

**Idaho Fish and Game Commission  
Annual Meeting January 26-27, 2022  
Idaho Department of Fish and Game  
Boise, Idaho**

**January 26**

Chairman Cameron called the meeting to order at 9:00 with Commissioners Dave Bobbitt, Don Ebert, Tim Murphy, Lance Clezie, Derick Attebury and Ron Davies present.

**MISCELLANEOUS**

**Discuss Items for Commission Meeting & Confirmation Hearings**

Commissioners discussed items in preparation for the confirmation hearing for Commissioner Dave Bobbitt.

Commissioners recessed at 4:30 to attend the Ribbon Cutting Ceremony at Headquarters.

**Public Hearing**

Chairman Cameron called the meeting to order 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.

The following individuals provided in person testimony: Joe Foster, Dino Hanson, David Temple, Brian Brooks, Mark Rose, John Robison, Brad Van den Dries and Jerry Hardy. Written comments received from Alan Gregory, Christine Gertschen and Stephanie Farac.

**January 27**

**Opening Comments**

Chairman Cameron called the meeting to order with Commissioners Bobbitt, Ebert, Murphy, Clezie, Attebury and Davies present.

Posting of the Colors and Pledge of Allegiance presented by Idaho Department of Fish and Game Honor Guard Brian Flatter and Meghan Roos.

**MISCELLANEOUS**

**Review of Public Comment**

Director Schriever and Commissioners discussed and reviewed the public comments. Comments included:

- ICL letter in opposition on the proposed removal of river otter trapping restrictions in Regions 2, 3 and 7.
- Trappers Association letter of support for furbearer season setting.
- Comments asking the commission to reconsider the late closure for waterfowl set last year.
- Mule deer and elk in units 26 & 27 Middle Fork comments – the Department will address next year in the season setting process.
- Suggestion that the Department and Commission put together a citizen’s advisory committee to assist with CWD moving forward. The Department sees merit in this and will bring a proposal forward for this.
- Support for the Turkey Plan.
- Comments from falconer for support of the season changes for sage-grouse.
- Four letters received from Dick Jordan, Lawrence Schoen, Western Watersheds Project, Talasi Brooks and Suzanne Stone and associates regarding wolf management and SB1211.

### **Presentation Awards**

Director Schriever presented Idaho State Service awards to Hilarie Engle, 5 years of service, Dan Garren and Craig White both 20 years of service.

## **CONSENT CALENDAR**

### **Consent Calendar**

Consent Calendar Items

- Financial Report
- Winter Feeding Committee Appointments

Consent calendar items were adopted without objection.

## **SEASON SETTING AND RULES**

### **Upland Game, Turkey, Falconry & Furbearer Season Setting**

Jeff Knetter, Upland Game and Migratory Bird Coordinator presented the final recommendations for the 2022 and 2023 Upland Game, Turkey and Falconry seasons. (Appendix 55, Exhibit 1).

**22-01** Commissioner Attebury moved and Commissioner Clezie seconded a motion that the Commission adopt staff recommendations for 2022 and 2023 Upland Game, Turkey, and Falconry seasons. Motion carries.

Cory Mosby, Furbearer Staff Biologist presented the staff recommendations for 2022 and 2023 furbearer seasons (Appendix 55, Exhibit 2).

**22-02** Commissioner Ebert moved and Commissioner Murphy seconded a motion to accept the staff recommendations for the furbearer beaver proposals. The motion passed with 6 votes in favor and 1 against.

**22-03** Commissioner Attebury moved and Commissioner Ebert moved to accept the staff recommendations for the furbearer proposals. The motion passed with 6 votes in favor and 1 against.

## LANDS

Bill Bosworth, Natural Resources Program Coordinator presented all of the lands items.

### Property Disposal

The Department periodically reviews land holdings and maintains a list of properties no longer serving the purpose for which they were acquired and are not supporting the Department's mission.

When disposal requires the sale of property, title is transferred to the Idaho Board of Land Commissioners, and Idaho Department of Lands (IDL) manages the process identified in Idaho Code (Idaho Code sections 58-331 and 58-332) for disposing of State surplus property. Expenses accrued during this process by IDL and IDFG would be paid for with revenue from the property sale, and any profit from the sale would be returned to IDFG.

Department staff are requesting Commission approval to initiate the disposal process for 9 properties:

#### Rockford Bay Access Site, Panhandle Region

This is a 0.6-acre parcel in Kootenai County on Lake Coeur d'Alene. This property was purchased to provide angler access. However, the property is primarily used for public parking, and the associated lake access is infrequently used.

