

Inside This Issue:

- ◆ Measuring Performance
- ◆ OWP Strategic Plan
- ◆ Regional Reports
- ◆ 2005 Annual Conference
- ◆ And more!

Bring Your Agency Plans to LIFE

...with OWP training courses brought right to your front door!

Comprehensive Management Systems is a 2½-day course to learn how to manage your agency's work—including its people and its finances—into a fully-functioning whole by understanding and connecting the building blocks of an effective management system: inventory, strategic planning, operational planning, and evaluation.

Measuring Program Performance is a 1-day course to comprehend basic concepts of performance and progress evaluation and apply those concepts to real-life examples from participants.

For more information, call Steve McMullin at 540-231-8847 or visit www.owpweb.org.

PRINTED ON RECYCLED PAPER



C. Kolus
OWP Newsletter
1440 Edora Rd. #20
Fort Collins, CO 80525

Management TRACKS



News from the Organization of Wildlife Planners

Measuring Performance in Minnesota

By Laura Preus and Brian Stenquist, Minnesota Department of Natural Resources

Large green sheets, titled "Conservation Agenda," hang quietly in the early morning hallways. Their graphs, statistics, and pictures tell stories about agency performance. They were hung in anticipation of a legislative entourage, which came and went on the morning of January 26. It's now well into February, and the green sheets are still up in the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR) building. We like seeing our successes proclaimed and our challenges articulated in clear language and crisp graphics. We like measuring performance in Minnesota. We like knowing where we are and where we are going.

In early 2004, the DNR completed its first edition of "A Strategic Conservation Agenda." This Conservation Agenda was built on two decades of strategic planning at the agency level. It offered agency-level priorities and reported on 75 measurable indicators in six performance areas: natural lands, fish and wildlife, waters and watersheds, forests, outdoor recreation, and natural resources stewardship education. The Conservation Agenda was several years in the making and is available on the DNR Web site at www.dnr.state.mn.us/conservationagenda/index.html.

The Conservation Agenda's performance measures were developed in response to various internal and external requests: (1) DNR managers and staff wanted to build a "culture of results"; (2) a new Commissioner wanted to better communicate agency direction and identify measures of progress; (3) the Governor's Office asked each state agency for a set of performance measures to assess progress; (4) legislators requested budget information in the context of outcomes; and (5) stakeholder groups requested information about conservation results.

Now, in February 2005, the DNR is completing its first Conservation Agenda progress update. This update includes the latest data on progress, ten new indicators, and a better description of DNR's vision and challenges. The update will soon be posted on the DNR Web site (above).

Over the past year, the Conservation Agenda has been used by DNR staff in a variety of ways. Here are a few examples:

- **Learning and decision making.** DNR managers are using indicators to foster discussions about progress (and shortfalls) in key performance areas.
- **Operations.** DNR managers are integrating performance measures into program-level strategic and op-

erational plans for fish, wildlife, and ecological resources.

- **Communications.** The graphics, pictures, and indicator descriptions have been used for stakeholder presentations, legislative hearings, Commissioners' briefings, media releases, etc. They have fostered shared expectations for natural resource results and built support for DNR budget initiatives.
- **Accountability.** The Governor's Office requests periodic progress on indicators. The performance measure information is now readily available and transparent. The Conservation Agenda has been accessible to citizens on the DNR's Web site and has received thousands of Web "hits."

Continued on page 3

In This Issue

The Prez Sez	2
Field Notes	4
OWP Strategic Plan	6
Wildlife Values Meeting	6
2005 Annual Conference	7
Training Courses	8



2004-05 Officers and Directors

President

Shaun Keeler
New York Department of Environmental Conservation
(518) 402-8924
sxkeeler@gw.dec.state.ny.us

President-Elect

Larry Gigliotti
South Dakota Game, Fish and Parks Department
(605) 773-4231
Larry.Gigliotti@state.sd.us

Treasurer

Michael Vanderford
U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service-R3
(612) 713-5148
michael_vanderford@fws.gov

Secretary

Verdie Abel
Ohio Division of Wildlife
(614) 265-7020
verdie.abel@dnr.state.oh.us

Executive Committee

Shaun Keeler – NY
Larry Gigliotti – SD
Verdie Abel – OH
Michael Vanderford – USFWS, Region 3
Michele Beucler – ID
Margo Matthews – AK

Regional Directors

Northeast
Michael Lapisky – RI (401) 789-7083
Tom Wiggins – VT (802) 241-3710
Southeast
Barry Sumners – TN (615) 781-6599
Lynn Garrison – KY (502) 564-3400
Midwest
Phil King – OH (614) 265-6321
Mary Lyon – MO (573) 751-4115
West
Chris Burkett – WY (307) 777-4510
Dana Dolsen – UT (801) 538-4790

Newsletter Production and Editing

Juliette Wilson, Editor
(970) 226-9303
juliette_wilson@comcast.net

Cheryl Kolus, Production and Layout
(970) 221-2823
ckolus@juno.com

The Prez Sez...

