

Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources  
Natural Resources Board Agenda Item

**SUBJECT:** Information Item: 2014 Spring Hearing/Meetings, Wildlife Management Bureau advisory question results.

**FOR:** May 2014 Board meeting

**TO BE PRESENTED BY:** Scott Loomans, Wildlife Regulation Policy Specialist

**SUMMARY:**

The attached memo will summarize the results of voting on four wildlife management bureau sponsored and three Natural Resources Board advisory questions.

The results of voting on all of these questions will be used by the department when it is called upon to provide information on proposed legislation and in the development of future policies and recommendations.

The department will continue to investigate the possible use of foot-cable restraints which could result in a future proposal to initiate rule making.

Changes related limited draw harvest permits, simplification of hunting and fishing stamp requirements, and deer baiting can only be addressed by legislation because the department's rule making authority is limited.

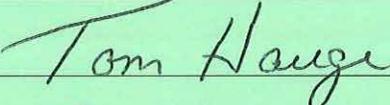
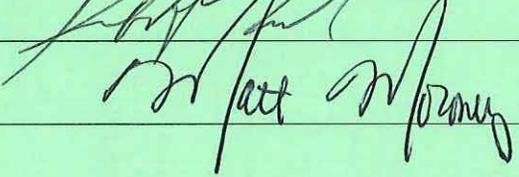
Spring hearing attendance in 2014 was 7,053 people.

**RECOMMENDATION:** Information only.

**LIST OF ATTACHED MATERIALS (check all that are applicable):**

- Background memo
- NA

- NA
- NA

Approved by	Signature	Date
Tom Hauge, Bureau Director		4/23/14
Kurt Thiede, Administrator		4/28/14
Cathy Stepp, Secretary		4/30/14

cc: Board Liaison – AD/8

## CORRESPONDENCE/MEMORANDUM

DATE: April 22, 2014

TO: Natural Resources Board

FROM: Secretary Cathy Stepp

SUBJECT: Approval of Wildlife Management's 2014 spring meeting agenda of advisory questions

This memo will summarize the results of voting and anticipated future action on four wildlife management bureau-related and three Natural Resources Board advisory questions.

### Background:

In 2014, all wildlife related questions asked at the hearings were advisory-only and not rule change proposals. The department will hold hearings on a spring hearing rules package again in 2015 and subsequent odd-numbered years. This timeline for rule promulgation is compatible with new requirements of Ch. 227 Stats. as modified by 2011 ACT 21.

Annually the department submits proposals and advisory questions on a variety of subjects including hunting, trapping, wildlife management and the management of department lands. The statewide April spring fish & wildlife hearings/meetings are the traditional vehicle for citizen input. The origins of these questions and proposals are most often: 1) department staff specialists from the bureaus of law enforcement, wildlife management, endangered resources and customer service and licensing, 2) publicly supported Conservation Congress advisory questions from prior years that were forwarded by the congress' executive council or; 3) advisory questions suggested by the natural resources board.

### Summary of Agenda Items:

Spring hearing attendance in 2014 was 7,053 people. Table 1. below provides a description of each question and a summary of statewide voting results. Written comments are summarized in Table 2. The full questions are attached as Appendix 1.

Table 1. Statewide voting results.

Question Number	Question Description	Yes Votes	No Votes	Statewide Vote	County Vote (Yes/No/Tie)
<b>Statewide Department Questions</b>					
28	Keep preference points longer than 3 years w/o applying	2,824	2,627	Yes	46 / 22 / 4
29	Apply for preference point only after drawing deadline	2,897	2,538	Yes	48 / 20 / 4
30	Eliminate restrictions on transfer of hunting/trapping permits	2,722	2,757	No	37 / 30 / 5
31	Allow use of foot cable restraints for	3,363	1,722	Yes	68 / 4 / 0

	harvesting furbearers				
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Question Number	Question Description	Yes Votes	No Votes	Statewide Vote	County Vote (Yes/No/Tie)
<b>Natural Resources Board Advisory Questions</b>					
32	Simplify hunting stamp requirements	3,212	2,374	Yes	60 / 12 / 0
33	Simplify fishing stamp requirements	3,300	2,265	Yes	60 / 9 / 3
34	Restrict deer baiting 10 before and during traditional 9-day gun season	3,639	2,180	Yes	66 / 5 / 1
35	Remove white deer / albino protection	1,915	3,939	No	3 / 69 / 0

Table 2. Written comments.

