

**Idaho Fish and Game Commission
Idaho Department of Fish and Game
Pocatello Regional Office
July 23-24, 2024
Pocatello, Idaho**

July 23

MISCELLANEOUS

Public Meeting

Chairman Ron Davies called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. MDT and reviewed the rule of conduct for the hearing and reported that all public comments would be reviewed by the Commission at the Wednesday business meeting. Commissioner Dave Bobbitt, Don Ebert, Tim Murphy, Greg Cameron, Jordan Cheirrett, Brody Harshbarger, and Ron Davies were present.

The following individuals provided in person testimony: Gary Peck, Randy Budge, Tal Sampson, Joe Foster, Nathan Hale, Doug Somsen, Josh Miller, Triston Warner, Brock Maynard, Mike Larkin, Matt Borg, Bryon Hancock, Shawn Barkull, Casey Stanley, Jayden Borg, Jim Betty, Laci Crosland, Talesa Sampson, Tanner Stanquist, Mitt Tingy, and Nathan Lopez.

July 24

MISCELLANEOUS

Chairman Davies called the meeting to order at 8:00 am MDT.

Review of Public Comment

Director Fredericks provided a summary of the public comments. There were 40 members of the public in attendance with 22 people providing testimony.

- Three people provided testimony in support of the Goose zone configurations for the 2025-2026 hunting season.
- The President and Vice-president of the Idaho Wild Sheep Foundation expressed their support and appreciation for the Bighorn Sheep Auction and Lottery tags program.
- Eastern Idaho Houndsman Association expressed appreciation for the Commission Challenge Grant opportunity and looking forward to the Commission decision on this year's Challenge Grants.
- Twelve people provided testimony with concerns of advancement of hunting technology and how this technology impacts fair chase and ethical hunting. There was specific testimony requesting a rule change to prohibit scopes greater than 9 power or range finders with more than 500-yard ranges. They asked the Department to think about advancing hunting technology practically and proactively.

- One person commented that the limits on hunting technology should not be limited to just long-range hunting but should include thermal imaging binoculars and trail cameras.
- Two people provided testimony suggesting range finders can assist hunters confirm they are shooting within their effective range.
- The President of the National Wild Turkey Federation of Idaho thanked the Commission for the support of their organization.
- One person provided testimony asking the Department to consider charging non hunters and anglers an access fees at Department access sites and wildlife management areas.

Consent Calendar

Minutes February 15, 2024, February 22, 2024, February 29, 2024, March 7, 2024, March 14, 2024, March 28, 2024, April 17, 2024, May 15-16, 2024, and June 12, 2024.

Financial Report

Winter Feeding Advisory Committee Appointments

24-50 Commissioner Ebert made a motion to accept the consent calendar as presented. Commissioner Bobbitt seconded the motion. Motion carries.

FISCAL

FY 26 Budget Approval

Jon Oswald, Administration Bureau Chief, presented the FY 26 budget forecast (Appendix 57, Exhibit 56).

24-51 Commissioner Bobbitt moved that the Commission approve the State Fiscal Year 2026 budget request as presented and allow the Department to modify the request as necessary for minor administrative items if they arise. Commissioner Harshbarger seconded. Motion Carries.

SEASON SETTING AND RULES

Administrative Rules: Adoption of Proposed Rules – Trapping of Wildlife and Taking of Furbearing Animals

Deputy Director Amber Worthington, presented (Appendix 57, Exhibit 57). Due to unforeseen, late-breaking concerns around certain proposed language in the rule, the Commission was asked to keep IDAPA 13.01.16 open for another year. With no objection from the Commission, staff will keep this chapter open for the next year to address concerns.

Administrative Rules: Adoption of Proposed Rules – Rules Governing Taking of Wildlife, GMZ Descriptions

Deputy Director Amber Worthington, presented (Appendix 57, Exhibit 58).

24- 52 Commissioner Cheirrett moved the Commission adopt the proposed rule as presented, with authority for the Department to make non-substantive edits in the proofreading process that do not alter the sense, meaning or effect of the rules. Commissioner Cameron seconded. Motion carries.

Administrative Rules: Adoption of Proposed Rules – Rules Governing Fish, Fishing Methods and Gear

Deputy Director Amber Worthington, presented (Appendix 57, Exhibit 59).

24- 53 Commissioner Murphy moved the Commission adopt the proposed rule as presented, with authority for the Department to make non-substantive edits in the proofreading process that do not alter the sense, meaning or effect of the rules. Commissioner Cheirrett seconded. Motion carries.

MANAGEMENT PLANS

Elk Management Plan

Morgan Pfander, Regional Wildlife Biologist, presented (Appendix 57, Exhibit 60).