A few words from our president

By Shaun Keeler, New York Department of Environmental Conservation

Perseverance with Talent is an incredible combination, two words that often come to mind when I think of the Organization of Wildlife Planners. The OWP membership continues to assert itself and be responsive to the needs of fish and wildlife organizations. By the time you receive this newsletter we will have put on our third “Measuring Program Performance—Results Driven Management” course; courses were given in the Midwest (Ohio), the Plains (Dakotas) and the Northeast (New York). The OWP continues to work hand-in-hand with the IAFWA and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to ensure that the states receive the help they need for advancing management priorities. Tangible examples of our assistance include training on state Comprehensive Wildlife Conservation Strategies (CWCSs), bridging CWCS meetings to OWP training sessions, and incorporating CWCS development into the OWP annual conference program.

Of course, the OWP has a long history of assisting agencies with creating and employing planning processes, and it started largely as a result of the foresight and vision of initial OWP Presidents such as Doug Crowe and Verlyn Ebert, along with key players like Spencer Amend (former member of the USFWS-MAT), and then-State Directors such as Jerry Conley and Gary Myers, to name just a few. It was a small but mighty group that initially “poured the cement,” building the foundation for the many benefits that would follow. Even though some outcomes were not clearly foreseen, there was confidence that a combination of solid processes would move things in the right direction. Many of the current agency Comprehensive Management Systems, Strategic Plans, and present management practices—products that took years to establish—greatly benefited from the OWP’s expertise, training, and



constant presence, its persistence and talent.

It’s a very busy era for all of us, and allocating time has never been more challenging. Even so, times like these offer great opportunity in creating a climate in which our services are especially needed and valued. As was the case in the earlier days of this organization, much of the value of participating in the OWP is not always immediately visible. It’s a continuum of value that evolves from perseverance and continued participation. That’s why it is so important that we persevere, including gathering at our annual conference in South Dakota this May. Also, let’s keep in mind that the OWP is about not just the current membership but also future OWP players and participants. Enhancing agency effectiveness is never ending. The current membership must provide a very strong bridge between the “Crowe-Ebert-Amend” protégés and those who will succeed us in the years ahead.

Finally, I’d like to thank so many of the membership for their hard work over the past several months and for their many efforts toward fulfilling our mission. Their work will reap many benefits for the numerous agencies and organizations we continue to serve, both today and far into the future.

2005 OWP Annual Conference and Meeting

May 21-26, Sylvan Lake (Custer State Park) South Dakota

By Larry Gigliotti, South Dakota Game, Fish and Parks

The Comprehensive Wildlife Conservation Strategy/Plan (CWCS/P) required by all state wildlife agencies is an opportunity to revitalize OWP. Taking an active role in helping states develop their plans will demonstrate OWP’s value to agencies and their role in wildlife management. To that end, the main objective of the 2005 conference is to provide OWP members with the knowledge and skills needed to take a leadership role in helping their states develop their CWCS/Ps.

The conference provides a one-day optional workshop, *Performance Measures for Ecosystem Management and Ecological Sustainability*. While not all states will be using an ecosystem approach for developing their CWCS/P, it is a logical approach that should be considered (see workshop information below).

The theme of the conference is “Humans in the Environment—Ecosystem Planning Approaches.” This emphasizes the fact that even with an ecosystem management approach, consideration of the human dimension is a necessary and often difficult component of wildlife issues. The conference begins with three folks that have a leadership role in the management of South Da-

kota wildlife and their experiences dealing with various issues demonstrating the human dimensions of most wildlife issues. In the afternoon, Shane Mahoney will describe a “philosophy” on ecosystem management, followed by Jon Haufler, who will provide a practical example of an ecosystem approach for the South Dakota CWCS/P.

