

Wildlife Advisory Committee Meeting
17-18 December 2019
Parktown Hotel, Saskatoon

Summary:

Full agenda for the 2 days. This year SERM (at the request of the minister I think) added a number of other groups to the Wildlife Advisory Committee (WAC). The committee is getting very big with an increasingly diverse membership.

Still significant amount of resources going into the Game Management Plan. Tying in habitat strategy due to the close relationship between habitat and wildlife. Interesting that fur farms are being managed by Agriculture. I would have thought SERM would have more involvement due to the lessons we have learnt from importing ELK and CWD and the issues with Wild Boar.

SERM is going to be pushing to mandatory hunter surveys with an administrative penalty of \$20-30 if you don't complete your surveys. Although I am fully in support of hunters completing surveys I am totally against mandatory survey completion. Overall there is a good response rate (23%), but there are some species and WMZ's that have very poor response (couple percent). I have expressed my concern to SERM regarding mandatory surveys—if they have specific problems with some species and some WMZ's then they should attack that problem.

No movement on the new Trespass Act. Government contracted a firm to build an 'app' to allow people to request access to land. However the success of the app requires the majority of the landowners to sign-up to make their land available. Overwhelming thoughts from the WAC members was that this app won't work.

Big Game Update:

- ~104,000 applications
- 10% success rate overall (hence the need for a 10-pool draw system)
- Unallocated elk licenses in zone 8A (antlerless elk) and mule deer in PA WMZ
- 146 people out of 706 declined a license when drawn for 3 or more species, 12 people declined their pronghorn license
- 848 veterans were approved for their HAL (the free license for veterans)
 - o 357 Saskatchewan veteran fishing licenses
 - o 252 Canadian fishing licenses
 - o 1496 licenses issued to 420 unique hunters

Chronic Wasting Disease continues to be a significant issue. We are the epicentre in Canada where the disease has been prevalent for 20 years. Some WMZ are exhibiting 40% infection rates. 2070 heads were turned in for 2018-19 and the positive were:

- o 3 elk
- o 2 moose
- o 270 mule deer
- o 74 white-tailed deer

Looking at ways to limit the spread of the disease including restrictions on movement of carcass.

SERM is adamant that this is NOT a food safety testing program. It appears that SERM is trying to get out of the testing because it is expensive, i.e., \$130/head. I suggested that a mandatory head testing should be put in place as SERM is selling a license to harvest a potentially diseased animal—

some WMZ's exhibiting a 40% infection rate. A mandatory head submission would also alleviate the need for a mandatory hunter survey (for the most part).

SERM is wanting people to use the online versions of the Hunting and Angling Guides to reduce their printing costs and to provide more timely information. SBPA members are encouraged to use the online guides.

Regulatory Amendments (suggestions by SERM)

- 2nd resident bear in the forest fringe, WMZ's 17, 32-50, 52-55
- Elk—antlerless tags in 33
- Antlerless mule deer to have a 3rd and 4th license if needed sometime in the future for youth
- Remove the requirement for a permit to shoot beavers
- Require taxidermists, butchers, pluckers, etc. to keep records for 1 year after the product is returned to the hunter.
- No change in direction on calibre for hunting rifles, suggest each organization to contact the minister to express their concern over the changes.
- No license refunds for any reason

Waterfowl

- Recommending increase pintail limit from 4 to 8
- Last Mountain Lake National area for Whooping Crane—looking to repeal
- Modernizing the Migratory Gamebird Act
 - o Possession of a bird will be until processed, once processed it would not count toward your limit
- Upland in the SW are close to having limits increased (may just be the cycle)
- No movement on Wild Turkey
- No movement on taking wild doves re falconers
- Moratorium on pheasant shoot farms—falls under captive wildlife, will likely allow in the future

WAC members were supportive of making it legal to use **certified dogs** to track wounded big game

Forestry is looking to tie into the game management plan (habitat). Forestation to mimic historical burn patterns

Respectfully submitted,

Robert Schultz