

MDIF&W Wildlife Species Planning 2015

Agenda



- Historic Planning Process
 - Species Assessment
 - Public Working Group
 - Management System
- Revised Planning Process
 - Comprehensive Plans
 - Streamlining Species Assessment
 - Public Surveys
 - Role of Working Groups
- Big Game Management Plan



Historic Planning Process – Plan Format



3 Components

1. Species Assessment
2. Goals & Objectives
3. Management System

Developed collaboratively by IFW and Public Working Group

Historic Planning Process – Species Assessment



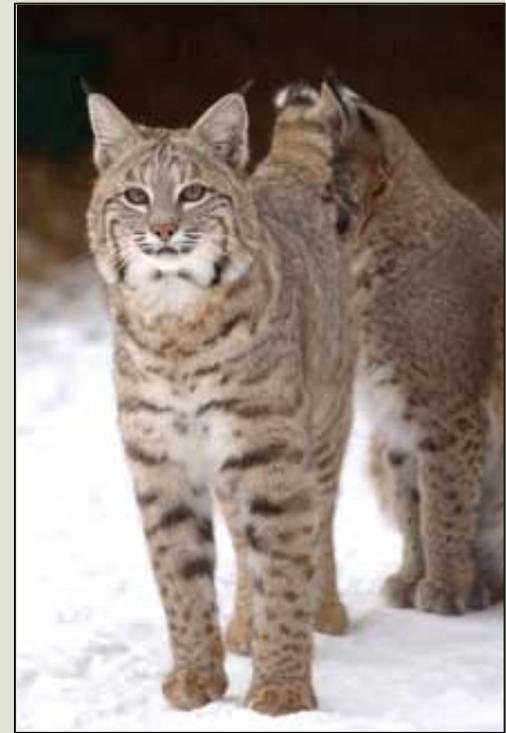
- Individual species or groups of species
- All hunted, trapped, and E&T species
- Written by species specialists
- Reviewed by Division and experts



Historic Planning Process – Species Assessment



- I. Introduction
- II. Natural History
- III. Management History
- IV. Habitat Assessment
- V. Population Assessment
- VI. Use and Demand Assessment
- VII. Summary
- VIII. Literature
- IX. Appendices



Historic Planning Process – Goals and Objectives



Developed by Public Working Group

- 10 – 25 Members
- Diverse Composition:
 - Sportsman's groups
 - NGOs
 - Landowners
 - Tourism groups
 - Concerned citizens/critics
- Worked within ecological sideboards (MVP and K)



Historic Planning Process – Goals and Objectives



Public Working Group

- Input from Species Assessment & Dept. Experts
 - Develop sideboards and participate when asked
- Developed Goals & Objectives
 - Population Targets (# of animals) to balance competing desires for the species
- MDIFW Response:
 - Feasibility
 - Capability of the habitat
 - Possible consequences
 - Problems & strategies
- Approved by Commissioner



Historic Planning Process – Management System



- Describes approach Dept. will use to achieve G & O
 - Data inputs
 - Rules of thumb
 - Management response
- Developed by species specialists
- Internal & external review
- Public informational meetings, if needed
- Rule-making and public hearings



Historic Planning Process – Process for Revision



- Plans updated every 15 years
 - Some plans now 30 years old
 - Management evolves, even if plans have not (e.g. River Otter)
- Plan revisions require reconvening Working Group



Historic Planning Process – Lessons Learned



1. Goals & Objectives not always feasible
 - Managing moose in relation to K
 - 10 deer mi² in northern Maine?
2. Some Goals mutually exclusive?
 - Maximizing moose viewing & hunting?
 - Moose and deer populations?
3. Plans not adaptable to changed circumstances
 - 2 bear hunting referendums in 10 years
 - Lynx impacts on trapping
 - Decline in deer hunters in N. Maine
 - Constantly evolving science

Historic Planning Process – Lessons Learned



4. IFW manages more than abundance:

- Habitat
- Herd health
- Conflicts/damage
- Hunting framework
- Public Education
- Disease
- Research



Moving Forward – What has changed?