The second day of the conference starts with an update on CWCS/P and the Teaming With Wildlife Campaign by Wildlife Diversity Associate David Chadwick (IAFWA). State wildlife strategy development is an historic opportunity for wildlife conservation planning. Involving every state and territory, this effort is both structured and flexible: while every state has been charged with the same set of core planning tasks, they have the flexibility to develop innovative planning approaches based on the wildlife and habitat needs particular to their state, with its unique social and political context. When completed, the strategies will present a powerful platform for the Teaming With Wildlife coalition to continue the campaign for dramatically increased funding for wildlife conservation at the federal level and in every state. OWP members must stay

informed and active with this effort. The remainder of the conference focuses on the human dimensions aspect of CWCS/P, as follows:

- use of public involvement in CWCS/P development;
- “effective government” by Hans Bleiker, his public involvement course intro (a MUST!);
- use of human dimensions information (wildlife values) in developing the CWCS/P;
- a presentation on managing Custer State Park for both wildlife and people; followed by
- a tour of the park and a western buffalo cookout.

The conference includes other interesting activities and plenty of breaks for further interaction and networking. The Game, Fish and Parks’ Sylvan Lake Lodge showcases South Dakota’s beauty and many attractions for a memorable experience. Don’t miss this opportunity to grow professionally in a relaxing environment, being with old friends and making new ones!

For more information or to register, visit www.owpweb.org.

Optional May 22 Workshop: Performance Measures for Ecosystem Management and Ecological Sustainability

Presented by Jonathan Haufler, Ecosystem Management Research Institute, Seeley Lake, MT

This workshop will explore performance measures for ecosystem management and sustainability, including comparison of various strategies for ecological planning. A hierarchical system of performance measures designed to maintain and enhance biodiversity and ecosystem integrity will be described based on reference to the historical ranges of variability at these four levels:

- Landscape: focuses on ecosystem diversity within a planning landscape and explains a practical approach to

managing and monitoring ecosystem diversity.

- Ecosystem or community level: describes measures of composition, structure, function, and processes.
- Species level: uses species assessments to evaluate ecosystem diversity and its proper distribution.
- Genetic level: addresses measures relating to population genetics and the rate of change in genetic composition within a landscape.

Instructors provide example applications of this approach and of performance measures at each of the four levels. Participants are encouraged to develop examples based on their own backgrounds and identify performance measures applicable to their areas of work.



Field Notes

(Continued from page 5)

New York

New York hosted the OWP's "Measuring Program Performance—Results Driven Management" course in Albany February 15 and 16. The OWP assisted the IAFWA and the USFWS in setting up a CWCS session immediately following the OWP training, providing state CWCS representatives an opportunity to meet and discuss issues and needs pertaining to the ongoing development of their state strategies. In other news from the Empire State, the Department of Environmental Conservation's Commissioner, Erin Crotty, announced in January that she would be stepping down as head of the agency, with her resignation effective in early February. A successor had yet to be named at the time of this report.

Vermont

Vermont's CWCS planning extravaganza—complete with two coordinating committees, six technical teams, 60 conservation partner organizations, 26 major habitat types, and more than 250 vertebrate, 140 invertebrate, and 570 plant Species of Greatest Conservation Need—is barreling full bore toward its expected July 15 completion date. The CWCS has come a long way since it was first announced to the public 11 months ago. Using a fine-filter-first approach, individual assessments of all vertebrates and most invertebrates have been completed. Drafts of habitat assessments for all 26 habitat types are also nearly finished. Our Conservation Strategy Review team is currently engaged in spirited discussions of limiting factors, strategy development, and the prospects and merits of regulation. We will then engage in a series of review and feedback sessions, first with our Conservation Partners in April and finally with the general public in late May. Visit Vermont's wildlife at www.vtfishandwildlife.com/SWG_home.cfm.

New Strategic Plan for OWP in the Works

Never fear, we have not forgotten! The Executive Committee is continuing work on drafting a new strategic plan for OWP. Those of you who were at last year's Ohio Annual Meeting may recall participating in a spirited evening session in which we conducted a SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats) analysis for OWP. It was very productive, and the meeting room walls were covered with flip charts by the time we were through. The Executive Committee processed that material, and has produced from it a set of six issue

statements and associated goals. President Shaun Keeler is e-mailing this document to the membership for review shortly before this newsletter goes to press, so you should have seen it by now. If not, it is also available on the Web at www.owpweb.org.

Please review this document, and e-mail your comments to sxkeeler@gw.dec.state.ny.us as soon as you can. Thorough membership review will strengthen the plan and ensure that it is responsive to your needs. Thank you!

