

# *Direction*



FY 2026-2029  
Annual Strategic Plan



# The Director's Message



Idahoans value healthy, abundant fish and wildlife populations and the outdoor recreation they provide, and Idaho Fish and Game's FY 2026-29 strategic plan – The Compass – outlines how we will preserve, protect, perpetuate and manage Idaho's wildlife.

A longer-term strategic plan update is also in the works and expected to be completed by spring 2026, which will expand our vision of the Department's path into the future and outline how we intend to get there.

Fish and Game serves Idahoans by managing the state's wildlife, and partnering with our fellow citizens in wildlife management is one of our greatest strengths and assets. I believe it's why Idaho Fish and Game is one of the finest fish and wildlife management agencies in the country, and without question, we have some of the best fish and wildlife professionals in North America.

However, that doesn't make managing Idaho's abundant wildlife simple or easy. As identified in the following pages, we face many challenges, including increased demand for outdoor recreation, loss of fish and wildlife habitat, coping with fish and wildlife diseases, and managing wildlife conflicts with crops and livestock, and many others.

Despite those challenges, I am confident the Department, along with the people we serve, can and will effectively meet and overcome them.

The basis for The Compass was established in 2015 when the Idaho Fish and Game Commission adopted the Department's internal strategic plan, which identifies the following broad, overarching goals:

- Sustain Idaho's fish and wildlife and the habitats upon which they depend.
- Meet the demand for hunting, fishing, trapping and other wildlife recreation.
- Improve public understanding of, and involvement in, fish and wildlife management.
- Enhance the capability of Fish and Game to manage fish and wildlife and serve the public.

This update describes more specific goals and objectives for the FY 2026-29 period. And although challenges evolve, they aren't new, and in some cases, we've managed them for decades. Despite the challenges we face, we have robust and widely distributed populations of fish and wildlife, and we continue to enjoy unparalleled wildlife recreation that revolves around fishing, hunting, trapping and wildlife viewing.

As we further develop the next long-term strategic plan, we look forward to working closely with hunters, anglers, trappers, and all other Idahoans to help chart our future course.



**Jim Fredericks**  
Director

# Our Mission

## **Idaho State Department of Fish and Game**

(Idaho Code Section 36-103)

All wildlife, including all wild animals, wild birds, and fish, within the state of Idaho, is hereby declared to be the property of the state of Idaho. It shall be preserved, protected, perpetuated, and managed. It shall only be captured or taken at such times or places, under such conditions, or by such means, or in such manner, as will preserve, protect, and perpetuate such wildlife, and provide for the citizens of this state and, as by law permitted to others, continued supplies of such wildlife for hunting, fishing and trapping.



# Idaho Fish and Game Commission

The Idaho Legislature created the Idaho Department of Fish and Game in 1899. In 1938, the Fish and Game Commission was established by voter initiative making it responsible for administering fish and game policy, approving the Department budget prior to Legislative action, and guiding the Department's management practices. Commissioners are appointed from seven administrative regions by the Governor and serve staggered, four-year terms.

The current commissioners are as follows: Dave Bobbitt (Panhandle), Don Ebert (Clearwater), Tim Murphy (Southwest), Mike Roach (Magic Valley), Jordan Cheirrett (Southeast), Brody Harshbarger (Upper Snake), and Ron Davies (Salmon). The Commission holds most of the regulatory authority for fish and wildlife management and set its broad expectations to Idaho Fish and Game in the 2015 Strategic Plan.



**Dave Bobbitt**  
Chairman



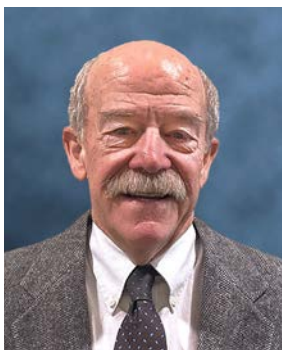
**Don Ebert**



**Tim Murphy**

## OUR VISION

*The Idaho Department of Fish and Game shall work with hunters, anglers, trappers and other Idahoans to provide abundant fish and wildlife that enables their right to hunt, fish and trap, and provides the foundation for the rich wildlife heritage they value, which is enshrined in the Fish and Game mission.*



**Mike Roach**



**Jordan Cheirrett**  
Vice-Chairman



**Brody Harshbarger**



**Ron Davies**

# GOAL

## Fish, Wildlife & Habitat

*Sustain Idaho's fish and wildlife and the habitats upon which they depend.*

### OBJECTIVES

*Maintain or improve game populations to meet the demand for hunting, fishing and trapping.*

*Ensure the long-term survival of native fish, wildlife and plants.*

*Increase the capacity of habitat to support fish and wildlife.*

*Eliminate the impacts of fish and wildlife diseases on fish and wildlife populations, livestock and humans.*

### STRATEGIES

- ▶ Develop and implement fish and wildlife management plans.
- ▶ Improve the scientific basis and public involvement process used to set harvest rules and regulations to achieve long-term sustainability of populations and habitat.
- ▶ Manage predation to ensure continued supplies of fish and wildlife for hunting, fishing and trapping.
- ▶ Identify and monitor native species with high priority conservation needs.
- ▶ Develop and implement management plans for conservation of high priority species to ensure survival and avoid new Endangered Species Act listings.
- ▶ Collaborate with interested and affected parties to recover threatened and endangered species.
- ▶ Provide incentives and assistance to landowners to improve habitat on private land.
- ▶ Work with sportsman's groups and other conservation partners to improve important habitats.
- ▶ Work with public land managers to achieve large-scale habitat improvements.
- ▶ Fully obtain and implement mitigation for habitat affected by infrastructure and development projects.
- ▶ Reduce or eliminate the risk of transmission of disease between captive and free-ranging fish and wildlife.
- ▶ Collaborate with other agencies and education institutions on disease control, prevention and research, including between wildlife and livestock.



