

Public has 60 days to submit comments to Game Commission.

HARRISBURG, Pa., Sept. 27, 2013 /PRNewswire-USNewswire/ -- Two wildlife-management plans drafted recently by the Pennsylvania Game Commission have been made available for public review.

Plans for managing river otter and bobcat populations in Pennsylvania can be found on the Game Commission's website,

www.pgc.state.pa.us

. Those going to the website can access the plans by clicking on a button marked "Accepting Public Comment" near the top of the home page. Both plans can be accessed from the next page that will appear, and comments can be submitted from that page, as well.

Each management plan charts a 10-year course for managing the species, and the plans have not yet received final approval. The public can comment on either or both plans, and those comments will be taken into consideration by the Pennsylvania Game Commission.

The 60-day period for submitting comments ends on Nov. 29.

Those wishing to submit comments can do so in a variety of ways. Email accounts have been set up to receive comments for each plan. Those wishing to submit comments regarding the bobcat management plan can send them by email to BobcatComments@pa.gov . Those

Pennsylvania Bobcat, River Otter Management Plans Available For Review

Written by Australian Business

wishing to submit comments regarding the river otter management plan can send them by email to OtterComments@pa.gov.

Those who do not have access to email, or who otherwise wish to submit their comments by letter, can mail them to the Game Commission. Please send comments on the bobcat plan to Bobcat Comments, Pennsylvania Game Commission, Bureau of Wildlife Management, 2001 Elmerton Avenue, Harrisburg, PA 17110-9797. Comments on the river otter plan can be sent to Otter Comments, Pennsylvania Game Commission, Bureau of Wildlife Management, 2001 Elmerton Avenue, Harrisburg, PA 17110-9797.

Individuals wishing to send comments by mail on each plan are encouraged to send them in separate envelopes, each marked for the appropriate species.

Both the bobcat and river otter could be considered among Pennsylvania's wildlife success stories.

Bobcats were considered "vermin" in the early 1900s and a bounty system was put in place to reduce their numbers. Even after the bounties were lifted in 1938, bobcats were unprotected and widely persecuted in Pennsylvania until 1970, when the Game Commission classified the bobcat as a furbearer.

Today, the bobcat is valued as an important predator in Pennsylvania's fields and forests and its population is thriving. Since 2000, hunters and trappers have had the opportunity to participate in a harvest program.

The plan sets out to maintain bobcat populations at desired levels, conserve bobcats for future generations and ensure sustainable bobcat harvest opportunities.

The river otter management plan likewise aims to ensure otter populations remain healthy and self-sustaining.

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Like the bobcat, the river otter has faced challenges during its existence in Pennsylvania. While it's believed otters could be found in nearly every major watershed in the state in the late 1800s, the combined effects of habitat destruction, water pollution and unregulated harvest caused the extirpation of otters from most of Pennsylvania by the early to mid-1900s. The Game Commission launched efforts to restore otters in 1982, and their numbers have increased continually since.

The plan sets out to sustain otter populations in areas of suitable habitat, and develops guidelines to assess the feasibility of a river otter harvest and, when appropriate, implement a harvest-management program.

More information on river otters, bobcats and other Pennsylvania wildlife species can be found at the Game Commission's website.

Also at "Accepting Public Comment" is information on the Commission's proposal to upgrade the bald eagle from "threatened" to "protected" status in Pennsylvania. This page also can be used to submit comments on this proposal.

Comments on the proposal to upgrade the bald eagle's status can be sent by email to BaldEagleComments@pa.gov or can be mailed to Eagle Comments, Pennsylvania Game Commission, Bureau of Wildlife Management, 2001 Elmerton Avenue, Harrisburg, PA 17110-9797.

SOURCE Pennsylvania Game Commission

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