—Your Executive Committee

Conference 2-fer Bonus! Wildlife Values in the West Work Group Meeting May 26

The Wildlife Values in the West Work Group is holding an update meeting on Thursday, May 26, following the OWP conference. Wildlife Values in the West is a human dimensions project sponsored by the Western Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies to identify and measure the public's value system concern-

ing wildlife. The project also includes human dimensions information useful to states developing their CWCS/Ps. Because about half of the members in the work group are OWP members, we combined this meeting with the OWP conference to encourage OWP members to attend *both* in one trip.

In Memoriam Larry Cartee (1947 - 2004)

This issue is dedicated to Larry Cartee, long-time OWP co-conspirator and past president who will be greatly missed for his friendship, dedication, and substantial contributions to wildlife conservation and agency planning. Larry's generosity was widely known, and the hospitality of events he arranged was first-class. He generated much support for wildlife programs in South Carolina. But in the broader landscape, no one was more committed to the long-term success of efforts to improve agency effectiveness via planning and management systems, despite the difficulties. As the Maori say, "A great totara (type of tree) of the forest has fallen." We will remember Larry with fondness and respect.

Get Ready to Vote!

OWP bylaws call for the Nominations Committee to submit to the OWP Executive Committee a slate of candidates for office at least 90 days prior to the annual meeting. This year the candidates are:

President-elect:

Dana Dolsen
Bill Romberg

Treasurer:

Andrea Crews
Rob Brooks

Review the candidates' biographies on the enclosed flyer.

Measuring Performance

(Continued from page 1)

A few of the challenges we have encountered with performance measures include:

- **Integrated management—indicator connections.** It is easy to fall into a trap of examining indicators in isolation. Integrated resource management requires examining the connections between multiple performance measures. This requires a conscious effort to work across organizational boundaries and create shared meaning from performance information.
- **Staff resources during tight budgets.** Performance measurement requires a sizable organizational investment. It takes time and money, as well as interpersonal relationships, to create and maintain performance informa-

tion. During times of tight budgets, this can be challenging.

- **Lack of data sets that answer key questions.** Quite often, we do not have and cannot get the most meaningful outcome-based performance information. DNR highlights data gaps in its Conservation Agenda. When one DNR manager was recently asked what advice she would offer to other agencies as they develop or refine performance measures, she responded matter-of-factly: "Take it slow, and bring people along with you. Tie it to operations, and report on how you are doing."

DNR was highlighted as a case study of performance measures in a recent U.S. Government Accounting Office's report on Environmental Indicators. (The report discusses the state of the

art of developing environmental indicators; it also highlights challenges of using environmental indicators to inform decisions.) A hard copy of the report (GAO-05-52) can be requested via <http://www.gao.gov/docsearch/repanctest.html>. Minnesota state government's effort to measure performance was a contributing factor to its high ranking in *Governing* magazine's "2005 Government Performance Project" (see <http://results.gpponline.org/>).

As the February sun sets, it casts a warm, red glow through the DNR building. The large green sheets in the hallways (proclaiming performance measures) cast a bright light of their own—helping us know where we are and where we are going. We like that.

A slice of advice on performance measures

by Keith Wendt,
Minnesota Department of Natural Resources

The best performance measures are based on:

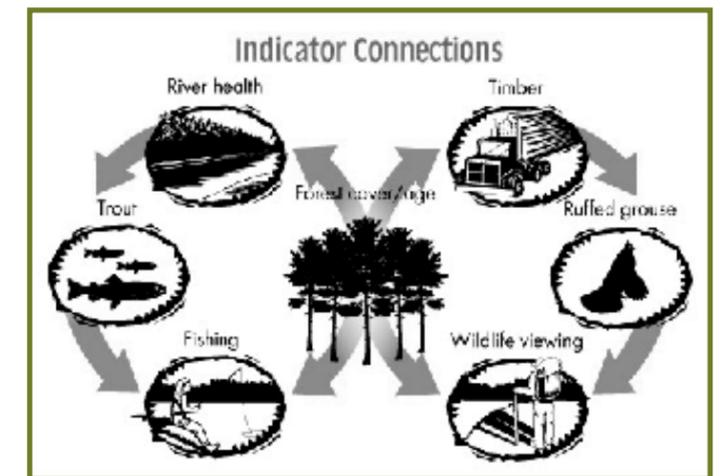
- **Good science.** It's not possible to develop useful indicators without good data (baseline and trend data) based on monitoring.
- **Clearly defined management objectives.** The development of useful indicators will follow clear identification of management objectives that reflect the most important natural resource values and conditions to be sustained.
- **Process and relationship building.** The most useful indicators will be selected through processes that ensure stakeholder priorities are heard and consent is built across different interests.