# FY 2025-2028 MANAGEMENT DIRECTION

FY 2025-2028 Management Direction	Brief Statement of FY 2025 status, progress, and/or accomplishments	FY 2026-2029 Management Direction	Tasks/Actions Planned for FY2026
<p>Emphasize improvements to deer and elk populations and hunting opportunity.</p>	<p>Technical Services Bureau staff have provided input on land use and land management plans to promote healthy deer and elk habitat in Idaho. The Department also revised the statewide elk management plan to give other agencies and NGOs information on elk management in Idaho.</p> <p>The Department has continued both deer and elk survival monitoring on populations throughout the state.</p> <p>Cameras studies are being evaluated and refined to increase precision in estimates of abundance and composition for deer and elk. Cameras are proving to be a good tool in assessing deer and elk populations in many areas of the state. This methodology also allows the department to fly fewer hours, reducing risk to staff.</p> <p>The Department continues to monitor for chronic wasting disease throughout the state and also continues to actively manage deer populations in positive detection areas to minimize prevalence and spread.</p> <p>The Department assessed hunter attitudes and preferences regarding crowding using 4 surveys over 5 years. Final analyses are in preparation. A survey of white-tailed deer hunters was also completed to measure attitudes and preferences for whitetail hunting and management to inform development of the white-tailed deer management plan.</p>	<p>Emphasize improvements to deer and elk populations and hunting opportunity.</p>	<p>Provide technical assistance to NG's and federal land management agencies to support sustaining and improving deer and elk habitat in Idaho.</p> <p>Continue survival monitoring of prioritized deer and elk populations.</p> <p>Continue to evaluate results from camera deployments for application in deer and elk population monitoring.</p> <p>Continue to monitor for chronic wasting disease statewide and actively manage chronic wasting disease where present to minimize prevalence and risk of disease spread.</p> <p>Assess preferences and attitudes of Idaho mule deer hunters through a statewide survey.</p>



FY 2025-2028 Management Direction	Brief Statement of FY 2025 status, progress, and/or accomplishments	FY 2026-2029 Management Direction	Tasks/Actions Planned for FY2026
<b>Continue to align predation management efforts with ungulate management needs.</b>	<p>Revision of predation management plans is ongoing</p> <p>Implemented additional wolf management efforts (reimbursement programs, control actions) in areas where ungulate populations were not meeting objectives as identified in the Wolf Management Plan.</p> <p>Staff radio-marked deer and elk statewide to monitor survival and evaluate causes of mortality. Analysis of data collected during predator-prey research in North Idaho (GMUs 1, 6, 10A) is ongoing.</p> <p>Staff developed and implemented a wolf-abundance model utilizing age-at-harvest and genetic data. Staff initiated the development of Integrated Population Models for wolves and Statistical Population Reconstruction models for mountain lions and black bears.</p>	<b>Continue to align predation management efforts with ungulate management needs.</b>	<p>Complete revisions to five elk zone predation management plans in FY2026.</p> <p>Implement and monitor predation management efforts where elk are below objectives and predation is identified as a limiting factor.</p> <p>Continue long-term monitoring of prey and predator interactions.</p> <p>Continue the development of population monitoring tools for large carnivores, utilizing efficient data sources (age at harvest, genetics) as much as possible.</p>
<b>Manage sage-grouse populations and habitat to maintain or increase sage-grouse populations and hunting opportunity.</b>	<p>A dynamic harvest strategy that incorporated counts of spring lekking birds with information on summer survival and reproduction was used to estimate the harvestable fall population and set zone-specific tag numbers. Tag levels were set to provide harvest of no more than 5-8% of the fall population in each zone. A total of 5,091 tags were offered, 49% of offered tags were filled.</p> <p>Partnered on five Sage-grouse Actions Team habitat projects in southern Idaho (wet meadow restoration, conifer removal). Partnered with state and federal agencies and private organizations on two landscape scale juniper-removal projects. Implemented multiple Cheatgrass Challenge invasive annual grass control projects in sage-grouse habitat.</p>	<b>Manage sage-grouse populations and habitat to maintain or increase sage grouse populations and hunting opportunity.</b>	<p>Continue to utilize a dynamic harvest strategy to allocate hunting opportunity commensurate with fluctuating sage-grouse populations.</p> <p>Work with state and federal agency partners in an adaptive management framework to effectively identify and guide habitat restoration projects to benefit sage-grouse across southern Idaho.</p>
<b>Ensure an efficient and effective fish hatchery program and maintain full operating capacity.</b>	Critical fish transport equipment was updated and fish hauling efficiency was improved. The three-year construction process for Nampa Fish Hatchery is underway. The designs for Hagerman State pipeline and Hayspur pond are complete.	<b>Ensure an efficient and effective fish hatchery program and maintain full operating capacity.</b>	Continue construction at Nampa Fish Hatchery. Complete Hayspur Fish Hatchery effluent management improvements. Complete the design process for the office and dormitory improvements at Cabinet Gorge Fish Hatchery. Continue evaluating Mackay Spring collection for possible improvements.



