

**Report on the Response of the Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries
to the Impact of the Aging of Virginia's Population**

April 30, 2008

Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries
Report on the Impact of the Aging of Virginia's Population
April 30, 2008

Agency Description

The Department's mission is to manage Virginia's wildlife and inland fish to maintain optimum populations of all species to serve the needs of the Commonwealth; to provide opportunity for all to enjoy wildlife, inland fish, boating and related outdoor recreation; to promote safety for persons and property in connection with boating, hunting, and fishing. It provides public informational and educational services related to fish and wildlife, and administers and enforces the rules and regulations of the Board of Game and Inland Fisheries, Title 29, and other related legislative acts.

Executive Summary

As the Commonwealth's population ages, there will be direct impacts on the programs delivered and potential impacts on the revenue for the agency. The aging population will have more leisure time available. Typically this time is directed towards activities requiring somewhat less activity. Fishing from piers, accessible fishing docks, and other areas are likely to become more in demand. Development of accessible hunting areas or hunting techniques will also increase. With an aging population more participants will be purchasing age-discounted licenses. At a time when participation may actually increase, the revenue generated by this increase in activity may potentially decrease. This could result in a demand for programs in which the cost of the program will not be covered by the fees paid by those utilizing the benefits.

Data Requested

1. The department maintains data on license sales to individuals in the listed age groups, as follows:

Year Sold	Ages 65 - 74	Ages 75 - 84	Ages 85 +	Totals
2001	3,117	248	6	3,371
2002	3,314	313	9	3,636
2003	5,716	769	18	6,503
2004	10,061	1,668	66	11,795
2005	37,223	8,253	232	45,708
2006	69,832	16,503	639	86,974
2007	77,286	18,145	797	96,228

The foregoing table differs from information submitted in September 2006 because both Annual Licenses and Lifetime Licenses are included. The data show that the Department is serving more senior citizens than it has in the past.

Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries
Report on the Impact of the Aging of Virginia's Population
April 30, 2008

2. Department staff observes that senior citizens participate to a considerable degree in hunting, fishing, recreational boating, and non-game activities. Generally speaking, the agency has the capacity to serve all interested seniors at present. However, as persons become older, they often have more time to participate in outdoor activities, and this increases the demand for agency services. In particular, access to outdoor activities is expected to become a more pressing issue. The Department currently operates more than 70 handicapped accessible boat ramps, boat piers, and restrooms. Handicapped accessible hunting is available at the Phelps Wildlife Management Area, in northern Virginia, and the department provides platform lifts that function mechanically as deer stands, when requested. A greater demand for these facilities has been incorporated into the Department's planning.

In the current fiscal year the Department completed two ADA accessible courtesy piers adjacent to boat ramps and two ADA accessible fishing piers at Powhatan Lakes Wildlife Management Area. In addition, the Department participated with the City of Franklin on a newly constructed boating access facility with two ADA accessible courtesy piers and four dedicated parking spaces for the handicapped on the Blackwater River.

3. Recreational hunting and fishing licenses are sold at a discount to Virginia citizens 65 and older.
4. Information about department programs and activities is increasingly available on its web page. Recently services were expanded to include the on-line sale of hunting and fishing licenses. The Department's publications and websites are fully accessible to seniors.
5. The Department has about the same age distribution as found in the state. The average years of service for agency employees is about 3 years greater than found in the state workforce. The turnover rate for DGIF employees has been significantly less than found in the state workforce, but has increased during the past 5 years. Key employees in management (regional division managers and above) are eligible for retirement in numbers higher than the average. The same is true for the agency's Protective Service Workers generally. The Department is using its flexibilities provided by state human resource policies to address these issues.
6. For individuals with mobility problems, the Department provides or coordinates managed hunts and issues permits to allow hunting from a stationary vehicle. The department is planning for an increasing number of individuals to participate in these programs the general population ages.

Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries
Report on the Impact of the Aging of Virginia's Population
April 30, 2008

Pursuant to legislation enacted by the Virginia General Assembly, the Department of Game and Inland Fisheries submits this report of its progress in addressing the impact of the aging of Virginia's population.

George J. Harigault
Prepared by

April 30, 2008
Date

Robert W. Duncan
Director

04/30/2008
Date