24-54 Commissioner Bobbitt moved the Commission adopt the Idaho Elk Management Plan 2024 – 2030. Commissioner Cameron seconded the motion. Motion carries.

SEASON SETTING AND RULES

2025 – 2027 Fishing Seasons and Limits Season Setting

Lance Hebdon, Fisheries Bureau Chief, presented (Appendix 57, Exhibit 61).

24-55 Commissioner Cameron moved the Commission adopt the Idaho Fishing 2025 – 2027 Seasons and Rules as proposed. Commissioner Murphy seconded the motion. Motion carries.

2024 Sage-grouse Season Setting

Jennifer Struthers, Staff Biologist, presented (Appendix 57, Exhibit 62).

24-56 Commissioner Cameron moved the Commission adopt staff recommendations for the 2024 sage-grouse hunting seasons and bag and possession limits, including bag and possession limits for take by falconry. Commissioner Murphy seconded the motion. Motion carries.

Falconry: Sage-grouse Tag Use for End of 2024 Season/Discount Order

Jennifer Struthers, Staff Biologist, presented (Appendix 57, Exhibit 63).

24-57 Commissioner Cameron moved that the Commission adopt the discount order for sage-grouse tags for falconry as presented. Commissioner Cheirrett seconded the motion. Motion carries.

2025 – 2026 Nonresident Tag Limits and 2025 Outfitter Allocation

Rick Ward, State Wildlife Manager, presented (Appendix 57, Exhibit 64).

24-58 Commissioner Cheirrett made the following motion:

“I move the Commission adopt staff recommendations for managing nonresident general season uncapped Elk Zone A and B tags and regular and white-tailed deer tags as presented by staff in the summary tables.”

Commissioner Bobbitt seconded the motion. Motion carries.

24-59 Commissioner Bobbitt made the following motion:

“I move the Commission set aside 2,975 general season elk tags and 1,846 general season deer tags from the 2025 statewide nonresident limits for sale to persons that have entered into an agreement to use the services of a licensed outfitter.”

Commissioner Harshbarger seconded the motion. Motion carries.

24-60 Commissioner Ebert made the following motion:

“I move the Commission adopt staff recommendations for 2025 outfitter tag allocation and 2025 general-season tag limits for nonresidents for elk zones and deer units that are unlimited for residents, as presented by staff in the summary tables.”

Commissioner Cameron seconded the motion. Motion carries.

Release of Bighorn Sheep Tags for Auction and Lottery

Hollie Miyasaki, Wildlife Staff Biologist, presented (Appendix 57, Exhibit 65).

24-61 Commissioner Cameron moved the Commission release the 2025 bighorn sheep auction tag to the Wild Sheep Foundation to conduct an auction and the 2025 bighorn sheep lottery tag to the Idaho Wild Sheep Foundation to conduct a lottery. Commissioner Cheirrett seconded the motion. Motion carries.

Discount Order for Bighorn Sheep Lottery Tag Application

Hollie Miyasaki, Wildlife Staff Biologist, presented (Appendix 57, Exhibit 66).

24-62 Commissioner Cameron moved the Commission adopt the discounted fees as presented by staff for all “Bighorn Sheep Lottery Tag” Special Controlled Hunt applications for the July 2025 and July 2026 drawing. Commissioner Murphy seconded the motion. Motion carries.

Goose Zones and Hunter Survey

Jeff Knetter, Upland Game and Migratory Game Bird Program Coordinator, presented (Appendix 57, Exhibit 67).

24-63 Commissioner Bobbitt moved the Commission adopt staff recommendations for goose zone configurations to take effect for the 2025 – 2026 hunting season. Commissioner Harshbarger seconded the motion. Motion carries.

LEGISLATION

Commission Community Challenge Grant

Ellary TuckerWilliams, Legislative and Community Engagement Coordinator, presented (Appendix 57, Exhibit 68).

24-64 Commissioner Cheirrett moved the Commission approve the recommendations of the regional and statewide review committees and permit staff to announce outcome of the FY 2025 Commission Community Challenge Grant process. Commissioner Bobbitt seconded. Motion carries.

LANDS

Crystal Summit Conservation Easement

Casey Pozzanghera, Lands Mitigation Program Coordinator presented the Crystal Summit Conservation Easement in Power County (Appendix 57, Exhibit 69).

24-65 Commissioner Bobbitt made a motion that the Commission acquire the 1,252 – acre Crystal Summit Conservation easement. Commissioner Cheirrett seconded the motion. Motion carries.

Spencer Property Donation

Casey Pozzanghera, Lands Mitigation Program Coordinator presented the Crystal Summit Conservation Easement in Power County (Appendix 57, Exhibit 70).