FY 2025-2028 Management Direction	Brief Statement of FY 2025 status, progress, and/or accomplishments	FY 2026-2029 Management Direction	Tasks/Actions Planned for FY2026
Manage avian predation where it affects native fish conservation and/or sport fish management objectives.	<p>IDFG staff contracted with Wildlife Services and assisted in non-lethal and lethal hazing activities at the Blackfoot/Chesterfield pelican colony in the Southeast Region.</p> <p>Drone surveys and/or ground counts were conducted at Blackfoot and Minidoka colonies during the nesting and fledgling phase of production.</p> <p>IDFG staff continued to tag Yellowstone Cutthroat Trout in the Blackfoot River system to monitor pelican predation rates, population dynamics, and abundance.</p>	Manage avian predation where it affects native fish conservation and/or sport fish management objectives as described in the 2026 Predation Management Plan to Reduce Impacts to Fisheries Resources by American White Pelicans and other Piscivorous Birds in Idaho.	<p>Use a combination of lethal (with appropriate USFWS permit) and non-lethal techniques to reduce bird/fish conflicts across Idaho.</p> <p>Conduct piscivorous bird hazing activities at priority waters (e.g., Anderson Ranch, Blackfoot, Chesterfield, and Island Park Reservoirs, Silver Creek).</p> <p>Conduct breeding population and productivity surveys at all active pelican colonies and conduct other piscivorous bird colony surveys as described in the predation management plan.</p> <p>Monitor population dynamics, abundance, and predation rates for the Upper Blackfoot River Yellowstone Cutthroat Trout population and other fish populations to measure the effectiveness of piscivorous bird management strategies.</p>
Plan, design, permit and implement restoration activities in the Pack River Delta and pursue other wildlife restoration opportunities throughout Lake Pend Oreille impacted by operations of Albeni Falls dam.	Pack River Phase 2 Restoration vegetation planting was completed in July 2024. A total of 60,000 willows, upland herbaceous, and upland woody plants were planted on the newly created wetland and riparian habitat. Other accomplishments for FY25 included designing, planning, contractor prequalification, and permitting for Pack River Delta Phase 3 Restoration construction planned for fall of FY26.	Plan, design, permit and implement restoration activities in the Pack River Delta and pursue other wildlife restoration opportunities throughout Lake Pend Oreille impacted by operations of Albeni Falls dam.	Coordinate with federal partners to implement North Idaho Memorandum of Agreement and initiate and complete Pack River Delta Phase 3 Habitat Restoration in FY26. Finalize project design and plans, complete permitting and environmental compliance, and select contractor. Construction to begin in October 2025 (FY26) with completion by April 2026.
Continue to integrate State Wildlife Action Plan (SWAP) implementation across IDFG programs, facilitate SWAP use, and develop an accomplishments reporting tool.	<p>Held one-on-one coordination meetings (in-person/virtual) with IDFG Headquarters Bureau program leads and Regional Wildlife Diversity Program biologists to broaden SWAP implementation through collaborating across programs and finding synergy with existing programmatic priorities.</p> <p>Developed spatially-explicit ArcGIS Survey123 online form for tracking SWAP implementation.</p> <p>Explored options for creating an online user interface (or dashboard) for SWAP including Tableau from Salesforce and Microsoft Power BI. The ArcGIS Survey123 online smart form developed in FY 2025 provides a start for developing additional online SWAP content and user interface.</p>	Continue to integrate State Wildlife Action Plan (SWAP) implementation across IDFG programs, facilitate SWAP use, and develop an accomplishments reporting tool.	<p>Continue to coordinate department-wide SWAP implementation by fostering cross-bureau and cross-program collaboration, focused on statewide SWAP priorities.</p> <p>Beta test Idaho SWAP Project Implementation Tracking Tool and once finalized, release for internal IDFG use.</p> <p>Building on the SWAP Project Implementation Tracking Tool, continue to develop online user interface to facilitate SWAP use and implementation.</p>
Improve populations and resiliency of native fish by partnering with governmental agencies, landowners, and private entities to improve aquatic habitats and develop and maintain screening facilities to minimize entrainment into irrigation systems.	Fisheries staff led project development for seven fish passage barriers across Idaho that will ultimately benefit several native species including Bull Trout, Cutthroat Trout, steelhead, and Chinook Salmon. Fish screen maintenance activities are completed daily during the irrigation season. Several fish screens were replaced in priority tributaries to the main Salmon River.	Increase resiliency of native fish populations by partnering with governmental agencies, landowners, and private entities to improve aquatic habitats, increase connectivity, and address factors that limit the growth, recruitment, survival, and distribution of focal species.	Fisheries staff are working with federal, state, local, NGO, and private partners to develop six restoration projects. Project outcomes include restored fish passage, increased instream complexity, and increased water efficiency.





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<b>Increase officer presence and patrol efforts statewide.</b>	MDTP (Mobile Data Terminal Project) includes 8 patrol vehicles outfitted with gear/technology which allow officers to complete administrative duties in the field. SCO performance guidelines were recently updated and monitored to reflect the strategic priorities of public contacts and violations detected.	<b>Sustain officer presence and patrol efforts.</b>	Prioritize conservation law enforcement efforts and maintain Department support role in wildlife and fish management.
<b>Prevent wildlife damage to private lands and compensate private landowners for wildlife damage to crops and forage.</b>	Completed legislative intent by hiring two new depredation technicians to support Regions 5 and 6.  Held staff meetings every other month, held an in-person training meeting, and respond to all calls from landowner sportsmen coordinators and regional wildlife managers to provide staff information and training on depredation research and depredation investigation and prevention techniques. Continued to develop an operations manual to evaluate big game crop damage with the use of drones and worked with a local company to develop an application for synthesizing drone data to assist with big game crop damage evaluations.	<b>Prevent wildlife damage to private lands and compensate private landowners for wildlife damage to crops and forage.</b>	Provide training and recommendations to staff based on depredation research and new depredation investigation and prevention techniques.  Complete development of an operations manual for evaluating big game crop damage with the use of drones and an application for synthesizing drone data to assist with big game crop damage evaluations.
<b>Update wildlife management plans on a six-year interval.</b>	Revision of the White-tailed Deer Management Plan was initiated in FY2025.  Revision of the Upland Game Management plan was not initiated in FY2025 as a result of reprioritizing management plans and timing.  Revision of the Moose Management plan was not initiated in FY2025 as a result of reprioritizing management plans and timing.  The draft Mountain Goat Management Plan was released for public review and comment in FY2025. The final plan will be presented for Fish and Game Commission review and approval in early FY2026.  Revision of the Strategy for Chronic Wasting Disease was initiated in FY2025.	<b>Update wildlife management plans on a six-year interval.</b>	Provide the White-tailed Deer Management Plan for Fish and Game Commission review and approval in FY2026.  Initiate revision of the Upland Game Management Plan in FY2026.  Initiate revision of the Moose Management Plan in FY2026.  Provide the Mountain Goat Management Plan for Fish and Game Commission review and approval in FY2026.  Complete revisions to the Strategy for Chronic Wasting Disease in FY2026.  Initiate development of a Greater Sage-grouse Management Plan in FY2026.



