



Plymouth County League of Sportsmen

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Scituate Rod and Gun Club

January 18, 2023

At 7:06 pm we began our monthly business meeting with the pledge of allegiance and a moment of silence for all our family and friends who have died, and for service men and women in our armed forces who have died or been injured while protecting our country.

Opening Statement: President Johnson welcomed all in attendance, thanked the Scituate club for the wonderful meal and their support of the Sporting community. Club Delegate Ernie Foster also welcomed all in attendance and thanked the Plymouth County League of Sportsmen for all the work we do representing the sporting community.

Roll Call: There were 24 Delegates and 1 Guest representing 13 Clubs and organizations in attendance. There was one dog named Willy representing the Scituate Club in attendance. He made sure to visit everyone and ask for a hand out.

Treasurer's Report: Treasurer Bonney gave a complete report of our finances. A motion was made, seconded and passed to accept the report.

Yearly League dues were payable in December and are now **PAST DUE**. A few clubs have not submitted payment. All Delegates please check with your Club and confirm if dues were paid. Any club that did not receive a dues notice please contact treasurer Bonney at: 781-545-2753. Prompt attention and payment will be greatly appreciated.

Bills to be paid: No bills were presented for payment.

Secretary's Report: A motion was made, seconded and passed to accept the December 2022 report as published

Communications: Received meeting report from Barnstable County League's December meeting.

President Johnson sent letter to Governor Healy that was proof read and voted on at the December meeting.

Special Guest: Matthew Sisk attended the meeting. Matt is the newest member of the Massachusetts Fisheries and Wildlife Board. He spoke on his background, some ideas he has, and ways to get more people involved with the Division Of Fisheries and Wildlife.

Massachusetts Division of Marine Fisheries Report: Ross Kessler attended the meeting and submitted the following report:

PUBLIC ACCESS

Small Grant – Three Small Grants were awarded.

- Town of Cohasset: \$18,000 to install specialized car-top vessel launch floats to assist people launching canoes, kayaks, and stand-up paddle boards, which are becoming more popular as fishing vessels every year. The specialized floats will simplify entering and exiting the water in locations where the shoreline does not allow for easy access due to rocky shorelines and significant tidal changes.

- Town of Barnstable: \$25,000 to make repairs at the state boat ramp at Blish Point on Barnstable Harbor. The ramp is in serious need of repair, showing cracks and potholes. This heavily used facility

is the only reasonable and accessible boat access to Cape Cod Bay for eight miles in either direction. This ramp is scheduled for a complete overhaul by OFBA in about five years.

- City of Newburyport: \$13,000 to install solar lights and a wash-down system at a popular fishing pier at Cashman Park. The lights will provide safety for night anglers and the wash-down will allow for bait scraps to be washed away, improving sanitary conditions on the pier.

SHOWS - DMF will have fishing permit sales and biologists on site at all shows attended.

Tried and True – I'll be there Sat., Feb. 4 all day other staff will be there Sunday.

Standish – I'll be there Saturday, John Boardman Sunday.

NE Boat Show- DMF will be attending all days and the fishing derby awards ceremony will take place at 1PM on Sunday, February 19.

RISSA- attendance all days.

FISHERIES

DIADROMOUS – E Bridgewater, Stump Brook permitting is complete and fabrication for improved passage has already started.

A question was asked, “what are the next steps in this waterway?” I spoke with Brad Chase this morning and the next steps include fixing two culverts to better allow fish passage at Elm and Furnace streets. Additionally, the Stump Brook Dam fish passage would benefit from some alteration to improve fish passage. The above changes will allow for fish passage into Monposett Pond (528 acres) and Stump Brook Reservoir (168 acres).

Mackerel - The 2021 Atlantic mackerel stock assessment shows the species is over-fished and subject to over fishing. For 2023, NOAA Fisheries will be reducing the commercial mackerel quota by 79% and amending in-season closures for the commercial fishery.

Open Access and Recreational Mackerel Limit Fishers who do not hold a regulated commercial mackerel permit endorsement, including all recreational anglers, are subject to a daily 20-fish limit. Lawfully caught mackerel may be aggregated shore-side (e.g., freezers, holding cars) for future use and non-conforming quantities may be possessed. Please be reminded that combining recreational and commercial trips is prohibited. Therefore, fishers may not obtain a commercial mackerel permit endorsement to exceed this limit when recreationally fishing for other species (e.g., striped bass, bluefin tuna) on the same trip.

Sea bass and Scup- Both of these species will receive some cuts this year. those are yet to be determined.

