

**Idaho Fish and Game Commission
Idaho Department of Fish and Game
Headquarters
March 24-25, 2026
Boise, Idaho**

March 24

MISCELLANEOUS

Public Meeting

Chairman Dave Bobbitt called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. MST and reviewed the rules of conduct for the hearing and reported that all public comments would be reviewed by the Commission at the Thursday business meeting. Commissioners Dave Bobbitt, Don Ebert, Tim Murphy, Mike Roach, Jordan Cheirrett, and Ron Davies were present.

The following individuals provided in person testimony: Travis Bullock, Donald Sickels, Burk Mantel, Jeff Abrams, Craig Davis, Jeff Bitton, and .

March 25

MISCELLANEOUS

Chairman Bobbitt called the meeting to order at 8:00 a.m. MST. Commissioners Dave Bobbitt, Don Ebert, Tim Murphy, Mike Roach, Jordan Cheirrett, and Ron Davies were present.

Review of Public Comment

Director Fredericks provided a summary of public comments. There were approximately fifteen members of the public in attendance, with seven individuals providing oral testimony and five individuals submitting written comments. Representatives from the Idaho Conservation League (ICL), Idaho Outfitters and Guides Association (IOGA), and Idaho Elk Breeders Association (EBA) provided comments on agenda-related items as well as broader wildlife management topics.

- With respect to Agenda Item #10, *History of Outfitter Allocation*, two commenters addressed the outfitter allocation system. One commenter noted that outfitter allocation began in approximately 1986 and stated that overall allocation numbers have not increased over time, urging consideration of limiting nonresident (NR) tag numbers. Another commenter emphasized the importance of allocated tags to the outfitting industry, noting that they provide business certainty and contribute significantly to Idaho's economy. The commenter shared that outfitting generates substantial revenue from out-of-state hunters and encouraged the Commission to consider these economic impacts carefully prior to making any changes to allocation.

- A commenter addressing Agenda Item 6.D expressed opposition to the five-day waiting period associated with certain capped elk zone tags for individuals who have applied for controlled hunts. The commenter requested elimination of the waiting period.
- A commenter speaking to Agenda Item 6.C, *Mandatory Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD) Testing*, representing the Elk Breeders Association, expressed the association's commitment to working collaboratively with the Commission and the Department to minimize risks associated with captive elk facilities. The commenter noted that the association is developing best management practices (BMPs) that exceed existing requirements and emphasized a continued commitment to improvement.
- A commenter addressing white-tailed deer hunting opportunities in the Clearwater Region provided historical context regarding November hunting seasons and the development of white-tailed deer tags. The commenter expressed opposition to white-tailed deer tags, stating they undermine the original intent of the November hunting seasons in the Clearwater and Panhandle regions, and urged the Commission to consider eliminating these tags.
- A commenter from the Idaho Conservation League expressed concerns regarding potential mineral exploration activities on the Andrus Wildlife Management Area and their potential impacts on habitat and management objectives.
- A commenter provided observations related to fisheries management in the Boise River system, noting perceived declines in native non-game fish species following the introduction of smallmouth bass. The commenter expressed the view that management decisions should prioritize native species over nonnative introductions.
- Written comments were submitted by a Colorado resident expressing concerns regarding the lethal removal of wolves in Idaho.
- Written comments addressing nonresident elk tags recommended limiting nonresident hunters to a single unit within a zone to reduce crowding and improve hunting experiences. Additional comments suggested modifying elk zone B-tag regulations in the Elk City zone to restrict harvest to brow-tined bulls only.
- Written comments also proposed changes to river otter trapping regulations, recommending that trappers continue to report harvest within 72 hours but be allowed up to 10 days after the season quota is met or after March 31 to present pelts for tagging.
- Two written submissions raised concerns regarding elk depredation in Unit 14 and expressed dissatisfaction with current management and service related to addressing agricultural conflicts.