FY 2025-2028 Management Direction	Brief Statement of FY 2025 status, progress, and/or accomplishments	FY 2026-2029 Management Direction	Tasks/Actions Planned for FY2026
<b>Restore and/or reconnect habitat in the Potlatch and Upper Salmon River basins to increase habitat for anadromous and resident salmonids.</b>	Project staff completed three floodplain reconnect projects during FY 2025 that increased rearing habitat for juvenile Chinook Salmon, steelhead, Bull Trout and Westslope Cutthroat Trout in the Lemhi and Pahsimeroi rivers. Staff in the Potlatch River implemented a project adjoining a previous restoration project that increased the density of large-woody debris complexes creating rearing habitat for wild juvenile steelhead over 0.7 miles of the West Fork of Little Bear Creek. Seven restoration projects are in some stage of development for implementation in subsequent fiscal years in the Upper Salmon Basin and Potlatch rivers. The Anadromous Fish Screen Program operated and maintained its inventory of 281 fish screens in the Upper Salmon River Basin, encompassing over 350 miles of mainstem river corridor and designed, fabricated, bid, and installed eight new fish screen replacements. Spring Valley Flow Augmentation 15% design plans and updated cost estimate were presented to BPA for approval. Plans were approved and BPA agreed to further fund the project through 100% design plans and initiate environmental consultation and permitting processes.	<b>Restore and/or reconnect aquatic habitat in the Potlatch and Upper Salmon River basins to enhance productivity and survival of anadromous and resident salmonids. Continue screening irrigation diversions to reduce entrainment of anadromous salmonids and migratory resident species.</b>	Staff plan to implement four restoration projects in FY2026 and seven other projects are in various stages of development. Fish screen shop staff are developing three fish screens for replacement in FY2026. Ongoing maintenance and operation are a daily task during the entire irrigation season.
<b>Help sister agencies and members of large tract agreements with motorized vehicle management.</b>	Enforcement summaries completed by officers within RaMS (Records and Management System) to capture this information.	<b>Help sister agencies and members of large tract agreements with motorized vehicle management.</b>	Continue with documenting effort (total hours of patrol) of large tract agreements property patrols.

## FY 2024-2029 PERFORMANCE MEASURES

Performance Measure	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029	Benchmark
1: Compliance with regulations (# of violations / # of licenses checked)	5,263/55,379 (9.5%/10.2%)						Less than 10% of licenses checked result in violation/ check 8% of total licenses sold
2: Opportunity to harvest game fish (# of Department-operated hatchery-raised resident and anadromous fish stocked in ponds, lakes, and streams)	28,731,107						30,000,000

### Performance Measure Explanatory Notes:

- The benchmark is based on past performance by Department officers.
- This measure was added in FY 2014. The benchmark is based on maintaining the FY 2013 level of production.





# GOAL

## Fish and Wildlife Recreation

*Meet the demand for hunting, fishing, trapping and other wildlife recreation.*

### OBJECTIVES

*Maintain a diversity of fishing, hunting and trapping opportunities.*

*Sustain fish and wildlife recreation on public lands.*

*Increase the variety and distribution of access to private land for fish and wildlife recreation.*

*Increase opportunities for wildlife viewing and appreciation.*

### STRATEGIES

- ▶ Provide opportunities specific to the needs of beginners, youth, people with disabilities and families.
  - ▶ Assess participation, demand and satisfaction with hunting, fishing and trapping opportunities. Adjust management to achieve objectives.
  - ▶ Provide diverse hunting, fishing and trapping opportunities to meet the desires for a wide variety of user groups.
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- ▶ Protect the public's right to use public lands and waters for hunting, fishing, trapping and wildlife viewing.
  - ▶ Work with landowners to obtain public access across private lands to public lands.
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- ▶ Provide incentives and services to landowners who allow public access for hunting, fishing and trapping.
  - ▶ Improve landowner/sportsmen cooperation through communication and enforcement of hunting, fishing and trapping rules.
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- ▶ Promote and publicize wildlife appreciation opportunities.
  - ▶ Partner with other agencies, local communities and others to develop wildlife appreciation facilities, opportunities and materials on other land ownerships.

## OBJECTIVES

*Maintain broad public support for hunting, fishing, trapping and viewing.*

## STRATEGIES

- ▶ Emphasize ethics, safety and fair chase in hunting, fishing and trapping through Fish and Game education and enforcement programs.
- ▶ Publicize the economic and social benefits of hunting, fishing, trapping and wildlife viewing.
- ▶ Expand opportunities to take hunter and trapper education classes.
- ▶ Promote hunting, fishing and trapping as important tools for conserving and managing Idaho's fish and wildlife.
- ▶ Emphasize the role of the sportsman conservationist in funding wildlife conservation and management in Idaho.
- ▶ Use research and marketing to maintain and increase participation in hunting, fishing and trapping.