#### Clark Fork Hatchery, Panhandle Region

Hatchery operations on this 20-acre parcel in Bonner County ceased in 2000 because fish present in the facility's source water carried Infectious Pancreatic Necrosis Virus, and the hatchery fish could not be protected from the disease. Since 2000, the facility has served as a work station for Panhandle Region staff and as a residence for contractors working on Department projects. Department operations moved in 2021 to other facilities and the Clark Fork property is no longer needed.

#### Greer Access Site, Clearwater Region

The Greer Access Site on the Clearwater River in Clearwater County was originally acquired to provide fishing access for anadromous anglers. The property consists of 3 small tracts. The Department would dispose of 2.75 acres located within the Greer building lots and lacking river frontage, and would retain the single parcel with river frontage for angler access.

#### McGill Spur Access Site, Clearwater Region

Fourteen acres in Clearwater County were originally acquired to provide fishing access to the Clearwater River for anadromous anglers. This property consists of 2 tracts separated by a railroad right-of-way paralleling the river. The Department would dispose of 8 acres lacking river frontage and retain approximately 3.75 acres for access parking and 2.25 acres providing river frontage for angler access.

#### Middle Fork Payette River Wildlife Habitat Area, Southwest Region

The Department was gifted 9.37 acres along the Middle Fork Payette River in 1991. This parcel provides minimal habitat for wildlife population management. It is landlocked by adjacent private land and has no road access, so the value for public access is low.

#### Emmett Airport Pond Access Site, Southwest Region

This 16.8-acre parcel in Gem County was acquired in 1961 to provide fishing access. This property receives low public use.

#### Boulder Hole Access Site, Southwest Region

This 4.26-acre parcel was originally acquired to provide access to a popular fishing site on the Little Salmon River. A flood in 1997 altered the river channel, and public use of the site is now low.

#### Deer Creek Hay Shed, Magic Valley Region

This 1-acre parcel in Camas County was initially acquired to support big game winter feeding operations. This property is no longer required for this purpose.

#### Thorn Creek Wildlife Habitat Area, Magic Valley Region

This property comprises 5.3 acres in Gooding County. The size and location of the site limits its utility for wildlife benefit, and public use of the site is very low.

**22-04** Commissioner Murphy moved and Commissioner Bobbitt seconded a motion that the Commission authorize Department staff to initiate disposal processes as presented. Motion carries.

#### **Trout Creek Property Donation**

A 2-acre parcel along the Pack River bordering the Pend Oreille Wildlife Management Area (WMA) in Bonner County has been offered for donation to the Department. This addition to the WMA would increase public access and consolidate Department ownership along the east bank of the Pack River.

Staff estimate maintenance costs would be \$84 annually and Fee in Lieu of Tax payments to Bonner County to be \$4 annually.

This property was previously presented to the Commission during Executive Session in July 2019.

**22-05** Commissioner Bobbitt moved and Commissioner Clezie seconded a motion that the Commission accept donation of the 2-acre Trout Creek property. Motion carries.

### **Morgan Property Acquisition**

The Department is proposing fee title acquisition of a 58-acre property located in Lemhi County. The Morgan property is located on the Lemhi River, just upstream of the confluence with Hayden Creek, its largest tributary. The property is adjacent to a 15-acre IDFG river access property and would expand public access to the river and adjacent uplands. It also connects the river to thousands of acres of surrounding public lands.

This property is at the downstream end of Chinook Salmon spawning areas where some of the highest juvenile fish densities have been recorded in the Lemhi River watershed. IDFG and collaborators are developing and implementing multiple floodplain rehabilitation projects to enhance riverine habitat in this area. Acquisition would support a restoration project that would connect habitat projects along more than 4 miles of the Lemhi River.

This property was previously presented to the Commission during Executive Session in May 2021.

The appraised value is \$250,000. Pacific Coast Salmon Recovery Fund would be used for 75% and HB530 funds would be used for 25% of the acquisition cost.

Maintenance costs are estimated to be \$2,450 annually.

Fee in Lieu of Taxes payments to Lemhi County are estimated to be \$100 annually.

**22-06** Commissioner Davies moved and Commissioner Attebury seconded a motion to acquire the 58-acre Morgan property. Motion carries.

## **SEASON SETTING AND RULES**

### **Bighorn Sheep Interim Tag Number Changes**

Hollie Miyasaki, Wildlife Staff Biologist presented the 2022 Bighorn Sheep Tag Modifications.