- Wildlife Action Plan: comprehensive plan for most non-game species
- Fewer staff dedicated to planning
- Complexity of wildlife management is increasing
 - New E&T spp, diseases, invasive spp, climate change, land ownership, referendums, social media, conflicts/damage
- Public expectation: wildlife managed for the full suite of interests & perspectives



Proposed Revisions to Planning Process



1. More Comprehensive 'Management Plans'
2. Streamlined Species Assessments
3. Broader Public Consultation
4. 'Working Groups' transition to 'Steering Committees'
5. 'Management Systems' not part of Plan



1. Comprehensive Management Plans



- Assessment, G&O, and Management Strategies in one document
- Goals, Objectives, & Strategies to address ALL management issues
 - Population goals
 - Hunter satisfaction
 - Viewing opportunities
 - Vehicle collisions
 - Human-wildlife conflicts
 - Disease
 - Habitat
 - Research needs
 - Public outreach



Example: Vermont Big Game Plan



The cover of the Vermont Big Game Management Plan 2010-2020 report features a topographic map of Vermont as a background. In the top left corner is the Vermont Fish & Wildlife logo. The title "BIG GAME MANAGEMENT PLAN 2010 - 2020" is prominently displayed in large, bold, green letters, with the subtitle "CREATING A ROAD MAP FOR THE FUTURE" below it. At the bottom left is the Vermont Fish & Wildlife Department logo and contact information: "VERMONT FISH & WILDLIFE DEPARTMENT (802) 241-3700 / www.vtfishandwildlife.com". On the right side of the cover, there is a vertical strip of four photographs: a white-tailed deer, a moose, a black bear, and a wild turkey.

Example: Vermont Big Game Plan



2010-2020 Moose Management Issues, Goals, and Strategies

ISSUE 1. Regional Population Goals

GOAL: To maintain regional populations of healthy moose at or below cultural carrying capacity.

Management Strategies

- 1.1 Maintain a statewide fall post-hunt population of between 3,000 and 5,000 moose.
- 1.2 Maintain a sex ratio of between 40 to 50 bulls per 100 adults (moose of at least age-class one).
- 1.3 Maintain an adult age-class distribution of at least 25% of at least age-class four.
- 1.4 Maintain an average ovulation rate of more than 1.15 for cows age class of at least three.

Example: Vermont Big Game Plan



ISSUE 2. Moose / Human Conflicts

GOAL: To minimize motor vehicle/moose collisions and other forms of damage caused by moose.

Management Strategies

- 2.1 Develop and implement a policy for Department response to "nuisance" moose.
- 2.2 Continue to cooperate with the Vermont Agency of Transportation (VTRANS) to erect warning signs at traditional moose highway crossings.
- 2.3 Cooperate with VTRANS in implementing roadside brush-clearing projects to improve visibility at the most dangerous moose crossings, when feasible.

Example: Vermont Big Game Plan



ISSUE 4. Moose Viewing

GOAL: Provide safe and quality moose viewing opportunity.

Management Strategies

- 4.1 Construct at least one moose observation tower with a parking area near a state highway in the Northeast Kingdom region and investigate other locations in other regions.
- 4.2 Include moose in a guide to wildlife viewing sites on the Department's website.

2. Streamlined Species Assessment



- Information pertinent to the current and future management of the species in Maine
- Limited natural history info
- 5 – 10 pages
- Some species will require more exhaustive assessments/reports (e.g. Lynx)
 - These do not need to be part of the management plan



3. Broader Consultation – Public Surveys/Meetings



- Primary mechanism for public input, rather than working group
 - More democratic
 - Balanced input from all Maine citizens, specific stakeholder groups
- General public, hunters, landowners, other target groups
- Dept. staff and Steering Committee identify survey questions
- Professional Survey Company



4. Role of Working Group



- Transition to ‘Steering Committee’
- Help IFW shape public input into Goals, Objectives, & Strategies
- IFW provides draft content for consideration
- Strive for consensus
- Subcommittees work on individual species



5. Management System



- Describes the data inputs, steps and calculations used to allocate harvest
- Science & available data constantly evolving
- Outputs (permit numbers, season dates etc.) go through Rule-Making

Removing this detail from Management Plan will allow IFW to be adaptive and use best available information

Maine's 2016 Big Game Management Plan



- Combine Deer, Moose, Bear & Turkey into one plan
- 10-year time horizon (2016–2026)?
- Include issues of general concern
 - Hunting access
 - Hunter recruitment
 - Public education
 - Others?



Table of Contents



Plan Timeline



Steering Committee: Roles & Responsibilities



- Sounding board on process and plan components
- Input on Public Survey content
- Feedback on draft goals, objectives, and strategies
- Feedback on time-sensitive issues

Steering Committee is Advisory

- IFW Commissioner has final authority

Steering Committee: Logistics



- Monthly meetings expected
- Conference calls if needed
- Rotate between Bangor & Augusta – others?
- Responsible for own travel expenses

Species Subcommittees



- Separate subcommittee for each species
- IFW staff and invited experts (~8 members)
- Chaired by species specialist(s)
- Responsibilities:
 - Identify management issues
 - Input on survey questions
 - Identify areas of conflict between species
 - Draft and refine goals, objectives, and strategies
 - Review and revise plan content
 - Report discussions & progress to Steering Committee