## FY 2025-2028 MANAGEMENT DIRECTION

FY 2025-2028 Management Direction	Brief Statement of FY 2025 status, progress, and/or accomplishments	FY 2026-2029 Management Direction	Tasks/Actions Planned for FY2026
<b>Make it easier to go hunting and fishing, including streamlining purchasing, improving licensing options for special populations, and other customer service improvements.</b>	<p>Staff has continued to encourage anglers to utilize electronic permit validation (e-tagging) and participation rates have increased over the prior year. Harvest estimates are being generated for both Chinook and steelhead using e-tagging data which has improved efficiency and accuracy. E-tagging based harvest estimates were used for the first time in the spring of 2025 to generate statewide steelhead harvest estimates and has replaced the steelhead mail/phone survey.</p> <p>E-tagging for salmon and steelhead was implemented for the 2025 season and was considered a success. Consideration of additional species that could be tagged electronically was temporarily put on hold while the Department shifted its resources to implementing a draw system for the sale of nonresident deer and elk tags in December of FY2026 for the 2026 season.</p> <p>Continuous improvements have been made to the licensing system and mobile app, including updated views for e-tagging submissions, system configurations to streamline the catalog of available products to purchase, and updates to email reminders and confirmations.</p> <p>Email subscribers grew by 2,462 subscribers, from 371,1006 in FY24 to 373,568 in FY25.</p> <p>Expanded social media reach through increased use of short-form videos, the NextDoor platform, and coordinated statewide campaigns such as Chronic Wasting Disease Awareness Week. Developed Request For Proposal for a vendor to assist with a comprehensive website overhaul that will greatly improve IDFG digital customer service.</p>	<b>Make it easier to go hunting and fishing, including streamlining purchasing, improving licensing options for special populations, and other customer service improvements.</b>	<p>Staff will continue to encourage anglers to utilize electronic permit validation (e-tagging). Increased participation rates and improvement in data processing and analysis will allow for faster harvest estimation and more accurate estimates.</p> <p>Once the nonresident draw is implemented for deer and elk tags in December of FY 2026, the Department will undertake an evaluation of potential species that would be a good fit for e-tagging for the 2027 hunting/fishing season.</p> <p>Grow email subscribers and continue to utilize email to keep customers informed on important news and information. Explore use of texting option to provide additional communication option for customers.</p> <p>Incorporate social media recommendations made via the upcoming IDFG Strategic Plan Update and Outreach, Engagement and Education Action plan. Hire web vendor and initiate multi-year website overhaul.</p>








FY 2025-2028 Management Direction	Brief Statement of FY 2025 status, progress, and/or accomplishments	FY 2026-2029 Management Direction	Tasks/Actions Planned for FY2026
<p><b>Improve hunting, fishing, trapping and wildlife viewing opportunities on private and public lands, including Wildlife Management Areas, and ensure adequate access to a diverse array of lands and waters.</b></p>	<p>The U.S. congress did not pass a new farm bill, so certain was not available to states during this fiscal year. Staff worked with Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies to provide information on the value of this program to states and help congressional staff understand the importance of the program.</p> <p>Provided routine technical assistance to state and federal land managers during land management planning and decision processes, which included the conservation of fish and wildlife habitats and recommendations to maintain or improve access to public lands and waters for hunting, fishing, and trapping.</p> <p>Analyzed visitation patterns on 10 Wildlife Management Areas (WMAs) using eBird data to better understand wildlife viewing use and guide infrastructure investments. Established baseline data on viewer use across key WMAs and presented key findings to managers. Distributed Idaho Birding Trail brochures regionally to IDFG office, Audubon groups, and tourism partners. Produced 10,000 new wildlife viewing pocket guides, featuring bats and raptors, and distributed across the state.</p> <p>Provided technical and financial assistance to improve non-motorized access trails in the Frank Church and Selway Bitterroot Wilderness areas. Entered into three agreements for non-motorized trail maintenance, two for the Frank Church Wilderness area and one for the Selway Bitterroot Wilderness area. As part of the five-year agreement to assist the Nez Perce-Clearwater Forest, crews completed clearing, brushing, and heavy deferred maintenance on approximately 220 miles of trail. Provided funding to maintain and improve important backcountry trails including: Elk City, the Frank Church, and Gospel Hump Wildernesses; trails in the Elk Summit, Indian Hill and Bear Creek areas of the Selway-Bitterroot Wilderness; and trails on the Palouse Ranger District.</p> <p>Fishing and boating access improvement and maintenance projects were completed at Cocalalla, Spirit and Hayden lakes (R1); Tolo Lake, Winchester Reservoir (R2); Olds Ferry, Horseshoe Bend Mill Pond, Seven Mile Slough, Cove Arm (R3), Silver Creek East and Glenns Ferry (R4); Edson Fichter, American Falls Fish Hatchery (R5); and Johnson Pond (R7). The fishing and boating access program was also able to purchase much needed equipment and materials for operating and maintaining sites.</p> <p>The Department stocked 28,500 pheasants at 23 sites during 2024 seasons. All stocking locations and weekly stocking schedules were posted on the Department website.</p>	<p><b>Improve hunting, fishing, trapping and wildlife viewing opportunities on private and public lands, including Wildlife Management Areas, and ensure adequate access to a diverse array of lands and waters.</b></p>	<p>Explore and apply for USDA NRCS Voluntary Public Access and Habitat Incentive Program access agreement if program is available.</p> <p>Provide technical assistance statewide to state and federal land managers during land management planning and decision processes that include recommendations to conserve fish and wildlife habitats and ensure access to public lands for hunting, fishing, and trapping.</p> <p>Increase opportunities for viewers to experience wildlife at destinations across the state by building wildlife viewing blinds, creating interpretive signs, analyzing viewer visitation on WMAs, promoting the Idaho Birding Trail, and creating and distributing wildlife viewing guides.</p> <p>Support U.S. Forest Service and trail association activities to improve back country trail access in Frank Church and Selway Bitterroot Wilderness areas, and other important back country areas.</p> <p>Identify and secure new fishing and boating access sites at key locations and subsequently develop amenities (ramps, dock, restrooms). New developments currently include Theater Bridge (R1) and The Confluence (R2) sites. Upgraded amenities and site improvements are planned at Spring Valley Reservoir (R2); Horsethief Reservoir, Wilson Springs Ponds, and Homedale (R3); Billingsley Creek North and King Hill (R4); and Cherry Plant (R5). And all existing sites will be operated and maintained for continued public use.</p> <p>Stock approximately 29,000 pheasants at 23 sites. Add any new stocking locations to the Department website.</p>