Consent Calendar

Minutes

- November 19th – 20th, 2025
- January 14th – 15th, 2026
- February 5th, 2026
- February 12th, 2026
- February 19th, 2026

Financial Report

Financial Report

Jon Oswald, Chief, Administration, presented (Appendix 59, Exhibit 18).

26-19 Commissioner Ebert made a motion to accept the meeting minutes as presented. Commissioner Murphy seconded the motion. Motion carries.

26-20 Commissioner Davies made a motion to accept the financial reports as presented. Commissioner Cheirrett seconded the motion. Motion carries.

SEASON SETTING AND RULES

Rulemaking and Budget Update

Amber Worthington, Deputy Director, presented (Appendix 59, Exhibit 19).

Petition for Rulemaking

Amber Worthington, Deputy Director, presented (Appendix 59, Exhibit 20).

26-21 Commissioner Cheirrett made a motion that the Department deny the petitioners' request for rulemaking to consider restrictions on non-resident salmon and steelhead fishing in the South Fork of the Clearwater River. Commissioner Davies seconded the motion. Commissioner Ebert opposed. Motion carries.

Spring Chinook Season Setting

John Cassinelli, Anadromous Fisheries Program Manager, presented (Appendix 59, Exhibit 21).

26-22 Commissioner Ebert made a motion that the Commission adopt Chinook Salmon seasons as recommended by the Department, and to promote effective use of the state of Idaho's share of salmon harvest. Commissioner Ebert further moves that the Commission delegate authority to the Director to make in-season adjustments based on the harvest matrix tables presented by the Department, including increases or decreases in geographic extent, fishing days of the week, fishing hours, bag limits, and season suspension and closures, with the Director to promptly notify to the Commission of such in-season adjustments, and the Department to comply with Idaho Code Section 36-105 for publications and notice for proclamation amendments or order. Commissioner Roach seconded the motion. Motion carries.

GMU 40 Bighorn Sheep Season Modification

Hollie Miyasaki, Wildlife Staff Biologist, presented (Appendix 59, Exhibit 22).

26-23 Commissioner Murphy moved that the Commission adopt staff recommendations to close the 2026 California bighorn sheep hunting season in Hunt Area 40 (Hunt #7001). Commissioner Cheirrett seconded the motion. Motion carries.

Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD) Update and Adjustment to Mandatory Sampling Units

Tricia Hebdon, Assistant Chief, Wildlife, presented (Appendix 59, Exhibit 23).

26-24 Commissioner Roach made a motion that the Commission remove mandatory CWD sampling requirements for mule deer and white-tailed deer harvested in GMUs 24 and 32A and add mandatory CWD sampling requirements for mule deer and white-tailed deer harvested from GMUs 64 and 69, within 10 days of harvest, starting with the 2026 hunting season. Commissioner Davies seconded the motion. Motion carries.

5-Day Waiting Period to Buy Capped Elk Zone Tags

Tara Reichert, License Operations Manager, presented (Appendix 59, Exhibit 24).

26-25 Commissioner Ebert made a motion that the Commission eliminate the waiting period for eligibility to buy a resident capped elk zone tag for any person who applies for a controlled elk hunt in the same calendar year for the 2026 hunting season. There was no second to the motion. Motion fails.

The Commission opted to make no change to the 5-day wait for the 2026 season.

LEGISLATION

Legislative Update

Ellary TuckerWilliams, Legislative and Community Engagement Coordinator, presented (Appendix 59, Exhibit 25).

Ellary TuckerWilliams provided an update on current legislation (Appendix 59, Exhibit 25). House Bill 630 (Airborne Shooting; Coyotes, Wolves) has passed the Senate committee and is on the Third Reading Calendar. If passed, it will be transmitted to the Governor. House Bill 652 (Hunting, State Sport) has been signed by the Governor, officially designating hunting as the state sport of Idaho. House Bill 678 (Wolf Trap Check with Transmitting Trail Camera) has passed both chambers of the Legislature and is awaiting the Governor's signature. Language providing rulemaking authority to the Commission was removed on the Senate floor. House Bill 855 (Lifetime Hunt/Fish License, Resident) has passed the House and Senate committee and is currently on the Senate floor.