24-66 Commissioner Ebert made a motion that the Commission accept the 153-acre Spencer property donation in Idaho County. Commissioner Harshbarger seconded the motion. Motion carries.

MISCELLANEOUS

WAFWA Presentation

Cortney Mycroft presented the Idaho Fish and Game Commission the Western Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies Commission of the Year Award (Appendix 57, Exhibit 71).

Hunters Ed Instructor of the Year

Gerran Steel presented Sammie Hend the Idaho Hunters Education Instructor of the Year Award.

SEASON SETTING AND RULES

Controlled Hunt Post Card Notification Error

Deputy Director, Amber Worthington presented the 2024 controlled hunt draw results for deer, elk, pronghorn, fall bear and fall turkey were incorrectly sent to hunters that were successful in the 2021 controlled hunt drawing. The Department relies on email notifications, emails, and hunters checking the “Go Outdoors App” to check results. Within 24 hours of the drawing 84,000 hunters, 45%, had checked their results through the App. There are approximately 3.2% of hunters who have no email address recorded in the system. These hunters rely on other forms of notification for their results. Correction letters and emails were sent to those hunters who were successful in the drawing this year. Director Fredericks suggested discontinuing the mailing due to the limited number of hunters without email addresses and the cost of the mailing. With no objection from the Commission, the Department will discontinue mailing post card results.

REPORTS

Wolf Population Estimation

Shane Roberts, Wildlife Bureau Chief, presented (Appendix 57, Exhibit 72).

MANAGEMENT PLANS

Draft Fisheries Management Plan 2025 – 2030 for Public Review

Lance Hebdon, Fisheries Bureau Chief, presented (Appendix 57, Exhibit 73). With no objection from the Commission, the Fisheries Management plan will be released to the public, agency partners, and interested organizations for their input. The final plan will be presented at the November 2024 Commission meeting.

REPORTS

Mature Mule Deer Harvest Management

Eric Freeman, Regional Wildlife Biologist and Toby Boudreau, Statewide Deer and Elk Coordinator (Appendix 57, Exhibit 74).

Overview of Disabled Veteran Special Big Game Tags and Children with Special Needs Big Game Tags

Ellary TuckerWilliams, Legislative and Community Engagement Coordinator presented (Appendix 57, Exhibit 75).

SEASON SETTING AND RULES

December Nonresident Tag Sale

Jon Oswald, Administration Bureau Chief, and Alex Erickson, Customer Service and Vendor Relations Manager presented (Appendix 57, Exhibit 76).

REPORTS

CWD Update

Tricia Hebdon, Assistant Wildlife Bureau Chief, presented (Appendix 57, Exhibit 77).

Idaho Fish & Wildlife Foundation Report

Hilarie Engle, Idaho Fish and Wildlife Foundation Coordinator, presented the winners of the new Idaho wildlife license plates (bluebird, elk, and cutthroat trout). Steven Clark's (Coeur d' Alene) cutthroat trout and bluebird designs were selected. Courtney Cunningham's (Filer Idaho) elk entry was also selected (Appendix 57, Exhibit 78). The new plates will be available August 1st.

Director's Report

Director Fredericks asked the Commission to review the Director's report (Appendix 57, Exhibit 79).

Commissioner Reports

Commissioner reports stand as written (Appendix 57, Exhibit 80).

MISCELLANEOUS

Planning for Next Meeting

The next meeting will be August 6 - 7, 2024, in Salmon, Idaho.

Executive Session I. C. 74-206 (1) (f)

24-67 Commissioner Cameron moved, and Commissioner Ebert seconded a motion that the Commission enter executive session under Idaho Code 74-206 subsections (1) (f).

Roll Call Vote: Ayes: Dave Bobbitt, Done Ebert, Tim Murphy, Greg Cameron, Jordan Cheirrett, Brody Harshbarger, and Ron Davies.

The Commission discussed litigation matters.

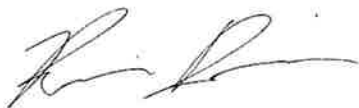
24-68 Commissioner Ebert moved, and Commissioner Cameron seconded a motion that the Commission come out of executive session with no action taken. Motion carries.

Open session

Litigation Position

Kathleen Trever, Deputy Attorney General presented. There are no litigation positions currently. The Department did receive correspondence from Fish and Wildlife Services regarding mandatory bear identification. With no objection from the Commission, the Department will proceed with a review of proposed rules the Department should bring to the Commission for consideration on this year's docket and any other items that might be appropriate.

Adjourn



Ron Davies
Chairman



Jim Fredericks
Secretary