

SOUTHEASTERN ASSOCIATION OF FISH AND WILDLIFE AGENCIES

Wetlands Wildlife Committee Report

Stephen V. Rockwood, Committee Chair

Sunday, October 29, 2017

Louisville, KY

Meeting convened: 1:00 PM

Chaired by: Stephen V. Rockwood (FL)

Committee Members and Guests Attending:

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| Doug Osborne (Univ. Ark.) | Amy Silvano (AL) |
| Andi Cooper (DU) | Dean Smith (AFWA) |
| Gillie Croft (Clemson Univ.) | Dave Kostersky (DU Canada) |
| Cody Martin (Univ. Ark) | Kameron Cole (Univ. Ark) |
| Jacob Sas (Univ. Ark) | Andrew Schmidt (AFWA) |
| Koven Minor (Univ. Ark.) | Nick Graves (Univ. Ark.) |
| Jacob Schwantz (Univ. Ark.) | Jeremy Ballard (Univ. Ark) |
| Bob Sargent (GA) | Daniel Oden (Univ. Ark) |
| Jen Mock Schaeffer (AFWA) | Rick Kaminski (Clemson) |
| Craig LeSchack (DU) | Nick Masto (Clemson Univ.) |
| Diane Eggeman (FL) | |

Scheduled Discussion Items:

- NAWMP 2018 – Diane Eggeman (FL) provided an update on the 2018 revision of the North American Waterfowl Management Plan. The 2018 revision will focus on linking objectives for waterfowl, habitat and people and incorporate information learned from the human dimensions surveys and the Future of Waterfowl Hunting II Workshop. The NAWMP revision is expected to be completed and released in September 2018.
- NAWCA (North American Wetlands Conservation Act) Support Letters – Steve Rockwood (FL) presented and discussed two separate draft letters supporting 1) the 5-year reauthorization of NAWCA, and 2) proposed NAWCA funding appropriation for FY 2018. After considerable discussion and minor editorial changes, the committee passed two separate motions asking the SEAFWA Directors and SE-TWS Executive Committee to approve and forward both letters in support of NAWCA.
- 2018 Farm Bill Re-Authorization – Andrew Schmidt (AFWA) provided an update on Farm Bill activities and indicated the House and Senate Agriculture Committees are developing the framework for re-authorizing the Farm Bill and continue to solicit input.

Changes may include proposals to amend the Conservation Reserve Program, the Regional Conservation Partnership Program, and the Sodsaver Programs. Both the House and Senate committees have expressed interest in re-authorizing the Farm Bill before it expires in September 2018. AFWA's 2018 Farm Bill Priorities can be viewed by clicking on the attached link

(<http://www.fishwildlife.org/index.php?section=comlist-1>).

- Clean Water Act and Waters of the U.S. – Steve Rockwood (FL) provided an update on the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (COE) proposal to roll back and rescind the Clean Water Rule and recodify the regulatory language that existed prior to 2015. The EPA and the COE have scheduled numerous public teleconferences on the proposal and will continue to receive written comments until late November 2017.
- Farming on Refuges – Steve Rockwood (FL) summarized the Farming on Refuges issue and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's (Service) internal policy banning the use of neonicotinoids and genetically modified crops on refuges beginning in January 2016. As a result of this ban, Region 5 Service staff developed a 5-year Strategic Action Plan for Waterfowl Management in the Southeast Region. This plan includes increasing waterfowl management efficiencies on refuges in the Southeast, hiring a Region 5 Waterfowl Biologist to help guide and assist refuges, and stepping down waterfowl population and habitat objectives.

Presentations:

- Diane Eggeman (FL) – 2018 NAWMP Update
- Nick Masto (Clemson Univ.) Aerial Strip-Transect Surveys of Waterfowl and Waterbirds in South Carolina: Summary and Revisions to 2016-2017 Surveys.
- Gillie Croft (Clemson Univ.) Waterfowl and Other Bird Production from Nest Boxes in Coastal South Carolina.

Action Items and Recommendations: Continue to monitor activities associated with Clean Water Act and Farming on Refuges and its impacts to migratory bird management. Forward two recommendations to SEAFWA Directors and SE-TWS Executive Committee supporting 1) NAWCA re-authorization, and 2) FY 2018 NAWCA funding appropriation.

Meeting adjourned: 3:00 PM

Submitted by: Stephen V. Rockwood

Attachments: NAWCA Letters of Support

SE-TWS NAWCA
2018 Funding Apprc

SE-TWS NAWCA
2017 Reauthorizatio