

Part I – Agency Profile

Agency Overview

The Idaho State Legislature created the Idaho Department of Fish and Game in 1899. In 1938, by voter initiative, the Fish and Game Commission was created to set policy for the Department. Commissioners are appointed by the Governor from the seven administrative regions of the Department and serve staggered, four-year terms. The FY 2015 Commissioners were as follows: Brad Corkill (Panhandle), Fred Trevey (Clearwater), Blake Fischer (Southwest), Mark Doerr (Magic Valley), Lane Clezie (Southeast), Kenny Anderson (Upper Snake), and Will Naillon (Salmon). The Commission holds most of the regulatory authority for hunting, fishing, and trapping.

The Director, Virgil Moore, is appointed by the Commission and serves as Secretary to the Commission and leader of the Department. The Department's 558 classified employees are divided into six core functions: Administration, Communications, Enforcement, Engineering, Fisheries, and Wildlife. Each function is divided into operations and program staff. Operations staff, led by Regional Supervisors, implements Department programs in seven regional offices and one sub-regional office. Boise program staff, led by Bureau Chiefs, direct and integrate statewide operations as well as hatchery, research, fish and wildlife health, intergovernmental, and interagency programs. The Department's strategic plan, *The Compass*, was approved by the Commission in 2005 and describes the goals, desired outcomes, and objectives of the Department.

The Department's FY 2016 original appropriation of \$95.7 million is funded by license and tag sales, federal and private grants, and contracts. The budget does not include any annual Idaho general tax revenue appropriation. Hunters, anglers, and wildlife viewers in Idaho generate over \$2.1 billion in economic output that provides 25,700 jobs and almost \$155 million in state and local tax revenue to Idaho (in 2011 dollars).

Key challenges to fulfilling the Department's mission are population growth and associated changes in land use; how people value fish and wildlife; finding an acceptable mechanism for funding sportsmen and public expectations for wildlife; disconnection of children from the natural world; and recruitment and retention for hunting, fishing, and trapping to uphold Idaho's outdoor legacy.

Core Functions/Idaho Code

The Department's mission and charter are outlined in *Idaho Code*, Section 36-103. Briefly, it states that all wildlife in Idaho is to be preserved, protected, perpetuated and managed for the citizens of the state in a manner that provides continued supplies for hunting, fishing and trapping. In 2012, 70% of voters in Idaho approved a constitutional amendment that ensures the public's right to hunt, fish and trap and signifies that the preferred method of managing wildlife populations is through regulated hunting, fishing and trapping. The Department also has the legal responsibility to preserve and protect native plants whenever it appears that they might possibly become extinct (*Idaho Code*, Section 18-3913) and to consult with the Office of Species Conservation on threatened and endangered wildlife and plant issues (*Idaho Code*, Section 67-818[3]a).

To fulfill this mission, the Department has four goals:

- Sustain Idaho's fish and wildlife and the habitats upon which they depend.
- Meet the demand for fish and wildlife recreation.
- Improve public understanding of and involvement in fish and wildlife management.
- Enhance the capability of the Department to manage fish and wildlife and serve the public.

The Department achieves its goals through its core functions:

- **Administration** - Provide fiscal services, information systems, internal controls, human resources, policy, and direction.
- **Communications** – Inform, educate, and involve people in the management of Idaho's fish and wildlife.
- **Enforcement** – Enforce the law and provide public information to achieve compliance with regulations.
- **Engineering** – Construct and maintain facilities in a cost-effective, efficient, and safe manner.
- **Fisheries** – Inventory, monitor, and manage Idaho's fish resources.
- **Wildlife** – Inventory, monitor, and manage Idaho's wildlife and plant resources.

Revenue and Expenditures

Revenue	FY 2012	FY 2013	FY 2014	FY 2015
License & Permits	\$33,485,151	\$32,754,043	\$33,953,131	\$37,281,288
Dingell-Johnson	6,963,911	6,395,936	\$6,269,403	\$6,097,997
Pittman-Robertson	6,345,066	7,260,456	\$7,082,851	\$9,808,845
Federal	24,502,817	30,939,302	\$28,558,861	\$27,950,585
Private & Local	7,338,765	7,072,429	\$8,340,460	\$7,834,758
Miscellaneous	<u>2,551,151</u>	<u>1,903,886</u>	<u>\$2,265,451</u>	<u>\$1,622,589</u>
Current Year Revenue	\$81,186,861	\$86,326,052	\$86,470,157	\$90,596,062
Expenditure	FY 2012	FY 2013	FY 2014	FY 2015
Personnel	\$41,663,716	\$42,661,600	\$43,355,900	\$45,843,100
Operating	30,217,331	29,110,100	\$29,149,200	\$33,955,400
Capital Outlay	8,589,910	21,349,000	\$6,838,500	\$7,940,300
Trustee/Benefit Payments	<u>268,671</u>	<u>403,300</u>	<u>\$440,200</u>	<u>\$441,300</u>
Total	\$80,739,628	\$93,524,000	\$79,783,800	\$88,180,100