The Idaho Fish and Game Commission has authority to establish harvest seasons (including season dates, bag limits, size, gender, and harvestable species) via proclamation, rather than through IDAPA rulemaking. The Commission considers proposed changes for season setting and publishes proclamations biennially for moose, bighorn sheep, and mountain goat in January of odd-numbered years. The Commission set the 2021 and 2022 seasons and tag numbers for moose, bighorn sheep, and mountain goats at their January 2021 meeting.

Although the Department focusses efforts for the season-setting process on a biennial cycle, the Commission has the authority to consider proposals and make adjustments annually if necessary due to fire, bad winter weather, disease, new data, or other factors.

With the exception of one special bighorn sheep tag issued by auction and one special bighorn sheep tag issued through lottery drawing, all tags for moose, bighorn sheep, and mountain goats are issued through a controlled hunt drawing conducted following the April 1 – April 30 application period.

The Department is proposing the following modifications to tag numbers for 2 bighorn sheep hunts for the 2022 hunting season:

- **Close bighorn sheep season in Controlled Hunt No. 7006 (Controlled Hunt Area 46-1, 1 tag).**

Disease was first detected in the Bruneau-Jarbidge California bighorn sheep herd in 2016. The population has declined since that time. IDFG counted 26 bighorn sheep, including 3 Class I-II rams, during the most recent aerial survey conducted in June 2021. This is a considerable decrease from the 67 bighorn sheep (12 rams including 8 class III-IV) counted during the previous survey in July 2018. Currently the Bruneau-Jarbidge population does not meet the minimum recommended number of individuals or Class III-IV rams needed to support a hunt.

IDFG staff is recommending eliminating Controlled Hunt No. 7006 (1 tag).

- **Reduce bighorn sheep tags in Controlled Hunt No. 7002 (Controlled Hunt Area 41-1) from 2 tags to 1 tag.**

IDFG counted 139 bighorn sheep in the Jacks Creek Population during the June 2021 survey. The total count included 33 rams (14 Class III-IV). This population is divided into 2 hunt areas (41-1 and 41-2). During the June 2021 survey, 62 bighorn sheep were observed in Hunt Area 41-1, including 10 rams (1 Class III-IV). In Hunt Area 41-2, 11 rams were observed in a group that historically moved between hunt areas but has seemed to favor Hunt Area 41-2 in recent years. Current and draft Bighorn Sheep Management Plan guidance is to restrict harvest to no more than 20% of Class III-IV rams. Considering the survey is a minimum count and that some of the Class I-II rams will be maturing into the Class III-IV age group, staff recommends reducing the total number of ram tags by 1 for the 2022 season in Hunt Area 41-1 because there are fewer rams in that hunt area.

IDFG staff is recommending reducing tag number in Controlled Hunt No. 7002 (Hunt Area 41-1) from 2 tags to 1 tag.

**22-07** Commissioner Clezie moved Commissioner Murphy seconded a motion that the Commission adopt staff recommendations for adjustments to the 2022 bighorn sheep hunting seasons. Motion carries.

## MANAGEMENT PLAN

### Draft Bighorn Sheep Plan

Hollie Miyasaki, Wildlife Staff Biologist, presented an overview of the Draft Bighorn Sheep Management Plan and is seeking Commission approval to release the draft for public comment.

The intent of this revision to the 2010 Bighorn Sheep Management Plan is to use current information to provide guidance for the Department and their partners to implement management actions that will aid in protection and management of bighorn sheep populations in Idaho and guide harvest season recommendations. This plan will function as the action plan for bighorn sheep management in Idaho. Major issues that affect bighorn sheep are identified and the plan will set overall direction for bighorn sheep management during the next 6 years (2022-2027). This plan will guide the Department in annual work plan development and program prioritization, and provide guidance on development of regulatory recommendations.

Staff seeks Commission concurrence to release the Draft Bighorn Sheep Management Plan to the public, agency partners, and interested organizations for further comments. Staff will revise the draft based on input received with intent to complete a final plan to present to the Commission for approval and adoption in March 2022.

**22-08** Commissioner Clezie moved and Commissioner Davies seconded a motion to approve the draft bighorn sheep management plan for release to the public for review and input. Motion carries.

### **Final Idaho Wild Turkey Management Plan**

Don Jenkins, Natural Resource Program Coordinator, reported that staff presented an overview of the development of the Wild Turkey Management Plan (Plan) at the Commission's November 2020 meeting. A second update and a draft plan were presented to the Commission at the November 2021 meeting and the Commission approved the plan for release to the public for review and input at that time.