FY 2025-2028 Management Direction	Brief Statement of FY 2025 status, progress, and/or accomplishments	FY 2026-2029 Management Direction	Tasks/Actions Planned for FY2026
<b>Maintain or grow hunter, bowhunter and trapper education student numbers into the future. Spend efforts on recruiting and retaining quality instructors. Adapt technology to meet the public where they are as far as expectations for learning opportunities such as online or hybrid options.</b>	Successfully completed comprehensive Hunter Education Customer Satisfaction survey to gather data from last three years of customers on instructor and curriculum quality and preferred class-delivery options.	<b>Maintain or grow hunter, bowhunter and trapper education student numbers into the future. Adapt technology to make program offerings more accessible to customers.</b>	Create automated Hunter Ed Customer Satisfaction survey for customers going forward to establish a quality control process for all aspects of the hunter education experience. Pursue other tasks coming from the Strategic Plan Update and Outreach, Engagement and Education Action plan.
<b>Improve accessibility of information on the variety of recreational access opportunities the Department provides for the public across the state.</b>	Updated and distributed 9,000 copies of the Access Yes! brochure. Maintained and updated the Access Yes!, Large Tracts Access, Idaho Department of Lands lease and WMA web pages when needed. Interactive Motorized Use Restrictions maps were updated for Large Tracts properties. Added Forest Legacy parcels to access web page.	<b>Improve accessibility of information on the variety of recreational access opportunities the Department provides for the public across the state.</b>	Work with Large Tracts companies to update the access agreement to over 850,000 acres of private timber company lands.  Continue to implement Access campaign to provide information on the variety of access opportunities the Department provides, including Fish and Game-owned land, Access Yes! properties, Wildlife Management and Habitat Areas, Idaho Department of Land leases, Large Tracts leases and Forest Legacy properties.
<b>Continue management-based fishery research projects to enhance the ability to conserve native fish populations and meet sport fish management objectives.</b>	New research prioritized by Regional Fishery Managers and other Fisheries Staff. Research emphasis areas include kokanee management, native trout conservation, hatchery Rainbow Trout strain development, and tiger musky production.  Implemented new methods for monitoring sturgeon abundance and movement; continued and improved collaborative research and management with Kootenai Tribe of Idaho, US Corps of Engineers, and other cooperating agencies.	<b>Continue management-based fishery research projects to enhance the ability to conserve native fish populations and meet sport fish management objectives.</b>	Develop and improve kokanee management strategies that maximize utility of hatchery fish; improve understanding of lake conditions that lead to productive kokanee fisheries.  Improve understanding of limiting factors for native stream salmonids, including Mountain Whitefish and Cutthroat Trout; investigate tools to prioritize streams for conservation actions such as restoration, renovation, and genetic rescue.
<b>Train and outfit Idaho trappers with the information they need to trap safely and ethically.</b>	The trapper and wolf trapper equipment, supplies and trailers are regularly maintained and stocked for hands-on learning certifications courses, including the annual IDFG Fur School for IDFG employees.  The trapper education program certified 942 students and the wolf trapper program certified 337 students in FY25. The curricula and exam was updated and reviewed.	<b>Train and outfit Idaho trappers with the information they need to trap safely and ethically.</b>	Maintain trapper and wolf trapper programs as hands-on courses with emphasis on rules, safety, avoiding non-target species and the role of an ethical and responsible trapper.





## FY 2024-2029 PERFORMANCE MEASURES

Performance Measure	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029	Benchmark
3: Landowners allow access for fish & wildlife recreation (# of properties enrolled / # private acres in Access Yes! Program)	102 / 336,000						90 / 350,000
4: Landowners with 50,000+ acre parcels allow access for fish & wildlife recreation (# private acres in Large Tracts Program)	881,739						941,000
5: Idahoans can access endowment lands for fish and wildlife recreation, while maintaining the integrity of IDL's constitutional responsibility (# acres in Idaho Endowment Lands Partnership Program)	2.40 million						2.35 Million
6: Idaho citizens hunt, trap, and uphold the North American Model of Wildlife Conservation (# of resident hunting and combination license holders / # resident trapping license holders)	258,196 / 2,311						245,000 / 2,300
7: Idaho citizens fish and uphold the North American Model of Wildlife Conservation (# of resident fishing license holders)	189,915						166,000

### Performance Measure Explanatory Notes:

3. The benchmark is based on past success of the Access Yes! program and the cost per acre.
4. This measure was added in FY 2020. The benchmark is based on maintaining the FY 2020 level of acreage, past success of the Large Tract program, available budget, and cost per acre.
5. This measure was added in FY 2020. The benchmark is based on maintaining the FY 2020 level of acreage, past success of the Endowment Land Agreement, available budget, and cost per acre.
6. This measure was added in FY 2020. The benchmark is based on maintaining the calendar year 2019 level of resident hunting & combo license holders and FY 2020 trapping license holder.
7. This measure was added in FY 2020. The benchmark is based on maintaining the calendar year 2019 level of resident fishing license holders.