Profile of Cases Managed and/or Key Services Provided

Cases Managed and/or Key Services Provided	FY 2012	FY 2013	FY 2014	FY 2015
Provide opportunity to harvest game fish and wildlife (<i># of hunting, fishing, and combination licenses sold</i>)	573,714	566,460	576,063	600,328
Scientifically assess the abundance and health of big game populations to inform management decisions (<i># of hours of deer and elk aerial surveys flown</i>)	427	719	741	1,190
Provide public access to private lands or through private lands to public lands for hunting, fishing, and trapping (<i>acres provided through Access Yes! program</i>)	924,080	882,976	1,043,432	887,643
Provide public access to important wildlife areas for hunting, fishing, trapping, and viewing (<i># of acres managed</i>)	380,000	388,000	390,000	395,000
Provide opportunity to hunt big game (<i># elk and deer hunter days</i>) ^a	1,258,684	1,344,219	1,456,170	NA ^a
Alleviate wildlife damage to agriculture (<i>minimum # of depredation complaints responded to</i>)	737	903	666	525
Compensate for wildlife damage to agriculture (<i># depredation claims paid</i>)	22	25	23	23
Improve opportunity to harvest game fish (<i># of Department-operated hatchery-raised resident and anadromous fish stocked in ponds, lakes, and streams</i>)	23,007,356	23,837,326	35,253,197	30,774,342
Provide opportunity to harvest salmon and steelhead without harming threatened populations (<i>angler hours spent fishing for salmon and steelhead</i>)	1,928,916	1,540,969	1,727,555	1,163,499
Provide public access to fishing waters (<i># fishing and boating access sites maintained</i>)	330	328	329	336
Scientifically assess the abundance and health of fish populations to inform management decisions (<i># surveys conducted on lakes, reservoirs, rivers, and streams</i>)	1,297	464	962	868
Enforce fish and game laws (<i># of warnings and citations issued</i>)	4,175	3,480	4,868	4,348
Protect game populations, provide information, ensure human safety (<i># of licenses checked by officers in the field</i>)	65,684	60,653	62,553	65,521

Cases Managed and/or Key Services Provided	FY 2012	FY 2013	FY 2014	FY 2015
Provide information, analysis, and recommendations to improve fish and wildlife habitats and reduce impacts from land and water use (<i>minimum # technical comments, reviews, meetings, site visits, and technical data requests filled</i>)	2,438 ^b	2,296 ^b	3,287	2,727
Minimize the impacts of fish and wildlife diseases on fish and wildlife populations, livestock, and humans (<i># cases, biological samples, and necropsies handled by health labs</i>)	2,825	2,924	3,274	3,535
Educate students about hunting and firearms safety, ethics and responsibilities, wildlife management, and fish and game rules and regulations (<i># of students Hunter Education certified</i>)	8,703 ^b	9,449	10,195	10,615 ^b
Provide information about fishing and hunting, fish and wildlife, educational programs, volunteer opportunities, and other general agency information to the public (<i>average # visits per month to agency website</i>) ^c	208,525	255,913	301,429 ^c	332,863
Train schoolteachers about how to improve their students' awareness, knowledge, skills, and responsible behavior related to Idaho's fish and wildlife. (<i># teachers who attended Project Wild workshops</i>)	425	654	390	346
Provide information to license buyers to increase their recreation satisfaction and opportunities (<i># visitors to Idaho Hunt Planner and Fish Planner web pages</i>)	174,483	264,962	287,145	268,375
Provide for community and public involvement in management and education while reducing costs (<i># Volunteer, Reservist, and Hunter Ed Instructor hours</i>)	74,848	68,986	63,673 ^b	52,768 ^b

^a - Measure based on a calendar year.

^b - Tally is incomplete.

^c - These cases are better reported as average # of visits compared to average # of visitors; FY14 was changed to reflect a previous inconsistency.

Performance Highlights

Aerial surveys for deer and elk were increased to fill data gaps and develop alternative techniques, both of which will increase efficiency and improve population estimates.