Tautog – Regs were altered to be consistent with Rhode Island.

2023 Recreational Tautog Regulations

Season	Bag Limit	Size Limit
January 1- March 31	Prohibited	N/A
April 1- May 31	3 fish per Angler	16” - 21” 1 fish may be greater than 21”
June 1- July 31	1 fish per Angler	16”
August 1- October 14	3 fish per Angler	16”- 21” 1 fish may be greater than 21”
October 15- December 31	5 fish per Angler	16”- 21” 1 fish may be greater than 21”

Recreational Lobster and Crab Trap Fishing For 2023, DMF is enacting two changes affecting recreational lobster and crab trap fishing. Both measures address the potential interaction between the gear and right whales.

Recreational lobster and crab trap fishers using buoyed gear are no longer required to rig their buoy lines with a weak link (capable of breaking at 600 pounds of tension) at the buoy. Weak links were designed to allow for a buoy to part from its line should the line entangle a right whale. However, the entanglement record shows little evidence the gear modification works as intended and ultimately does not lead to risk reduction. As such, DMF is rescinding the requirement for recreational fishers to rig their buoy lines with this device. While the use of a weak link at the buoy is no longer a mandatory requirement, fishers may continue to deploy buoy lines with the device installed. Many fishers favor this device because it makes the gear easier to fish.

The November 1–May 15 closed season for buoyed recreational lobster and crab trap gear may now be extended past May 15 or rescinded after May 1 based on the documented presence or absence of right whales in state waters. DMF implemented this seasonal gear closure in 2021 to reduce the potential for the gear to become lost or abandoned as a result of winter storms, and to eliminate the risk that a buoy line may entangle an endangered right whale during the winter and early spring months when they aggregate to feed in our inshore waters. DMF has successfully managed commercial fixed gear fisheries with this dynamic management approach over the past several seasons and is now applying it to recreational fixed gear fisheries as well.

Lobster Legal- In the last few years Max Strahan sued NOAA, DMF, etc. in order to stop all fixed gear fishing that employs vertical lines. His suit asserted that the vertical lines were a threat to endangered right whales. Last year he lost the case. He lost on the reasoning that he did not have standing, not on the merits of the case. That judgment opened the door to lawsuits from groups that have scientists and thus standing. In the most recent budget negotiations Sen Susan Collins, Maine inserted language into the budget freezing new regulations on lobster gear for the next five years. I'm editorializing here but, this ruling hypothetically will give regulators and the fixed gear sectors time to plan for potential regulatory changes that impact those sectors of the fishing industry.

Massachusetts Division of Fisheries & Wildlife Report: Jason Zimmer attended the meeting with his young assistant and submitted the following report.

We are making good progress beginning to administer projects under the America the Beautiful Grant we were awarded that I reported on last month. We are in the process of getting the Red Book WMA restoration project redesign process started and have begun planning and budgeting for the pine barrens and coastal plain pond habitat projects.

- Staff will be out mowing fields and trails at the Frances A Crane WMA and Myles Standish State Forest pheasant and quail areas this winter.
- Our SE Wildlife Biologist just attended a training in NY with our State Waterfowl Project Leader (H Heusmann) to support our ongoing black duck research. The current project involves assisting with the data collection of a PhD student at the University of Saskatchewan looking at nesting attempts and

brood survival of black ducks using satellite transmitters. We will be trapping ducks immediately after the hunting season ends and deploying 10-20 satellite transmitters.

●We recently completed our “park mallard” survey, which is a statewide inventory of all known/suspected waterfowl feeding locations. This data, collected over decades, provides us with important information to help monitor local waterfowl populations and trends.

●Beavers continue to increase in the SE District and we are continuing to have issues associated with their activity at our Burrage Pond WMA. We will be starting up some limited trapping there to attempt to eliminate issues on the dams and at several water control structures, which, if left unchecked, could lead to significant damage to the property as well as environmental damages.

●MassWildlife continues to work on hunting and boating access issues at Santuit Pond in Mashpee and Shallow Pond in Barnstable.

●The SE District will be sending a letter to the Town of Plymouth expressing concerns with the ability of the Town to enforce illegal parking on Drew Road now that the Town has removed the special police powers from their natural resource officers (now called natural resource specialists). Prior to the NR staff having the ability to issue parking citations, the illegal parking and associated overuse of the area was leading to damage to the rare and sensitive natural resources on Little and Great South Ponds.