Performance indicators should be tied directly to the center of budgeting and strategic planning.

- Indicators and targets are effective tools when they are linked to clearly defined and agency-sponsored priorities with budgetary resources allocated to implement them.
- Strategic and operational plans set agency direction and focus priorities. Indicators measure progress toward that direction and set of focused priorities.
- The best indicators are part of performance management systems that connect strategic goals to budgets and use indicators to measure performance and report results.

There is no one "core set" of universally applied indicators that can address all natural resource issues.

- The best performance measurement systems develop indicator sets tailored to specific values unique to geography, people, and institutions.
- The most useful indicator sets evolve over time; they adapt to growing knowledge and changing values.



Alaska

Planners in Alaska have been supporting development of the Comprehensive Wildlife Conservation Strategy (CWCS) by ensuring a robust public involvement process. Our draft is currently available for public comment. Developing measures for the CWCS has been both challenging and rewarding, especially given that basic information is largely lacking for many species. We've had to focus on developing meaningful management actions based on limited information.

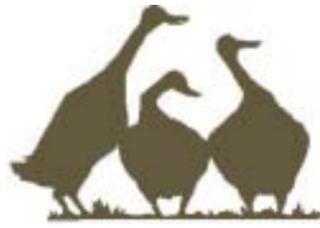
Missions and measures are taking on a higher profile throughout Alaska state government. We are developing and reporting measures at the division and department level. In addition to these statewide efforts, planners are providing a variety of planning and public involvement services, especially for species management plans, at the local and regional level.

Arizona

The director and executive staff recently approved an Agency Process Team report, describing the Arizona Game and Fish Department's management system in three tiers (with many interlinking features). The tiers are strategic planning, operational planning and implementation planning. Supporting activities include survey and inventory input, (customer and resource), evaluation and monitoring (to assess overall and periodic progress), and cost accounting. The revised management system will be rolled out to all employees this year.

The department is progressing quite well with its CWCS efforts. Jeff Sorenson and his team are making great strides, and Ty is still serving as the Responsive Management Coordinator, in addition to his role as the Heritage Fund Coordinator.

As with many agencies, we're looking at ways to increase our non-federal funding. Alternatives being considered include fee increases and/or licenses to recruit new customers, introducing legislation to seek a small percent of the



Field Notes

Take a gander at what's been happening across the regions

Compiled by the Regional Directors



state sales tax revenue, and changing our watercraft fee structure.

As a CMS state, we're also coordinating with USFWS Region 2 for ideas on how to maximize our match dollars.

Idaho

It's official: The Idaho Department of Fish and Game has a new strategic plan! The plan, called *The Compass*, will soon be available on our Web site (<http://fishandgame.idaho.gov>). And there's *more* good news—our existing cost-accounting system was revised to align accounting codes with the broad objectives outlined in *The Compass*. This also has allowed our agency to finally take advantage of *I-Time*, the state's "Web-based employee self-service time entry application."

Now that we have a Commission-approved strategic plan, a small group of administrators are crafting an improved model of action planning and budgeting. Coincidentally, the state strategic planning law was recently reviewed (after 10 years), and the Idaho legislature is expected to refine the requirements for performance measures. As a result of this harmonic convergence, we can design measures that will actually be meaningful to both our agency and to the legislature, rather than having separate paper exercises.

Utah

New governor, Jon Hunstman, Jr., appointed Mike Styler, former state house representative from Delta, as the Department of Natural Resources' new executive director. The Utah Division of Wildlife Resources (DWR) prepared a video and booklet on the current management challenges and leadership opportunities for the Governor's Transition Team that should also help orient

Mr. Styler. One of his first tasks is the selection of the next DWR director, so staff is anxiously awaiting interviews and an announcement. In the interim, Miles Moretti continues as acting director, and Alan Clark, most recently Wildlife Section Chief and former planner, now serves as an acting assistant director. The planner position now reports to Mr. Clark, making for a smoother relationship in the director's office.