Chinook salmon season opened on the Upper Salmon River in June, with the river being open to anglers from just upstream of the Middle Fork Salmon River to above Stanley for the **first time in nearly 40 years** (about 184 miles of river).

A limited **coho salmon** fishery was opened on the Clearwater River, marking the first time in over 30 years that a coho-specific fishery was opened.

Enforcement officers conducted 65,521 compliance checks on licensed hunters, anglers and trappers; responded to 6,991 calls for service from public regarding wildlife; contacted and interacted with an additional 67,922 people on calls for service; and contacted people on 2,376 boats, 1,786 off-highway vehicles, and 207 snowmobiles.

Last year marked the **largest deer harvest** since 1992 and the **largest elk harvest** since 2005. Hunters harvested 61,200 deer in 2014 – about 12,100 more than in 2013.

Increased outreach to **Hispanic anglers** to improve awareness of fishing opportunities, license requirements, and regulations. Spanish language ads were developed and ad space was purchased in the Buena Vista Guidebook, a widely-distributed Spanish language Yellow Pages. To help address specific compliance issues, Spanish language business cards were developed with Southwest Region bass regulations, and bi-lingual bass regulation signs were developed and installed at Lake Lowell.

Using the new **discount authority** granted to the Fish and Game Commission and with deliberate advertising, discounted second deer and elk tags generated nearly \$500,000 in revenue.

Springfield Fish Hatchery, the newest addition to Fish and Game's hatchery system, produced and released the first production group of Snake River sockeye salmon in May. The 211,000 smolts released will return to Idaho as adults in 2017 and 2018 and further bolster conservation efforts for Snake River sockeye salmon.

A **hunter education** facility was constructed at the Panhandle Regional Office and will serve the hundreds of students who annually take hunter education classes and/or participate in hunting clinics in the Coeur d'Alene area; it will also serve students who will be taking trapper education in the future.

Monitored **sage-grouse** populations, including lek route surveys, raven surveys, radio-collaring, and nesting success. In addition, Fish and Game hosted an early-morning bus tour to a lek with students from the Salmon Region to increase awareness of sage-grouse life history and habitat needs.

Provided technical input to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) on the status of **bull trout** in Idaho, and commented (through Office of Species Conservation) on draft bull trout recovery planning documents produced by USFWS. The final recovery plan is expected to be released in September 2015.

In response to public feedback, enforcing the **Motorized Hunting Rule** became a priority for the Southeast Region for FY2015 and FY2016. The action plan included printing new pamphlets, a pre-season press release, training non-enforcement staff to assist, and prioritizing and formalizing officer plain clothes and uniform patrol of problem areas.

Almost **200 volunteers** helped rehabilitate the Little Sage Hen Flat **sage grouse lek** area near Mountain Home. The volunteers collected 530 pounds of local sagebrush seed and planted thousands of sagebrush and bitterbrush seedlings and hundreds of forbs that the birds depend on for rearing young.

Approximately 1,500 tiger trout were stocked in **Wallace Lake** in June to prey upon reddsides and to provide a unique fishery.

Sixty-one **turkeys** were transplanted from the Southeast Region to Carmen and Tower Creeks to develop a huntable population of turkeys near Salmon.

Anadromous fish passage was improved at diversions on the Pahsimeroi River, Carmen Creek, and Tower Creek. These are pivotal projects that significantly improve fish passage at these dewatering points and reconnect and provide access to habitat upstream.

A **Family Outdoor Festival** was held in Robin in the Southeast Region. Twelve local sportsmen's groups provided instruction and skills practice on many aspects of hunting and angling; 200 people attended the festival about 100 youth and adults participated in the associated mentored pheasant hunt.

Deployed **Reel In & Recycle** monofilament fishing line recycle containers on various waters to help anglers keep access areas clean.

Radio-collared thirty newborn **pronghorn fawns** as part of a research project to measure and compare fawn survival in three study sites in southern Idaho.

In the **Lemhi River**, a large river restoration project is being implemented to restore the floodplain and natural processes in a 2.5 mile river segment; a conservation easement has been donated by the ranch to protect restoration actions. Work also is being done to remove the lowest diversion on Bohannon Creek, a tributary to the Lemhi River, to improve year round connectivity between these two watersheds.

Began developing regional webpages and blogs designed to create and distribute more **localized information** about fish and wildlife and hunting and fishing.

Idaho Fish and Game and Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife – partnering with The Xerces Society for Invertebrate Conservation – were recently awarded a \$170,833 competitive grant for **monarch butterfly** conservation. Monarch populations have declined 90% across its range over the last twenty years and on-the-ground efforts are being made to reverse the decline.

