



DIVISION OF FISHERIES & WILDLIFE

Southeast District Activities – October/November 2018

Wildlife – District staff spent a good portion of October and November, from a wildlife perspective, preparing for and completing our annual fall stocking of pheasant and quail throughout the District. This process begins in the summer, when we typically prepare the stocking schedule, determine delivery dates and locations and contact our vendors and cooperators. In October, we begin to assess and mow/maintain roads used for stocking and we go over our stocking racks, perform any needed maintenance, and then load them onto our stocking trucks and trailers. We also reassemble our quail flight/holding pen at the District Office. All of this effort goes into making sure our stocking runs smoothly and that we can provide upland gamebird hunters with a high quality recreational opportunity.

This year's stocking went very smoothly, with very few vehicle/trailer issues and mostly positive feedback from hunters. We did receive some complaints on the quality of some of the pheasant we stocked and we are working through our internal process to properly review the quality of birds in accordance with our vendor contracts and will make any necessary changes moving forward. We did have one fairly significant issue with a snowstorm the week before Thanksgiving that collapsed a portion of our quail pen, allowing hundreds of quail to escape. Luckily, we were able to acquire additional quail from one of our vendors to get that night's stocking completed and, through the dedication and ingenuity of our staff, we successfully recaptured nearly 100% of the escaped birds and were able to complete our final two stockings during Thanksgiving week, the last one with a few more birds than we had originally scheduled, which must have been a nice treat for hunters on Thanksgiving morning!

Other wildlife related activities during October and November included several site visits to areas reporting bold or habituated coyotes, the removal of a dead deer from a pond in Kingston, the capture of several injured raptors and owls and transport to wildlife rehabilitators and preparation for our annual biological deer check station operation during the first week of shotgun season.

Staff also prepared for and operated controlled paraplegic and archery deer hunting programs at Camp Edwards on Joint Base Cape Cod. Both hunts had good participation and success, however the weather during the paraplegic hunt was terrible, leading to poor hunting conditions. One paraplegic sportman was successful in harvesting a nine male turkey, as the fall turkey season overlaps with the paraplegic deer season. Archery hunters participating at Camp Edwards harvested 6 deer and many reported seeing a lot of deer activity, which hopefully will lead to successful upcoming military, shotgun and primitive firearms seasons on the base.

Fire breaks were mowed/maintained at Camp Cachalot WCE and Southeast Pine Barrens WMA in preparation for potential fall/winter prescribed fires.

Fisheries – Fisheries work during October and November included the completion of our annual Fall trout stocking, ongoing monitoring of our Passive Integrated Transponder (PIT) antennae in the Childs,

Quashnet, Coonamesset Rivers and Red Brook, ongoing monitoring of stream temperatures throughout the District, and assisting the Sandwich State Fish Hatchery with annual trout spawning.

Further, Steve Hurley our Fisheries Biologist tended, almost daily, to the Red Brook channel ensuring safe passage for young of the year herring out of White Island Pond and down into Buttermilk Bay. He also attended the annual River Herring Network Meeting and gave a presentation on coldwater fisheries management to the Cape Cod Chapter of Trout Unlimited.

Natural Heritage –

District staff continued our ongoing management of Cooks Pond in Plymouth by adding in another two flume boards in the main water control structure to allow the water levels to increase slowly over the Fall/Winter. The water levels will be held at a higher level for the winter and then will be drawn back down in the late Spring/early summer to mimic natural hydrology and support and/or enhance coastal plain pond habitat along the shoreline.

Staff assisted with planting of native forbs on Bird Island to continue to enhance rare and endangered shorebird nesting habitat. Staff also continued monitoring our radio-tagged Blanding's turtles in the Hockomock Swamp WMA, attempting to gain locations as winter approaches to determine where the turtle may be overwintering.

The encroachment (cutting of vegetation in rare species habitat) at Bartlett Pond in our Red Brook WMA was resolved with the landowner meeting with MassWildlife, NHESP and Town officials and agreeing to discontinue cutting once he was made aware of the location of the property boundary.

Outreach/Notable Meetings – New signs related to the new dog regulation on WMAs that will go into effect on January 11, 2019, were installed at all WMAs in the District. Further, calls or emails were sent out to a large stakeholder group to inform as many people as possible of when the regulation will officially be in effect.

A meeting of the Marshfield Conservation Commission was attended by the District Supervisor and David Stainbrook (MassWildlife Deer and Moose Biologist), where a presentation on deer management was made by David at the request of the Town. The Town is considering changes to its regulations for conservation land to possibly allow some controlled archery hunting.

Internal reviews with regards to the request by the Town of Barnstable to evaluate the possibility of installing 1-2 municipal water supply wells on the WMA are ongoing. MassWildlife, the Town of Barnstable and USGS, among a number of other cooperators have been meeting regularly to determine the possible impacts of new wells, as well as to determine if a path forward could exist that benefits both the Town and the globally rare coastal plain pond habitats in the Hyannis Ponds complex.

In response to a request by the National Wild Turkey Federation to look at expanding wild turkey hunting opportunities, MassWildlife has completed an internal review of turkey hunting regulations and David Scarpitti (MassWildlife Upland Gamebird Biologist) presented some draft regulatory changes to the Fisheries & Wildlife Board. MassWildlife is now soliciting feedback from the public on these proposed regulations, prior to potentially bringing them back to the Board to request a public hearing. Please see

attached informational sheet related to the proposed changes and provide comments to MassWildlife by emailing David Scarpitti at david.scarpitti@mass.gov.

The annual distribution of the 2019 Guides to Hunting, Fishing & Trapping is underway to all Southeast District license vendors and some other sporting goods shops in anticipation of 2019 licenses going on sale on December 1.