The CWCS is in the final stages of development, and although some rough edges are apparent, we still intend to be one of the first states to submit it to the NAAT. The Leadership Team is embarking on revitalizing its vision to reflect the agency's intent to make Utah citizens more aware of the value of wildlife to individuals, families, and communities. Innovative programs are being pursued to bring an entrepreneurial focus to wildlife conservation practices and build stronger relationships with conservation communities of place and interest.

MIDWESTERN REGION

North Dakota

While work continues on the CWCS planning effort, the North Dakota Game and Fish Department has also finished an internal revision of its strategic plan. The strategic programs were redefined and structured around four areas of emphasis: Hunting and Trapping, Fishing, Habitat, and Resource Stewardship and Enjoyment. Present planning work is now focusing on the operational and evaluative phases of its management system. Major work has also been required to maintain our cost tracking system as the agency is forced to migrate to a new state accounting system.

SOUTHEASTERN REGION

Arkansas

We in Arkansas are very busy working on the CWCS. A CWCS Communications Team is initiating a SWG public opinion survey and planning four ecoregion public involvement workshops to be facilitated by our Cooperative Extension Service. We are talking with our Missouri neighbors to the north about a joint NFWF/Duke grant proposal on the Eleven Point River. And Dynamic Solutions Group, LLC, is helping us with stakeholder involvement in trout fisheries management planning.

Kentucky

Most of Kentucky's planning efforts are being directed toward completing the CWCS. In addition, we hired a marketer in December. Current marketing efforts include reducing churn in anglers and increasing the purchase of Sportsman's Licenses.

Oklahoma

Recent major planning activities in Oklahoma have centered around preparation of the CWCS. Using Dynamic Solutions Group as a contractor, we held a workshop in July to gather information about conservation problems and actions from the state's fish and wildlife experts. One round of public meetings has been held and a series of open space meetings are planned for the spring. A draft of the report is available at www.wildlifedepartment.com/cwcs.htm.

Other department activities include participation in both the "WAFWA Wildlife Values in the West Survey" and "Public Opinion On and Attitudes

Toward Fish and Wildlife Management in the 16 SEAFWA States." Results from both surveys as well as from a few questions included on a statewide social indicator survey will continue to improve our understanding of our constituents' desires and interests.

Oklahoma was also fortunate to receive a grant from the National Shooting Sports Foundation to implement a marketing campaign designed to increase retention of new and occasional hunters. Results will be available this spring. In a related project, the agency is pursuing data warehouse and data mining technologies to improve our use of the hunting and fishing license database.

Tennessee

The Tennessee Wildlife Resources Agency's (TWRA) first Strategic Plan was produced in 1977. This spring, we'll begin drafting the sixth version of the plan. Dwight Guynn from the USFWS Management Assistance Team will kick things off with training for the chairmen of the program committees. Our CWCS will become the non-game and endangered species section of our next Strategic Plan.

With a newly-granted authority to set license fees, our Commission is seeking an increase of about 35 percent for most licenses. It's been several years since we had a license increase, but this large increase will reduce license sales, which will, in turn, decrease our federal assistance apportionment. Future increases will be more frequent and much smaller.

NORTHEASTERN REGION

Maine

The Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife (MDIFW) is

deeply immersed in the CWCS planning effort. A public working group will convene in March to begin review of our process and help identify areas in need of improvement.

We are also making great progress in our newest planning effort called Beginning with Habitat (BwH), which involves identifying important wildlife habitats and open space for towns and municipalities to include in their comprehensive plans. Species planning efforts continue, as well. We use species specialists to compile a species assessment, which is then reviewed for accuracy by MDIFW biologists. A public working group uses the assessment as a reference when identifying management issues and crafting goals and objectives for the next 15 years. The Commissioner and the Commissioner's Advisory Council give final approval to the goals and objectives that provide direction to MDIFW.

A species specialist then develops a species management system that identifies which data need to be collected and how they will be analyzed and interpreted. The management system is reviewed by the Wildlife Division and when finalized, guides MDIFW's management of the species. This dynamic system can be updated when new data or management techniques become available.

In 2004, assessments, goals, and objectives for the bald eagle, golden eagle, New England cottontail, waterfowl, American woodcock, ruffed grouse and snowshoe hare were completed. Our intent is to develop assessments and management systems for all hunted, trapped, and endangered and threatened species in Maine. To date, the department has prepared 42 species assessments since 1985, including 37 individual species assessments and five assessments for groups of species. In all, the assessments embrace 209 wildlife species. Also, 12 assessments have received major updates at least once since 1986.

Continued on page 6