Several **boating and fishing access sites** around Idaho were renovated: Rose Lake in North Idaho received a new boat ramp, docks, handicapped accessible pathways, new vehicle access and turn-around roadway and expansion of the parking area; the Zans, Fivemile and Lenore sites on the Clearwater River all had boat ramps replaced or widened; the Harrop's Bridge site had a hardened boat ramp and outhouse installed; and Crane Falls Lake near Bruneau received a new boat ramp, outhouse, and fishing docks.

The **North Idaho Wildlife Education Program** reached almost 6,000 children and 3,000 adults through short programs, an estimated 97,000 people through the North Idaho Nature Center, and 200 parents and children in twenty-six ½-day camps.

Salary compression and merit increases were addressed for a large number of employees by enhancing the FY2015 change in employee compensation using legislatively-provided discretion to use salary savings.

The Eagle Fish Health Laboratory screened over 12,000 trout, salmon, steelhead and kokanee as part of a comprehensive fish health program focused on producing **healthy fish** for harvest as well as safeguarding the health of wild fish populations.

Enforcement patrols were conducted to protect habitat and gain compliance with regulations protecting species of conservation need, including southern and northern Idaho ground squirrels, Columbia spotted frog, curlew, wolverine, and white sturgeon.

Fish and Game continues to utilize technology, such as **web-chats and social media**, to exchange information with the public on fish and wildlife management proposals. About 1,000 people participated in one web-chat.

Fish and Game continued the practice of **stocking** larger rainbow trout into lakes, streams and reservoirs around the state. Research data revealed that in larger water bodies, 12-inch rainbow trout are caught at a much higher rate than 10-inch fish, which have been produced historically.

Technical information and assistance continued to be provided to the **Governor's Office of Species Conservation** on species such as wolverine, yellow-billed cuckoo, Canada lynx, and Columbia spotted frog.

A focused effort to increase **recruitment and retention** in hunting and fishing included a spring advertising campaign targeting resident anglers who don't buy licenses every year; attending over 85 events with the *Take Me Fishing* Trailers; the Hunter Passport Program for which over 6,300 new hunters took advantage; and launching the *Wildavore* program to introduce adults to hunting.

Fish and Game continued to restore Bare Marsh – a 165-acre wetland near Coeur d'Alene River Wildlife Management Area – by installing a functioning water control structure, draining and burning the wetland, and chemically removing excess vegetation. Restoration will improve conditions for waterfowl and shorebirds, eventually increasing **hunting opportunity**.

The **Citizens Against Poaching** program received 850 calls reporting fish and game violations, resulting in 219 citations issued and paying out \$33,000 in rewards money.

Lake Pend Oreille anglers enjoyed the best kokanee fishing on the lake since the early 1990s, and the kokanee spawning run was the biggest observed in 30 years. Over 200 eagles feasted on spawned out kokanee during December and January, creating viewing opportunities for thousands of people.

The **MK Nature Center** celebrated its 25th anniversary. Over the year, staff and volunteers held 294 educational programs for 8,825 people, including 57 free programs primarily for Title 1 schools.

Seven **new offices** were created to relieve overcrowding at the Panhandle Regional Office.

Continued to increase or restore aquatic and **riparian habitat** and reconnect floodplain, including 730 feet of new kokanee spawning gravels in a Lake Pend Oreille tributary, a new meandering stream channel into the new Wellness Pond in Pocatello, replacement of a fish barrier with a bridge in Custer County that opened up 7.5 miles of cold water habitat in Bayhorse Creek, and 400 feet of new lateral rearing side channel habitat in the upper Lemhi.

Cooperatively developed course work, workshops, and directed research for a class of both **undergraduate and graduate students** in the University of Idaho's Natural Resource College. Students developed an interdisciplinary natural resource plan for a portion of the Farragut Wildlife Management Area, including timber harvest scenarios to address wildlife management and social concerns such as reducing fire risk reduction and preserving recreational opportunities. The students worked closely with the community of Bayview.

Captured and moved fifty **Columbian sharp-tailed grouse** from southern Idaho to Northern Nevada to bolster populations across its range.

Netting effort for **lake trout suppression** on Lake Pend Oreille was reduced for the first time since the program started in 2006. This marks a transition towards a long-term maintenance netting approach, which will gradually allow costs to be reduced while maintaining a low density lake trout population.