# GOAL

## Working with Others

*Improve public understanding of and involvement in fish and wildlife management.*

### OBJECTIVES

*Improve citizen involvement in the decision-making process.*

*Increase public knowledge and understanding of Idaho's fish and wildlife.*

### STRATEGIES

- ▶ Ensure that interested and affected stakeholders are notified of opportunities to participate in decisions and that all voices are heard.
  - ▶ Improve variety and convenience of opportunities for citizens to be involved in Fish and Game decisions.
  - ▶ Utilize new information technologies, such as social media and other web-based platforms to broaden participation in proposal development and Department decision-making.
  - ▶ Utilize opinion surveys to sample a cross-section of sportsmen and sportswomen.
- 
- ▶ Provide biological information on Idaho's fish and wildlife to convey the status of populations and the basis for management decisions.
  - ▶ Expand utilization of new information technologies to improve public outreach.
  - ▶ Provide timely and accurate information on recreational opportunities, management actions and important news related to fish and wildlife an hunting, fishing, trapping and viewing opportunities.





## FY 2025-2028 MANAGEMENT DIRECTION

FY 2025-2028 Management Direction	Brief Statement of FY 2025 status, progress, and/or accomplishments	FY 2026-2029 Management Direction	Tasks/Actions Planned for FY2026
<b>Continue to build citizen engagement in wildlife conservation and management and use existing programs like Master Naturalist and volunteers to involve citizens and keep them engaged.</b>	<p>A decision on a new volunteer software platform was postponed pending completion of the Strategic Plan Update and the recommendations of a Volunteer Strategy Work Group established by the Director's Office.</p> <p>Provided support for 10 chapters of the Idaho Master Naturalist Program (IMNP) including a new online timekeeping system to serve volunteers and track hours. 150 new members joined the program.</p>	<b>Continue to build citizen engagement in wildlife conservation and management and use existing programs like Master Naturalist and volunteers to involve citizens and keep them engaged.</b>	<p>Form Volunteer Work Group and develop comprehensive volunteering plan, including: 1)Improving system for how volunteers find opportunities; 2) Establishing clear training protocols for all types of volunteers; 3) Standardizing time-keeping processes; 4) Setting clear legal/HR policies that are consistent across the state; 5) Establishing standard quality control procedures for existing volunteers; and 6) Using volunteers and their stories as a way to communicate IDFG's mission.</p> <p>Provide support for all state chapters. Host a state-wide conference for all members. Introduce additional wildlife management content for IMNP curriculum.</p>
<b>Build capacity and utilize website and social media in a strategic manner.</b>	<p>Routine website maintenance was performed and website usability was enhanced as needed through the application of best practices.</p> <p>Staff training was performed as requested to ensure website end-users had the necessary knowledge and capabilities.</p> <p>Completed Request for Proposal to hire outside expert vendor to assist with a comprehensive website overhaul. Applications from potential vendors are due this summer.</p>	<b>Build capacity and utilize website and social media in a strategic manner.</b>	<p>Perform routine website maintenance and continue enhancing website usability as needed through application of best practices.</p> <p>Perform staff training upon request to ensure website end-users have the necessary knowledge and capabilities.</p> <p>Hire outside expert vendor to assist with comprehensive website overhaul and begin the first phase of the project.</p>
<b>Continue to increase public knowledge of the importance of sportsmen to fish and wildlife conservation efforts.</b>	<p>Focus group research was completed in early 2025. Conclusions are informing a brand book update, an updated strategic plan, and communications work.</p>	<b>Continue to increase public knowledge of the importance of sportsmen to fish and wildlife conservation efforts.</b>	<p>Develop updated brand book and complete statewide rollout to train staff on implementing the IDFG brand and communicating with the public.</p>
<b>Increase public knowledge of unlawful fishing and hunting activity; better inform the public about flagrant violations; and promote citizen reporting of wildlife crime.</b>	<p>Communications staff at headquarters and in regions worked with enforcement officers to educate the public on how to spot and report violators via social media. Announced successful poaching convictions. Released "Pepper Video" to highlight the role that canine officers can play in stopping wildlife crimes.</p> <p>Worked throughout the year with regional communications managers and HQ staff to seek the public's help to identify poachers.</p>	<b>Increase public knowledge of unlawful fishing and hunting activity; better inform the public about flagrant violations; and promote citizen reporting of wildlife crime.</b>	<p>Work with new Enforcement Bureau Chief to establish communications priorities for the coming year, including exploring when and under what circumstances information about wildlife crimes and their perpetrators should be publicly released.</p> <p>Continue successful collaboration between regional communications managers and regional enforcement staff to communicate enforcement issues as they arise.</p>
<b>Develop long-term strategy for angler and aquatic education.</b>	<p>Aquatic Education Specialist was fully trained and conducted statewide analysis of IDFG aquatic education efforts in every region, as well as visited all Idaho State Parks within the rod loaning program. Analysis immediately led to improvements across the system.</p>	<b>Integrate Aquatic Education Specialist, inventory statewide angling and aquatic education efforts.</b>	<p>Identify new partnership opportunities for Trout in the Classroom programs statewide. Update and maintain online information with regard to angler education and aquatic education. Implement plan for stronger communication surrounding the fishing trailer programs statewide.</p>