		Ayes	Noes
<b>Statewide Wildlife Management Advisory Questions</b>			
28	Keep preference points longer than 3 years w/o applying	4	
29	Apply for preference point only after drawing deadline	3	1
30	Eliminate restrictions on transfer of hunting/trapping permits	3	1
31	Allow use of foot cable restraints for harvesting furbearers	3	1
<b>Natural Resources Board Advisory Questions</b>			
32	Simplify hunting stamp requirements	3	2
33	Simplify fishing stamp requirements	2	3
34	Restrict deer baiting 10 before and during traditional 9-day gun season	3	5
35	Remove white deer / albino protection	3	28

### Future Action on 2014 Spring Hearing Advisory Questions

The results of voting on all of these questions will be used by the department when it is called upon to provide information on proposed legislation and in the development of future policies and recommendations.

The department will continue to investigate the possible use of foot-cable restraints which could result in a future proposal to initiate rule making.

Changes related limited draw harvest permits, simplification of hunting and fishing stamp requirements, and deer baiting can only be addressed by legislation because the department's rule making authority is limited.

**DEPARTMENT WILDLIFE ADVISORY QUESTIONS**

**QUESTION 28-29. Modifications to the permit preference system for bear, bobcat, fisher, otter, wolf, elk, sharp-tailed grouse and turkeys**

The demand for hunting and trapping opportunities exceeds the available opportunity for certain species. In order to assure that harvest is held to a sustainable level and to distribute hunting and trapping permits in a fair and equitable way, the legislature has established limited draw preference systems for bear, bobcat, fisher, otter, wolf, and turkey hunting management. All of these preference systems have slight variations but two rules or laws are consistent between the drawings:

- People who do not apply for three consecutive years lose any preference points they have earned in previous years when they were not successful in the permit drawing.
- The department has established deadlines by which people must apply for the permits and there are no exceptions, even for people who have missed the application deadline but would still like to apply for a preference-point only.

The loss of preference points by people who have not applied in three years may have assisted the department with maintaining current records. However, it is easier to store and access that type of information with today's modern information systems.

People who have missed application deadlines have asked the department if they could at least apply for a preference-point-only, acknowledging that they would have no chance to actually draw a permit, in order to continue building the number of preference points they will ultimately need to draw a permit. This is not allowed under current law but changing the law may be a good customer service opportunity for the department.

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Do you support allowing people who fail to apply for limited draw hunting or trapping permits for three or more years to maintain preference points they have previously acquired?    28.    YES\_    NO\_\_\_\_\_

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Do you favor allowing people who have missed a limited draw permit application to still apply for a preference-point-only, providing them with an advantage in the following year's drawing?    29.    YES\_\_\_\_    NO \_\_\_\_\_

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**QUESTION 30. Transfers of limited draw hunting and trapping permits**

Under current law, the transfer of certain limited draw preference points for specific hunting and trapping opportunities is allowed if the transfer is to a minor in any situation or if the transfer is to a surviving spouse, personal representative, guardian, or trustee upon the death of the person who earned the preference points. These limited draw permits include bear, bobcat, fisher, otter, wolf, elk, sharp-tailed grouse and turkeys.

A person who has drawn a wolf harvesting license can also transfer their permit to any person who is legally able to hunt or trap in this state.

The department receives many requests but is not able to allow the transfer of permits in additional situations. For instance, the department has been asked to transfer permits to terminally ill individuals, senior citizens, and veterans.

Rather than expand the number of classes of people to whom a limited draw harvest permit may be transferred, it would be less complicated to simply allow the transfer of permits to any other person who is legally able to hunt or trap in this state. This is how wolf permit transfers are currently handled. A simple law allowing transfers would avoid making people prove that they have a certain illness or establish other complicated regulations. Some potential hunters and trappers would appreciate this type of customer service.

