

WILDLIFE COMMITTEE

April 16, 2024

12:00 – 12:40 p.m.

NOTES

Attendees:

Derek Whipkey, guest (SIU Student researching Nutria)

Mike Eichholz

Scott Meister

Liza Lehrer

Joy O'Keefe

Gary Glowacki

Chris Jacques

Lydia Scott (notes)

Mike welcomed everyone.

Lydia needs to be sure to include Melissa and John Lough for these meetings.

Mike attended the Illinois Invasive Species Council meeting a few weeks ago. The council wants a more formal cover letter for the reports. They are developing the cover letter and will send it to the committees for future reports.

Mike asked the Council whether it would be important to be sure that the committees have alternative perspectives, e.g. hunters. The Council said the expertise of the team as constituted is what they want. If action needs to be taken IDNR will engage other perspectives.

Joy wonders whether a veterinarian might be valuable for the committee. Matt Allender might be a good addition, although he is very busy. There may also be another person in his lab who might be willing to serve on the committee. Liza will ask him. If not, Mike may have a wildlife vet to consider.

Mike has provided the list of citations. This list was included with the agenda but can be found in the [Nutria folder](#) on Google.

Mike asked Derek Whipkey to provide an update on his research.

Derek reminded the committee that last year no Nutria were found at any of the sites he sampled. However, this year, two sites out of sixty-three sites had confirmed Nutria EDNA. They were found close to Round Pond in Gallatin County and one in Alexandar County in the Shawnee National Forest.

In March IDNR used detection dogs, 55 sites. The dogs did not detect any Nutria.

Questions asked:

What is the sensitivity level for the EDNA? He responded that it is variable based on a wide range of range of conditions. Semi-aquatic animals are novel for using EDNA.

What is the likelihood of a false positive? Derek believes that it is very low.

What confidence does he have in the findings? He stated, with the QPCR, there are a number of amplifications in the readings. The two sites had high readings.

What are next steps? Will there be more monitoring of these sites? Derek hopes that there will be ongoing monitoring. The detection dogs are cheaper than EDNA.

Did the wildlife cameras find anything? No.

How would Derek explain the disparity in the results? He thinks that these species are susceptible to cold weather, and it may be that they migrate north but then do not adapt to the cold. However, in Maryland, they seem to be able to survive colder weather when they lose their tails.

Derek advised the committee to look at the 2019, Hilts paper. The Marnie Pepper papers are also good sources. (Literature list can be found [here](#).)

Derek will be wrapping up his research soon and graduating in December. Mike is on his committee and will keep the Wildlife Committee updated with any new findings from Derek's work. Mike thanked Derek for his help.

Mike provided a copy of a revised outline (the one used for the feral swine recommendation). He asked for committee members to volunteer to write sections. Following are the assignments:

Mike – history and distribution

Joy – environmental impact

Liza – economic impact (Chris to help her)

Scott – recommendations

Gary – to review the first draft

Joy is going to put the output file on [Google drive folder](#).

Next meeting will be May 17th, noon.

Lydia will remind people of their assignments a week before.