

Meeting Date: July 28, 2022

Agenda Item No. 6.

Agenda Item: Draft Idaho State Wildlife Action Plan **Bureau Chief Approval:** JR

Prepared by: Rita Dixon, State Wildlife Action Plan Coordinator

Background:

The Idaho State Wildlife Action Plan (SWAP) is a statewide plan for conserving and managing Idaho's most at-risk fish and wildlife species and their habitats. The SWAP provides strategic and voluntary guidance on priority conservation actions needed for SWAP species including both "species of greatest conservation need" and "species of greatest information need", as determined by the Department. For the first time, the Department has incorporated plant species into its 2022 revision. The plan also emphasizes preventing future species listings under the Endangered Species Act of 1973, as amended (16 U.S.C. 1531, et seq.; ESA), thus helping maintain state-led management authority for Idaho's native fish, wildlife, and plants.

Statutory Authority and/or Policy issues:

In authorizing the State and Tribal Wildlife Grants Program (STWG) in 2000, Congress required that all states wishing to remain eligible for funding under this program commit to reviewing, and if necessary, revising their plans at intervals of not more than 10 years. Accordingly, this plan represents the Department's comprehensive review and revision of its 2015 SWAP.

The Idaho Fish and Game Commission administers state wildlife policy through the Department (Idaho Code 36-104). Wildlife management plans, including species management plans and the State Wildlife Action Plan, guide conservation and management of wildlife and are a direct reflection of the Department Strategic Plan. The SWAP will function as the action plan for at-risk species management in Idaho.

Public Involvement Process:

Pending approval by the Commission to release the draft 2022 SWAP revision, the Department will initiate a 30-day public comment period in August 2022 to give the public and affected stakeholders an opportunity to provide input on the draft plan.

Following review of public input staff will incorporate improvements and prepare a final draft for Commission consideration for adoption at their November meeting.

Justification:

States are required to provide an opportunity for public participation in the development, revision, and implementation of their respective state wildlife action plans. In addition, the plan must include a description of how the state involved the public in the development of its plan. The approval of the 2022 SWAP revision by the US Fish and Wildlife Service depends on meeting this requirement.

Staff Recommendation:

Staff seeks Commission concurrence to release the Draft SWAP revision for public review and input.