However, some people think that expanding the number of people to whom permits may be transferred will result in an increase in the number of applicants for limited draw permits and result in an over-all increase in the number of preference points that would be needed for success in the drawing. The wait required to draw a tag would likely increase. Drawing certain permits, such as for bear or bobcat, can require 5 or more years of preference points.

Through this advisory question, the department is asking people to weigh their concerns about customer service and simplicity against concerns about permit availability.

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Do you favor simplifying the conditions for being able to transfer a limited draw harvest permit or points by simply allowing transfer to any other person who is legally able to hunt or trap in this state and not restricting transfers to minors or certain other people upon the death of the permit/point holder? 30. YES\_ NO\_\_\_\_\_

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**QUESTION 31. Allow the use of foot cable restraints for harvesting furbearers**

A cable restraint is a device used for the live capture of furbearers. The device consists of a non-spring activated cable which includes a relaxing mechanical lock, stops, and swivel. International research on humane trap systems has documented the safe use of cable restraints on dry land, with much of the field research conducted here in Wisconsin from 2000 to 2002. Beginning in 2004 our law has allowed the statewide use of passive neck cable restraints for bobcat, coyote, fox and more recently, wolf. Use of this tool is during the latter portion of the trapping seasons beginning on December 1<sup>st</sup>, as a respectful, precautionary measure to minimize incidental contact with other wildlife and domestic dogs. This device has proven to be safe, humane and selective.

Additional trap research conducted following the same protocols has shown the foot cable restraint to pass all injury score systems for these same species, especially wolves. Use of this tool could be allowed with the same start date as currently approved for passive neck cable restraints, December 1<sup>st</sup>. Use of this tool during the latter portion of harvest seasons will minimize contact with black bear, allow careful review, and provide an additional, versatile tool for trappers.

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Do you favor allowing the use of foot cable restraints during the latter portion of the furbearer harvest seasons, beginning on December 1<sup>st</sup>? 31. YES\_ NO\_\_\_\_\_

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## NATURAL RESOURCES BOARD ADVISORY QUESTIONS

### QUESTION 32-33. Simplifying hunting and fishing stamp requirements

In order to simplify regulations and the licensing process, some individuals and organizations have been exploring the concept of a single hunting and a single fishing stamp which would consolidate from five to two the number of stamps that a person would need to obtain all fishing and hunting privileges.

Hunters currently need to purchase a turkey stamp (\$5.25), a pheasant stamp (\$10.00) and state waterfowl stamp (\$7.00) to participate in all of those activities. Anglers currently need to purchase an inland trout stamp (\$10.00) to fish inland trout waters and a Great Lakes trout and salmon stamp (\$10.00) to fish for those species in the Great Lakes.

If this concept were enacted, all hunters would purchase a single stamp, which would support habitat work, and with the purchase of an appropriate license, authorize any type of hunting. All anglers would need to purchase a single stamp, to support fisheries & habitat work, and with the purchase of an appropriate license, would authorize any type of fishing. Exemptions for young people, mentored hunters, and participants in educational events would be maintained.

A goal is that there would be no reduction of revenue for the important fisheries and wildlife conservation programs currently funded by the stamp programs. The accounts would continue to be segregated and dedicated so that funds could not be used for other purposes. Under this proposal, current stamp funding obligations such as the pheasant stocking program, wetland habitat work and trout and salmon stocking would be maintained and most likely increase.

Because additional hunters and anglers would be purchasing the stamps and potentially generating additional revenue, it may be possible to fund new programs that improve habitat on both public and private lands. For wildlife programs, those funds might be used for forest habitat management which includes deer, ruffed grouse and other forest species. Funds could also be dedicated to enhance hunter recruitment efforts and expand access to private lands.

If additional hunters and anglers are purchasing the stamps, the fee for each stamp could be reduced while still maintaining or increasing overall funding levels. For instance, using current hunter numbers a fee of \$5.00 for the hunting stamp could provide \$3.5 million. A hunter who pursues waterfowl, pheasants and turkeys currently pays \$22.25 in stamp fees for all of those privileges. This proposal would not impact federal migratory bird hunting stamp requirements and hunting and fishing licenses would still be required.