House Bill 939 (Hunting Technology) incorporates previously removed rule language related to advanced hunting technologies into Idaho Code and expands its application to big game animals and game birds from August 30 through December 31. The bill restricts the use of thermals, night vision, transmitting trail cameras, and drones, while providing exemptions for wolves, mountain lions, predatory wildlife, damage control for livestock and crops, retrieval of wounded animals, monitoring of private property, and trap monitoring. The legislation is intended to address concerns regarding increased harvest success and fair chase, though it is expected to present enforcement challenges due to the breadth of exemptions. Fiscal impact to the

Department is anticipated to be minimal. The bill has passed the House and has been referred to the Senate.

Due to open meeting law requirements, the Commission was unable to take a position on House Bill 939 during the March 2026 Commission meeting. Unlike prior legislation considered during Legislative Commission conference calls, this agenda item was not noticed as an action item in advance of the meeting. As a result, the Commission was limited to discussion only and could not formally support, oppose, or take action on the bill at this time.

Senate Bill 1300 (Agency Directors, Appointed by the Governor) has completed the legislative process and is awaiting the Governor's signature. Senate Bill 1326 (Property Rights, Protection) has completed the legislative process and is awaiting the Governor's signature. Senate Bill 1348 (Public Outdoor Target Ranges) has passed the Senate and House committee and is currently on the Third Reading Calendar in the House. If passed, it will be transmitted to the Governor.

MISCELLANEOUS

Nonresident Tag Draw Update

Tara Reichert, License Operations Manager, presented (Appendix 59, Exhibit 26).

Presentation of the Shikar-Safari Wildlife Officer of the Year, 2025

Justin Williams, Chief, Enforcement, presented (Appendix 59, Exhibit 27).

History of Outfitter Allocation

Rick Ward, State Wildlife Manager, and Brad Compton, Commission Representative on Idaho Outfitters and Guides Licensing Board, presented (Appendix 59, Exhibit 28).

REPORTS

Deer and Elk Status Update

Toby Boudreau, Deer/Elk Program Coordinator, presented (Appendix 59, Exhibit 29).

SEASON SETTING AND RULES

2026 Migratory Game Bird Season Setting Preview

Jeffery Knetter, Upland Game/Migratory Game Bird Program Coordinator, presented (Appendix 59, Exhibit 30).

REPORTS

Jacks Creek (Owyhee) Bighorn Sheep Augmentation Update

Rachel Curtis, Regional Wildlife Biologist, presented (Appendix 59, Exhibit 31).

Electronic Permits Update

Chris Sullivan, Electronic Permits Update, Anadromous Fisheries Program Coordinator, presented (Appendix 59, Exhibit 32).

MISCELLANEOUS

History of the Idaho Game Warden

Barry Cummings, Regional Conservation Officer, presented (Appendix 59, Exhibit 33).

State Record Fish Program

Martin Koenig, Sportfish Program Coordinator, presented (Appendix 59, Exhibit 34).

REPORTS

Director's Report

Director Fredericks highlighted items from each Bureau in the Director's Report.

Commissioner's Reports

Commissioner reports stand as written (Appendix 59, Exhibit 35).

MISCELLANEOUS

Planning for Next Meeting

The next meeting will be May 6th – 7th, 2026, in Coeur d'Alene, Idaho.

Executive Session

26-26 Commissioner Murphy moved, and Commission Cheirrett seconded a motion, that the Commission go into executive session under Idaho Code 74-206 subsections 1 (c) (f). Motion carries.

Roll Call Vote: Ayes: Dave Bobbitt, Don Ebert, Tim Murphy, Mike Roach, Jordan Cheirrett, and Ron Davies.

The Commission discussed litigation matters.

26-27 Commissioner Murphy moved, and Commissioner Cheirrett seconded a motion, that the Commission come out of executive session with the record to reflect that no final action was taken. Motion carries.

Open Session

Adjourn 2:30 p.m. MST

Dave Bobbitt
Chairman



Jim Fredericks
Secretary