



Changes in Wildlife Control

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New Jersey Wildlife Damage Control Association

With the new year upon us, we at the New Jersey Wildlife Damage Control Association thought this would be a good time to ensure that our colleagues at NJPMA were informed of some important recent changes that affect our industry and its standards as wildlife control operators in this state.

First, we at the New Jersey Wildlife Damage Control Association (NJWDCA) would like to ensure that you are aware that there are two separate and distinct associations of professional wildlife control operators in our state.

There is a national organization called National Wildlife Control Operators Association (NWCOA) that most nuisance wildlife operators around the country belong to. Each state has its own chapter within NWCOA and up until recently, the officers of the NJWDCA have held those positions at the state level of NWCOA as well. We have, for personal reasons, stepped down from those positions at NJ NWCOA and within the past few weeks new officers have taken them over.

The NJWDCA is proud of the relationship that we have with the New Jersey Pest Management Association, as well as with the national leaders of NWCOA. However, we would like to make it clear that we have nothing to do with the new leadership at **NJ** NWCOA. We are not associated with the stances they have taken or the direction in which they are headed.

We are hoping to ensure there is no confusion. We respectfully request that you keep in mind the difference between our organizations, as well as the positive relationship and communication that we at NJWDCA have with the NJPMA.

Division of Fish & Wildlife Regulatory Changes:

On to the important changes that have come from our regulatory body, the New Jersey Division of Fish and Wildlife. We are happy to report that the major points of issue – the Division Relocation Policy, depredation permits, and trapping policies – clear up some areas which had previously been grey.

First, the New Jersey Division of Fish and Wildlife have expended their Relocation Policy in regards to wildlife for those times when either euthanasia of trapped animals is not possible or relocation is preferred for particular reasons. Some examples of how the policy has been broadened include the fact that non-rabies vector animals, such as squirrels, can now be released further than 10 miles from their capture site. However, rabies vector animals have different mile amounts (no more than 5 miles for skunks, while no more than 10 for raccoons, for example), and in all cases they must remain within the same municipality where they were caught.

We encourage you to read the newly expanded policy in its entirety at either our association website (www.njwdca.com, go to the Laws and Regulations page and click on Wildlife Relocation Policy) or this link on the Division website: www.state.nj.us/dep/fgw/pdf/relocation_policy.pdf.

In a move that truly makes a difference in the rights and protections of our industry, the Division of Fish and Wildlife has also recently provided us with an expanded depredation permit. We are aware that many of you have chosen to forego obtaining a depredation permit in past years because the animals that were covered were limited. Now, however, the expanded depredation permit allows property owners or their agents to control squirrel, raccoon, opossum, skunk, weasel, woodchuck, gray fox, red fox and coyote that are causing damage to property, by lawful procedures. (Another important note: Animals that are not listed, such as muskrats, can be controlled if the animal is causing damage and the operator obtains a site-specific depredation permit from the Division of Fish and Wildlife. In this situation, we recommend that you contact Anthony McBride, DFW Biologist at: (908) 735-8793).

The permit cost is only \$22.00 per year and it provides statewide coverage. The applications for both initial and renewal permits are available for download from both the NJWDCA website and the Division site. NJWDCA also provides sample versions of filled out applications for the use of our members (found online as well). These samples will help make sense of the application questions.

One of the most important benefits of working under a DFW depredation permit is that it removes any doubt that you are protected from Title 4 animal cruelty laws and are, in fact, protected by Title 23, as long as you follow the laws for proper trapping and euthanization techniques as outlined. Any operator who has obtained the proper permit and is following the rules cannot be targeted for prosecution by an SPCA officer or animal control officer. Any operator who is threatened with such must immediately contact the Division of Fish and Wildlife.

Finally, the Division has determined that wildlife control operators can contact them for free company trapping identification numbers to be placed on trap tags. Any company running animal traps must properly label their traps with tags. If you prefer, you can list your company name, address, and phone number. In that case, if someone wants to contact the owner of the trap, they will be able to do so. However, if you so choose, you can obtain a trap tag identification number from the DFW, which would allow you to refrain from listing other pertinent contact information. Then only the DFW will know the information of the trap's owner. If your company is interested in obtaining a trap tag number free of charge, you can contact the Division. Tags can be purchased at companies such as: Wildlife Control Supplies (877-684-7262) and Funke Trap Tags (641-483-2597).

Division statutes on trapping are quite clear. Traps must be maintained and checked by the company or operator who owns and set them, and they must be checked at least one time within every 24 hour period when set for capture.

There has been a recent political split in other states between nuisance wildlife operators and pest control operators. In New Jersey, we know that it is imperative that we bond together to further our progress. As groups we are different yet similar, and the NJWDCA is happy to do our part to maintain the excellent working relationship between our groups. If you become aware of attempts to drive a wedge of any kind between us, please speak up.

We hope those of you who perform wildlife and animal control work will consider joining our association. A small \$35.00 annual fee will provide you with many benefits, most importantly, the moral support, knowledge, and updates of information of your peers throughout the state. We look forward to another successful and progressive year for our association and yours!

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