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To simplify regulations and the licensing process, do you support establishing a single hunting stamp which would be purchased by all hunters but would be less expensive, earmarking funds for waterfowl/wetland, pheasants/grassland, and turkey management purposes as in the past and allowing any additional funds to be available for forest management and hunter recruitment?

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32. YES\_ NO\_

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To simplify regulations and the licensing process, do you support establishing a single fishing stamp which would be purchased by all anglers but would be less expensive, earmarking funds for inland trout habitat and Great Lakes trout and salmon propagation, as in the past and allowing additional funds to be available for inland lake habitat management/stocking and combating aquatic invasive species?

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33. YES\_ NO\_

**QUESTION 34. Restrict deer baiting and feeding ten days before and during the traditional 9-day firearm season**

We have heard hunters say that feeding and baiting affects deer distribution and natural daytime movement. When deer need to move less to find food, and are concentrated in areas where access and/or hunting are restricted, the quality of the hunt is reduced. For the department, this can make managing the herd more difficult and contribute to the debate about the accuracy of deer numbers.

In 2006 and 2008, Conservation Congress spring meeting attendees voted in favor of banning baiting for deer hunting by 56% and 54%. Another question in 2006, which proposed banning both baiting and feeding just 10 days prior to and during the traditional 9-day firearm season, had a greater level of support with 62% voting in favor. This same question was asked in 2011, and had roughly the same level of support, 63%. These votes have not led to changes, other than banning baiting and feeding of deer in counties or adjacent counties where deer have tested positive for chronic wasting disease (CWD). Currently, baiting and feeding of deer is prohibited in 35 counties because of their close proximity to CWD positive deer. Banning baiting and feeding of deer in counties where it is currently allowed may encourage deer movement during shooting hours and result in a more even distribution of deer available to hunters on both public and private lands.

Baiting and feeding would still be allowed at other times of the year. This compromise would still allow those who believe they need to hunt with bait to do so during most of the archery and some firearm seasons. This compromise is not ideal for reducing disease transmission risks associated with baiting and feeding; however, it would result in less deer feed being placed on the landscape at a time of the year when much food is currently placed. The DNR is not able to modify deer baiting and feeding regulations by administrative rule, except for adding counties where it is banned because of CWD positive deer. Otherwise, changes to deer baiting and feeding regulations must be made in state statute by the legislature.

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1. Would you support legislation to authorize banning deer baiting and feeding statewide 10 days before and during the 9-day gun deer season? **34.** YES\_\_ NO\_\_\_\_

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**QUESTION 35. Remove white deer/ albino deer protection**

Albino, white and piebald deer have a recessive genetic mutation that causes a total absence (in the case of albinos) or lack of (in white and piebald deer) body pigment. Albino deer are completely white with eyes, nose and other soft parts being pink. White deer are deer that are white except for the hooves, tarsal glands, head or parts of the head, and their hooves, eyes and nose are dark. Piebald deer have varying amounts of brown fur beyond what is present in white deer and they too have dark eyes, nose, and hooves.

In the wild, white fur and markings place these animals at a selective disadvantage because they lack the typical protective coloration and are more visible, making them more susceptible to predators. These animals often have other recessive traits and physical maladies such as poor eyesight in albinos, because of their pink eyes. These recessive genetic conditions are quite rare (estimated at less than one percent under natural conditions) and the phenomenon is often localized in a specific area. From a strictly biological perspective, there is no reason to protect white deer. It is currently illegal to harvest albino or white deer in Wisconsin outside of the CWD zones. At the January meeting of the Natural Resources Board, the Board took action to reinstate protection of white deer in the CWD zones. This change will be in effect for the 2014 deer hunting season, so in 2014 it will be illegal to harvest white and albino deer statewide. Piebald deer are not protected.

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Would you favor legalizing the harvest of white and albino deer statewide? **35.** YES\_\_ NO\_\_\_\_

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