



HARVEST INFORMATION PROGRAM WORKING GROUP

Chair: Karen Waldrop, Ducks Unlimited

Vice-Chair: Josh Avey, Arizona Game and Fish Department

Tuesday, March 15, 2022

1:00-2:00 p.m. PT

87th North American Fish and Wildlife Conference

Introductions

Karen Waldrop, Chair, called the meeting to order at 1:00 p.m. and conducted introductions.

The minutes from the September 8, 2021, AFWA HIP Working Group Meeting were approved.

Brad Bortner, WMI, and Phil Seng, DJ Case and Associates, provided a report covering HIP communications strategy. The update included background information on the challenges the HIP Working Group intends to address in improving upon HIP data quality. In 2021, Brad worked under the auspices of the AFWA HIP Working Group with an ad-hoc group to discuss HIP communication challenges and potential solutions. All four flyway technical committees and Councils supported the concept of a unified campaign to broadly increase understanding of HIP by multiple agencies.

Moving forward, a communications plan will be developed to guide a broad campaign to increase understanding of HIP by all states, flyways, and other partners based on common messages, images, and themes. Key concept of the communication plan will be to develop a suite of communication tools that can be used by all states and partners without significant investment. The Flyway Technical Section and Council has provided support of this plan.

The objectives for the plan include:

- Increasing the number/percentage of migratory bird hunters that complete the HIP certification process;
- Decreasing the number of hunters who do not intend to hunt for migratory birds who complete HIP certification;
- Increasing the accuracy/quality of the data collected by the HIP registration effort; and
- Removing impediments that prevent the other objectives.

Primary and secondary audiences were identified. The primary audience is hunters, and the secondary audiences will include license software providers and agency licensing staff, state fish and wildlife agency staff, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service agency staff, and license retailers.

Discussion was had regarding whether evaluation was important for this program and, if so, what metrics would be used for evaluation. Sample evaluation metrics might include increased understanding of HIP, migratory bird hunters completing HIP registration, non-migratory bird hunters not completing HIP registration in error, or increasing the accuracy and quality of HIP data.

Key messages, talking points, concepts and potential message concepts were discussed.

Message testing will be conducted with 8 virtual focus groups, 2 from each flyway, with 1 group of migratory bird hunters and 1 group of non-migratory bird hunters. Feedback will be used to develop final concepts. The timeframe is estimated to be 90-days from start to finish.

The toolkit will include posters, print ads, social media content, online advertising materials and a FAQ sheet for primary and secondary audiences.

Next steps were discussed regarding integrating Flyway feedback on the revised communications plan, the adoption of the HIP Working Group by AFWA and implementation of a multi-state grant proposal. If the grant implementation is successful, message testing and final message development will be rolled out into a toolkit to all states.

There was a roundtable discussion. The communications plan was adopted, and the HIP Working Group voted to proceed with presenting the letters of support from the flyways to AFWA for adoption of the communications plan.

Kathy Fleming, USFWS, gave a brief HIP stratification analysis update with background on the stratification timeline. She addressed problems with current stratification. Those problems include:

- Hunters not answering HIP questions;
- Non-migratory bird hunters being included in the sample frame;
- Hunters having difficulty recalling the previous year's harvest;
- Hunters concern with how data would be used (e.g. to restrict seasons);
- Hunters putting themselves in the wrong stratum; and
- Hunters overestimating what they did the previous year.

The USFWS matched hunters who provided survey responses for two consecutive years and compared harvest estimates and precision using two different stratifications:

- What they said they did (HIP answer); and
- What their previous-year harvest survey said they did (assumed correct).

Preliminary results show a significant effect:

- “Correct” stratification leads to slightly higher estimates and lower variance; and
- The effect is greater for ducks than doves.

Proposed alternatives might include:

- Asking hunters what they plan on harvesting;
- Asking hunters how many days they hunted, or plan to hunt;
- Asking hunters what they “usually” harvest; or
- Tracking hunters from year to year (persistent ID) to evaluate long-term avidity.

The USFWS is currently evaluating these alternatives relative to HIP strata, but the sample size is smaller. The hope is that this work will be done by summer for the dove task force meeting.

Next steps include applying for the multi-state grant proposal and implementing the communications plan.

The meeting was adjourned.