●The Special Winter Gamebird program is open to hunters and many people have been taking advantage of it in the SE District and getting permits for hunts at both Frances A Crane WMA and Erwin Wilder WMA. If interested, reach out to me for more information.

●Staff are currently attending to all of the wood duck boxes throughout the District. We did take advantage of a few days of good ice to check some of the sites on foot, but most will be completed in the more tedious and time consuming manner of checking from canoes/kayaks.

●The new Hunters Share the Harvest Program we launched this year after many years of effort by MassWildlife was a big success, especially considering we were not able to launch it until the day before shotgun season opened. A total of 14 deer were donated (12 females and 2 males), which amounted to 756 pounds of ground venison equaling 1,512 meals that were distributed to Veterans through the Massachusetts Military Support Foundation Food 4 Vets Program. You can support this ongoing program by making a donation to the Massachusetts Outdoor Heritage Foundation here and choosing the Hunters Share the Harvest Program in the dropdown menu:

<https://www.massoutdoorheritage.org/donate.html>

●The preliminary deer harvest, although not official at this point, puts our total annual harvest across all seasons at just over 15,800 deer, which will be a new State record harvest. Further, all reports indicate a new record harvest for Zone 11 as well.

Seven Person Board Report: No formal Report was given. Ernie Foster informed us that the January meeting will be a public meeting, where after lunch all Board members will introduce themselves, discuss their passions, and what they want to accomplish while sitting on the Board.

Legislative Report: No report

Massachusetts Conservation Alliance: A long discussion was held on the Nahant Coyote culling issue.

Old Business: No report from the Audit Committee, they plan to meet after the Standish show.

New Business: PCLS will be setting up a booth at the Standish show, any one interested in helping out in the booth please contact Jim Smith at 508-888-8854.

The Hunt Stock podcast is being planned again this year for August in Westminster, Ma. More details will be available soon.

“South Shore Outdoor Expo” will be held September 16, 2023 at the Marshfield Fair Grounds. Adults \$15.00, kids 15 and under are free. This event will be similar to the “Big Moe” event that used to take place. The purpose will be to promote the great outdoors. More details will be coming in the near future.

A motion was made, seconded and passed to invite Secretary of Environmental Affairs, Rebeca Tepper to our annual banquet.

A motion was made, seconded and passed to reserve a table and invite staff members from the south east district field office of DWF to our banquet.

A motion was made, seconded and passed on a list of dignitaries to invite to our banquet.

Annual Banquet: Our annual Banquet will be held on April 22, 2023 at Camp Kiwanee in Hanson Mass. Grand Raffle prizes will be the same as last year. Dinner will be the same as last year’s with the addition of cheese and crackers as an appetizer. This year each table will be numbered and called up to the buffet line one at a time. This should help keep things running smoothly. Tables seat 8 people. **Dinner tickets and Grand Raffle tickets are now available.** Please see your club Delegate or contact Jim Smith at 508-888-8854 for Dinner and Raffle tickets. Each Delegate needs to step up and sell as many raffle tickets as possible. Jim is going to need help greeting guests at the door, organizing the auction and raffle prizes, as well as help selling raffle tickets and running prizes to lucky winners at the banquet. Please consider stepping up and helping Jim.

Good of the Order:

Standish Sportsmen Show February 11-12 at club house, 1 Burr Ln. East Bridgewater, Ma. Saturday: 9am-5pm, Sunday: 9am-1pm.

N.E. International Boat show February 15-19, 2023 at Boston Convention and Exhibition Center, Boston, Ma.

Big E Sportsmen Show in West Springfield, Mass: February 24-26, 2023.

Tried & True fishing expo at Whites of Westport: February 4, 9am-5pm. February 5, 9am-3pm.

Castafari Offshore Fishing Seminar February 25-26, 2023 at Marriott Hotel, Quincy, Ma.

NE. Saltwater Fishing Show March 10-12, 2023 at Rhode Island Convention Center, Providence, RI. \$12.00 admission (Age 12 and under- FREE) Sunday is Family day, all Ladies and Kids under 12 admitted free.

Adjournment: The meeting came to a close at 9:02 pm. Our next meeting is scheduled at Marshfield Rod and Gun Club, 300 School St. Marshfield, Ma. On February 15, 2023. Camaraderie at 6:00 pm and agenda at 7:00 pm.

At the present time there is no state mandate requiring the wearing of masks or social distancing at indoor meetings or events. It is up to each individual to do whatever they are comfortable with. PCLS respectfully asks if any Delegate or guest is experiencing any symptoms of covid, that they please refrain from attending the meeting

PCLS Secretary

Ed Birch

