

## Report Highlights

### Pennsylvania Game Commission Compliance With Its Strategic Plan

A 1998 amendment to the Game and Wildlife Code requires that the LB&FC conduct a performance audit every three years of the Pennsylvania Game Commission's (PGC's) compliance with its strategic plan for agency operations. This is the sixth report issued under this mandate. The report also addresses PGC revenues, expenditures, and the Game Fund financial condition.

- **The PGC 2009-2014 Strategic Plan is sufficiently defined to allow an independent assessment.** Although not the case until 2012, we believe the PGC objectives are sufficiently defined and adequate data exists for us to independently assess—at least in broad terms—compliance with the Strategic Plan. The assessment still, however, requires a substantial degree a subjective judgment because very few of the objectives are specific, quantifiable, or time-limited. As a consequence, we could only “grade” the extent to which an objective was achieved in broad categories (i.e., Fully or Largely Achieved, Partially Achieved, or Not Achieved or Largely Not Achieved).
- **Six of the PGC's seven broad goals were rated as Partially Achieved; one was rated as Fully or Largely Achieved.** In addition to the seven broad goals, the Strategic Plan contains 41 Strategic Objectives. Of these 41 objectives, we rated 11 as Fully or Largely Achieved, 27 as Partially Achieved, 3 as Not Achieved or Largely Not Achieved. Each rating has a brief explanation.
- **We rated the PGC's deer management objective as Fully or Largely Achieved.** The PGC's deer plan calls for stable populations in 20 of the 23 Wildlife Management Units, an increase in 1 WMU, and a decrease in 2 WMUs. Actual population trends match the PGC's objective in all but 7 WMUs. In 4 of those WMUs, the deer population trend is increasing whereas the goal is to stabilize the population; in 2 WMUs, the trend is stable whereas the goal is to decrease the population; and in 1 WMU the population is stable whereas the goal is an increase.
- **Bobwhite quail and black ducks were the two game species where we rated the goal to conserve, protect and restore as Not Achieved or Largely Not Achieved.** Bobwhite quail populations have declined by 97% and black ducks, once abundant, are now down to fewer than 500 pairs in PA.
- **The PGC's objective to Increase Hunter Recruitment was Partially Achieved.** General hunting licenses increased from 948,323 in FY 08-09 to 952,989 in FY 13-14, but fell back to 943,811 in FY 14-15. New hunters are up from 30,213 in 2009 to 41,462 in 2014. Sales of junior hunting licenses are also up, from 85,698 in 2010 to 89,600 in 2013.
- **The PGC's efforts to improve forest health through its deer management plan does not appear to have been effective, at least as yet.** There has been little or no change over the past 8 years in the number of WMUs with improved forest health, with 2014 measurements matching the average for the 8-year period (i.e., 1 WMU rated good; 15 WMUs, fair; and 4 WMUs, poor).

#### Recommendations: (See pages 34-35.)

1. **The PGC consider streamlining its Strategic Plan.** Streamlining the plan to a more manageable number of objectives and measures should make it easier for both the PGC and the public to understand the plan and assess results.
2. **The PGC strive to develop objectives that are time-limited and quantifiable.** We recommend the PGC develop time-limited, quantifiable objectives wherever possible.
3. **The PGC should attempt to assess the extent to which they are achieving the objectives of the Strategic Plan in a way that would be meaningful to the public.** We recommend the PGC consider including as part of its Annual Report an easy-to-understand assessment (perhaps along the lines of this report) of the extent to which the plan's objective were achieved that year.