A public input summary was given (Appendix 55, Exhibit 3).

This Plan provides guidance to the Department and their partners to implement management actions that will enhance wild turkey habitat and populations in Idaho. This is the Department's first management plan specific to wild turkeys. This Plan will function as the action plan for wild turkey management in Idaho during the next 6 years (2022-2027). It identifies major issues that affect wild turkeys and sets the overall direction for turkey management. The Plan will guide the Department in annual work plan development and program prioritization, and will provide guidance on development of regulatory recommendations.

**22-09** Commissioner Bobbitt moved and Commissioner Ebert seconded a motion that the Commission adopt the Idaho Wild Turkey Management Plan (2022-2027). Motion carries.

### **SEASON SETTING AND RULES**

#### **Grizzly Bear Update: Delisting Petition(s)**

Jim Fredericks, Deputy Director and Deputy Attorney General Kathleen Trever presented. There is not any action on this item, information only.

At its December 16, 2021 teleconference, the Commission reviewed and approved a revision to the 2016 Tri-State Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) among Idaho, Montana and Wyoming concerning grizzly bears in the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem (GYE). The revised agreement addresses management, genetic health, and allocation of discretionary mortality of GYE grizzly bears. The Commission also adopted a revision to a 2016 proclamation, to formalize Idaho-specific measures related to the Tri-State MOA. The Montana and Wyoming Commissions also adopted the Tri-State MOA revisions.

The Tri-State MOA revisions originated with the State of Wyoming's communicating its intent to petition the delisting of GYE grizzly bears. Wyoming submitted its petition for delisting the GYE to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service on January 11.

Staff recently learned that the State of Montana submitted a petition to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service on December 17, 2021 to delist grizzly bears in the Northern Continental Divide recovery area.

Based on scientific and regulatory information, as well as recent court decisions interpreting the Endangered Species Act, it is appropriate to revisit the 1993 U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service delineation of the "ecosystems" for recovery in the U.S. Northern Rocky Mountains.

Recovery areas identified by the Service in the 1993 Recovery Plan, including the Selkirk, Cabinet-Yaak, and the Northern Continental Divide (located in Northern Montana), are in fact the southern extremities of a larger, connected population in Canada, with documented movement of bears between the areas and to areas outside of core habitats as the population has grown. There is also documented bear presence and movement in the Kootenai(y) and Moyie river valleys, as well as the Purcell Trench, which supposedly separate the "ecosystems."

Notably, the 1993 Recovery Plan defines the Selkirk Recovery area as nearly 50% in Canada, under which jurisdiction grizzly bears are not an ESA-listed species. It's apparent that this definition was made because only the southern-most portion of the Selkirk Range, which harbors a portion of the Selkirk grizzly population, is in the U.S. and was too small on its own to include in the lower-48 recovery plan. The continued artificial division of these areas and the Service's undersized management units for these areas is inconsistent with best available science and produces incorrect conclusions as to population status. Continued designation of these as separate "ecosystems" is an outdated construct and does not serve conservation, management, and assessment of grizzly bears in Idaho.

Staff are coordinating with the Governor's Office on the merits of an Idaho petition for delisting.

## **MISCELLANEOUS**

### **Presentation Award**



Andy Brunelle, Idaho Capital City Coordinator, Intermountain and Northern Regions USDA Forest Service was honored in recognition of his outstanding partnership and support of the Idaho Department of Fish and Game.

## **LEGISLATION**

### **Update on Legislation and Rulemaking**

Jim Fredericks, Deputy Director provided a brief update on rulemaking and legislation. There is news of a bill on outfitter allocation but is not printed at this time. The Department will keep the Commission apprised of any action taken during the Commission legislative conference calls. Staff are preparing for year-two of Governor Little's Zero-Based Regulation Rulemaking process. This will involve a comprehensive review, simplification and associated negotiated rulemaking of three or four chapters of IDAPA 13.