Ice fishing clinics/derbies for children were held at Hyde Pond in Salmon and at Jimmy Smith Lake near Challis.

Met with the Morgan Creek Grazing Association to discuss upcoming **wolf—livestock depredation** management options and to improve communications between the Association and Fish and Game.

Enforcement officers conducted 506 youth-related events, including hunter safety courses, youth fishing clinics, and mentored youth hunt activities, involving a total of **10,553 youngsters**.

Collaborated with Idaho Parks and Recreation to design and construct a new fishing pond at **Castle Rocks State Park**.

Waterfowl habitat and fishing access were improved on the **Hagerman Wildlife Management Area**: carp were eradicated from several ponds, Riley Pond was dredged to improve shoreline fishing access, and a new fishing pier was constructed for anglers.

Worked extensively with the public to develop proposals for 2016-2018 fishing regulations. Opportunities to give input included public meetings, open houses, and web site comment forms; nearly 1,400 individual responses were recorded during this scoping period. The resulting rule change proposals will undergo additional **public review and comment** prior to Commission approval.

Fish and Game led efforts in the Snake River Basin in using genetic tools to monitor the status of salmon and steelhead, and continued its lead in using **genetic monitoring** tools to assess stock-specific impacts in some Columbia River sport, commercial and treaty Indian fisheries.

The **Clark Fork Delta** restoration project restored 42 acres of lost island habitat, and protected nearly 1,000 acres of the remaining delta. The delta has been eroding away at a rate of over 10 acres per year since dam operations began in the 1950s.

Steelhead anglers fished 198,034 angler-days to harvest 43,469 summer steelhead from the Clearwater, Snake and Salmon Rivers.

Part II – Performance Measures

Performance Measure	FY 2012	FY 2013	FY 2014	FY 2015	Benchmark
1. Compliance with regulations (# of violations / # of licenses checked)	4175 / 65684 (6.4% / 11.5%)	3480 / 60,653 (5.8% / 10.7%)	4868 / 62,583 (7.8% / 10.9%)	4348 / 65,521 (7.2% / 10.9%)	Less than 10% of licenses checked result in violation / check 15% of total licenses sold
2. Elk and deer populations are meeting objectives (% zones and units meeting objectives)	83%	83%	82%	83%	90%
3. Opportunity to harvest game fish (# of Department-operated hatchery-raised resident and anadromous fish stocked in ponds, lakes, and streams)	23,007,356	23,837,326	35,253,197	30,774,342	23,900,000
4. Landowners allow access for fish & wildlife recreation (# of properties enrolled / # private acres in Access Yes! Program)	110 / 448,435	110 / 442,951	113 / 437,177	92 / 385,028	90 / 350,000
5. Effectively convey and distribute information about wildlife and wildlife-based recreation (# of unique visitors per year to Fish and Game website)	NA	1.35 million	1.64 million	1.77 million	2.00 million
6. Attract and retain highly qualified personnel (% successful registers / % retention of hired FTEs after 2 years employment)	96 / 91	98 / 90	97 / 88	100 / 81	94 / 88
7. All that pay benefit, all that benefit pay (% of funding that comes from the general Idaho public)	2.6%	2.6%	2.5%	2.3%	3.0%

Performance Measure Explanatory Note:

1. The benchmark is based on past performance by Department officers.
2. The metric is based on cow elk in elk zones; % 4-point mule deer bucks in mule deer data analysis unit; % 5 point whitetail bucks in whitetail data analysis unit. The benchmark is a target to meet objectives laid out in big game species plans. Objectives in the plans are based on historical biological data as well as the social requests for various hunting experiences. Many external factors, such as wildfire and weather, affect the Department's ability to achieve objectives.
3. This measure was added in FY2014. The benchmark is based on maintaining the FY2013 level of production. Note that it also is reported in Cases.
4. The benchmark is based on past success of the Access Yes! program and the cost per acre.
5. This performance measure was added in FY2014. The benchmark is based on expected growth in web traffic.

6. A “successful register” is defined as one with at least 5 qualified applicants. The percent of successful registers was determined by the formula **$[\# \text{ successful registers} \div \text{total open competitive registers}] * 100$** . The benchmark is based on the average over the past four fiscal years.
7. “Funding from the general public” is defined as revenue from the sales of wildlife license plates, the non-game tax check-off, donations to the Department, and interest income. The percent of funding from the general public was calculated by the formula **$[\text{funding from general public} \div (\text{funding from general public} + \text{license sales})] * 100$** . The benchmark reflects a goal of increasing this revenue by \$672,000 from FY2015.

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