ILLINOIS INVASIVE SPECIES COUNCIL

WILDLIFE COMMITTEE MEETING NOTES
March 2, 2023, 2:00 p.m.
Attendees in red:
John Lough
Scott Meister
Joy O'Keefe
Mike Eichholz
Gary Glowacki
John Burk
Mark Vakovich
Liza Leher
Lydia Scott

Lydia welcomed everyone and asked them to introduce themselves.

Tricia Bethke, Co-Chair, Pests and Pathogens Committee, provided some thoughts about how their committee is functioning:

The committee understands that there is a need to be ready for early detection and rapid response and provide advice to the state to be prepared. She mentioned that the committee struggles because everyone is volunteer and there is a lot of work to be done. She stated that she believes it is important to keep pests and pathogens separate from wildlife. There may be overlap but they are very separate. Their committee has done a first draft assessment of jumping worms. (Jumping worms was selected as a test case to test out their draft protocol and because there is so much public interest right now.) Their committee meets 4 x year. The fact that their committee is up and functioning means, while nothing critical is happening now, they are in a better position to deal with significant challenged if they develop. She will share the risk assessment protocol for jumping worms. Don't need to recreate the wheel.

Kelly Estes, Co-Chair, Pests and Pathogens Committee, stated that their group represents a very diverse range of expertise with the ability to focus on diverse targets. They are working to get better engagement and support from the committee members.

Questions included:
Is there a challenge with not having enough people on their committee or expertise to address specific problems? Tricia responded that there is likely the expertise but few resources and time. It is easier for Tricia and Kelly to work on this because it is their job to educate on these issues. They explained that they need to build stronger links between management and research to inform action.

Suggestion: It is hard to get people, working as volunteers, to move things forward. One way to make things happen is to assign action items to committee members so they know what needs to get done between the meetings. It is important to have someone to check in on them to see if it is getting done.

The Pests and Pathogens Committee is focused on insects and pathogens. That said, there may be a need to work collaboratively with another committee, e.g. tics? Wildlife is a vector and it would seem to be a wildlife issue, however it may bridge pests and pathogens and wildlife. It would be a courtesy to contact the other committee and perhaps collaborate.

John Lough reported on the Terrestrial Plant Protocol. The objective of the protocol is to provide a framework for recommendation. A question was asked as to whether there was a scoring mechanism. The Terrestrial Plant Committee had discussed scoring but decided it gave them more flexibility not to put in a scoring mechanism. Additionally, the Terrestrial Plant Committee has developed a list of species they are interested in reviewing. The provided a copy of this list to a wide audience to get feedback. This is providing an opportunity for broader feedback from industries, landowners and the public.

A question was raised as to whether the Wildlife Committee would need to develop a protocol. It was recommended that the wheel not be reinvented. There may be existing examples available. Lydia will ask the Aquatics Committee and the Terrestrial Plants Committee to attend the next Wildlife Committee meeting to discuss their processes and how things are working.

Lydia will prepare a Google sheet for committee members to start to generate a list of significant species. Columns will be provided for a species, why, distribution, pathway, regulation, research or other information, is anyone working on this, etc. (Lydia will take a look at the Terrestrial Plants protocol to develop columns for consideration). It was suggested that committee members select one species to start with, e.g. that could be a rallying cry – a poster child, one they can all get behind first.

The expectation is that IDNR and IDOA would accept recommendations from the committees. They have respect for the members of the council and committees and have expressed appreciation for the work that is taking place on these groups.

John invited the committee members to the March IISC meeting to be held in early April. Lydia will send out a Doodle Poll.

AGENDA
3/2/2023

1. Welcome
2. Pests and Pathogens Committee – Discussion of their work and species focus
    a. Tricia Bethke and Kelly Estes
3. Terrestrial Plants Committee – Discussion of their work and their protocol
    a. Kellie Schmidt and Chris Evans
4. Next steps
5. Additional Committee Members
6. Potential Co-Chairs
7. Next meeting date and agenda topics
8. Adjourn

NOTES for January 11, 2023 Meeting

Attendees:
John Lough
Scott Meister
Joy O'Keefe
Mike Eichholz
Gary Glowacki
John Burk
Lydia Scott

1. Welcome and Introductions

Committee members were welcomes and asked them to introduce themselves.

2. Review of IISC By-Laws and Committee Responsibilities

Committee members went through the sections of the Bylaws related to committees and discussed possible additions to the committee: NRCS or federal representatives, urban wildlife (Urban Wildlife Institute), entomologist, representatives from agriculture (feral pigs are a huge problem in other states with respect to agriculture), transportation (they will think of others). Mike will look into federal participation from wildlife control.

One key concern is where does this committee start and another end, e.g. invertebrates. John Lough, President of IISC, stated that there will be some overlap and opportunities for collaboration between committees. Lydia will ask the co-chairs of the Pests and Pathogens Committee to come to the next Wildlife Committee to talk about what species they are reviewing.

John Lough pointed out that the other committees have started with identifying protocols. Lydia will send along protocols that may have been developed by the other committees. Additionally Lydia and Scott Meister will look into other states invasive species wildlife committees and protocols that they may have. The Committee should look at Michigan. Lydia will see if she can find something on their webpage. (Mute swans, etc.) The Committee should look into what states have wildlife invasive species committees? Would the Midwest Fish and Wildlife group know? – Scott Meister will look into this.

Additionally, the Committee was advised that the Illinois Invasive Species Council has a Google account and that collaborative files can be created and shared through this resource. Chris Evans is setting this up.

3. Discussion of top concerns and needs

The Committee discussed knowledge and expertise gaps.

It was suggested that urban wildlife expertise may be needed. Joy suggested we connect with the Urban Wildlife Institute and Liz Lehrer (llehrer@lpzoo.org) (rats, pigeons, etc.) Lydia will contact her.

Another suggestion was someone from transportation, e.g. animal shipments, etc.

Another suggestion was NRCS Animal Wildlife control. Mike will look into this.

Feral pigs was discussed and the need to have someone with that expertise. Lydia pointed out that Chris Jacques may be that expert. Lydia will check in with him since he was not on the call.

Peggy Doty and Joy are working on a web resource on invasive species for the U of I Extension. If possible, Joy will share the list of the pages and content. Joy is working on the animals list and suggested that the IISC provide advice on content. Need an intersection with the Extension on this.

Here is the link to the Illinois Invasive Species list. It includes some wildlife.
https://www2.illinois.gov/dnr/education/Pages/ExoticsHome.aspx

https://www2.illinois.gov/dnr/education/Pages/ExoticsHome.aspx

Also, here is the link to the Illinois Wildlife Action Plan
https://www2.illinois.gov/dnr/conservation/IWAP/Pages/default.aspx

4. Discussion of potential goals and outcomes

The Committee is not ready to discuss this agenda item.

Lydia asked if anyone was willing to be a Committee Co-Chair – no one stepped forward.

Lydia will set up a meeting for about a month from now. The Committee agreed that more frequent meetings may be required at first with the intention to get to about 3 to 4 meetings per year. The expectation is that the work of the Committee will take place between meetings.