## **REPORT**

### **Wolf Abundance Estimate Report**

Shane Roberts, Wildlife Research Manager presented. Back ground: Since 2019 the Department has used a statewide remote camera array to estimate wolf occupancy (distribution) and abundance (total number). The camera-based abundance estimation method was first developed in Idaho for use on ungulates through collaboration with the University of Montana. The methodology has since been adapted for estimation of other species, including wolves. During spring 2021, Department staff deployed a total of 737 cameras statewide for wolf monitoring purposes. Cameras captured over 9 million pictures during the June-September deployment. Through our continued collaboration with Microsoft's AI (Artificial Intelligence) for Earth program, we used specialized image recognition software to identify which pictures contained animals (as opposed to grass or twigs blowing in the wind), and then trained staff categorized the pictures that contained animals by species. The resulting data were used in a space-to-event model to estimate average wolf density within portions of the state categorized into three levels of wolf occupancy (low, medium, high). Those density estimates, combined with information on wolf habitat, were then used to estimate wolf abundance across the entire state. This method resulted in estimates of 1,566 and 1,556 wolves statewide during the summers of 2019 and 2020, respectively. "For summer 2021, statewide wolf abundance was estimated at 1,543, suggesting a stable population across the three years".

## **MISCELLANEOUS**

### **Shikar Safari Wildlife Officer of the Year**

Raliegh Scott was presented the Shikar Safari Wildlife Officer of the Year award. Raliegh's people skills, knowledge of hunting, fishing, trapping, backcountry horsemanship, and relationships in his comminute enhance the Departments' ability to protect and manage the wildlife resources of Idaho. Thanks for a job well done.

## **REPORT**

### **Chronic Wasting Disease Update**

Rick Ward, State Wildlife Manager presented.

In November 2021 chronic wasting disease (CWD) was confirmed in two hunter-harvested mule deer bucks taken during October in the Slate Creek drainage in Unit 14. These were the first confirmed positive tests for CWD in Idaho. Beginning November 19, 2021, IDFG staff conducted supplementary check stations to collect additional samples for testing from deer and elk harvested during on-going hunts in Unit 14 and surrounding units. The Commission approved a temporary CWD management zone consisting of Units 14 and 15 on November 22 and authorized IDFG to implement emergency surveillance hunts to collect additional samples from deer, consistent with IDFG's *2021 Strategy for Chronic Wasting Disease*.

IDFG staff identified a CWD surveillance area as the geographic area where additional CWD samples were to be collected to allow estimation of CWD prevalence levels and distribution in both mule deer and white-tailed deer. The CWD surveillance area consists of all of units 14 and 15 and portions of units 11A, 13, 18, and 23. The CWD surveillance area is divided into three sampling areas: 1) all of Unit 14; 2) all of Unit 15 and a portion of Unit 11A; 3) portions of Units 13, 18, and 23. Staff targeted 200 CWD samples per sample area for each deer species as the total needed to estimate the CWD prevalence rate and geographic distribution with a high level of precision and confidence. CWD samples for both mule deer and white-tailed deer were sought for the Unit 14 and Unit 13/18/23 sample areas, while the Unit 15/11A sample area was designed to focus on collection on only white-tailed deer samples. In total, our goal was to collect 1,000 deer samples for testing across the CWD surveillance zone.

The Commission recessed to attend a meeting with the House Resources & Conservation Committee.

Reconvene

### **Final 2021 Outfitter Use Report**

Rick Ward, State Wildlife Manager presented the report.

Beginning with the 2021 season, outfitter tag sales have been administered through IDFG's licensing system, providing improved tracking and monitoring of outfitter tag use. Staff presented a statewide overview of the final 2021 (Appendix 55, Exhibit 4) general-hunt outfitter tag sales and use by tag type, including:

- Tags allocated to outfitters
- Tags purchased by outfitters
- Allocated tags returned to the nonresident pool
- Non-outfitted tags converted to outfitted tags
- Unused outfitter allocation

## REPORTS

### Director's Report

The Director's report stands as provided in the agenda packet.

### Commissioner Reports

Commissioner Reports stand as written (Appendix 55, Exhibit 5).

## MISCELLANEOUS

### Planning for Next Meeting

The next meeting is scheduled for March 23-24 in Boise.

### Executive Session

**22-10** Commissioner Davies moved and Commissioner Attebury seconded a motion that the Commission go into executive session under Idaho Code 74-206 subsection (c) for land acquisition and subsection (f) for litigation. Roll Call vote Ayes: Dave Bobbitt, Don Ebert, Tim Murphy, Greg Cameron, Lane Clezie, Derick Attebury and Ron Davies.

Staff presented information on potential land acquisition. Legal counsel discussed litigation matters.

**22-11** Commissioner Davies moved and Commissioner Clezie seconded a motion to come out of executive session and let the record reflect that no action was taken. Motion carries.

### Open session

Adjournment at 3:13 p.m. MST.



Greg Cameron  
Chairman



Ed Schriever  
Secretary