FY 2025-2028 Management Direction	Brief Statement of FY 2025 status, progress, and/or accomplishments	FY 2026-2029 Management Direction	Tasks/Actions Planned for FY2026
<b>Employ marketing best practices to produce the results most desired by our commission and Department leadership; strengthen the Department's relationship with license holders and the public; and strengthen our fiscal resilience by growing the Department's user base at a reasonable level.</b>	<p>Made findings of the statewide public opinion survey to all staff. Communications Bureau used findings to inform ongoing communications planning decisions including increased use of email communications, utilizing enforcement officers as brand ambassadors, and adoption of procedure to "close-the-loop" following public comment periods to apprise commenters of final actions.</p> <p>License sales were down -0.49% from \$60,248,166 in calendar year 2023 to \$59,956,085 in 2024. Resident license holders were up 3.26% from 411,522 in calendar year 2023 to 424,944 in 2024.</p> <p>Learnings from the IDFG 125th Anniversary Campaign were implemented to further FY25 campaigns to build brand equity by demonstrating the work IDFG does on behalf of wildlife and the public.</p>	<b>Expand understanding of IDFG's mission by employing marketing best practices; strengthen the Department's relationship with license holders and the public; and strengthen fiscal resilience by growing the Department's user base.</b>	<p>Use data gathered from public opinion survey to inform and guide recommendations from the Strategic Plan Update and the Outreach, Engagement and Education Action plan. Use Work Plan Integration and Special Projects processes to increase long-term planning and improve statewide collaboration on major projects.</p> <p>Achieve annual rate of growth of 3% for resident license holders from calendar year 2023 through 2026.</p> <p>Implement strategic plan updates and brand book components into communication campaigns to strengthen the Department's relationship with the public and its fiscal resilience.</p>
<b>Create a conservation education plan to define its role within the Department; standardize how IDFG is presented in conservation education programs; create conservation education tools to enhance staff efforts.</b>	<p>During the IDFG strategic planning process initiated in 2025, "public engagement, outreach and education" emerged as one of eight themes for action planning. This event paused the conservation education plan, as the strategic planning process will inform how public engagement, outreach and education is approached in the future.</p>	<b>Create a conservation education plan to define its role within the Department; standardize how IDFG is presented in conservation education programs; create conservation education tools to enhance staff efforts.</b>	<p>Initiate an informal qualitative assessment of regional conservation education efforts as a baseline for moving forward with recommendations from the Strategic Planning process.</p>

## FY 2024-2029 PERFORMANCE MEASURES

Performance Measure	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029	Benchmark
8: Effectively convey and distribute information about wildlife and wildlife-based recreation (# of unique visitors per year to Fish and Game website)	NA						2.00 million

### Performance Measure Explanatory Notes:

8. The benchmark is based on expected growth in web traffic. In FY2024 this number was not available due to a transition from Google Analytics to GA4 and changes to how the new system calculates web traffic.



# GOAL

## Management Support

*Enhance the capability of the Department to manage fish and wildlife and serve the public.*

### OBJECTIVES

*Attract and retain a diverse and professional workforce.*

*Provide programs, equipment and facilities for excellent customer service and management effectiveness.*

*Improve information management and business systems.*

### STRATEGIES

- ▶ Seek competitive salaries for Fish and Game employees.
- ▶ Provide training and professional development opportunities.
- ▶ Reward leadership, integrity, competency, professionalism and innovation.
- ▶ Use the fleet management program to efficiently acquire and manage Fish and Game vehicles and field equipment.
- ▶ Promote and strengthen volunteer programs to assist with habitat and fish and wildlife management and education.
- ▶ Work closely with license vendors to ensure accurate delivery of licenses and tags.
- ▶ Provide facilities that foster effective customer service and productive work environments.
- ▶ Develop data management system to make Fish and Game data more readily usable and available to the public, other agencies and employees.
- ▶ Implement an electronic licensing system that is reliable, adaptable, user friendly and cost effective.






## FY 2025-2028 MANAGEMENT DIRECTION

FY 2025-2028 Management Direction	Brief Statement of FY 2025 status, progress, and/or accomplishments	FY 2026-2029 Management Direction	Tasks/Actions Planned for FY2026
<b>Optimize Revenue through HB 230 and Price Lock in accordance to the Commission discount order.</b>	To optimize revenue, the Commission discount order for Price Lock was updated to remove the ability for newcomers and those that do not purchase a license annually to opt into Price Lock through purchase of a three-year license. This change is estimated to bring in \$2.1M in revenue over the next five years. Three-year licenses and Auto-Renew continue to be advertised in email communications to customers.	<b>Optimize Revenue through HB 230 and Price Lock in accordance to the Commission discount order.</b>	Continue to increase opportunities to highlight three-year licenses and Auto-Renew in marketing efforts, and maintain current Price Lock discount order.
<b>Improve technical and administrative infrastructure to increase efficiency and effectiveness of outreach efforts.</b>	Marketing staff have worked with our licensing vendor to provide additional marketing opportunities directly to license holders, including push notifications to mobile app users and updated marketing email templates. Marketing staff have also successfully implemented targeted advertising for CWD and Mandatory Hunter reporting.	<b>Improve technical and administrative infrastructure to increase efficiency and effectiveness of outreach efforts.</b>	Continue to review opportunities to utilize additional outreach tools, such as targeted ad campaigns or new email campaign content.
<b>Increase operational efficiency for compliance efforts with modernized enhanced communications capabilities.</b>	This project was largely restricted to those areas with internet/radio coverage. A centralized ILETS dispatch center based at HQ can be utilized in the future.	<b>Increase operational efficiency for compliance efforts with modernized enhanced communications capabilities.</b>	Integrate Tyler Tech Solutions statewide to allow for a mobile CAD (computer-aided dispatch) system.

## FY 2024-2029 PERFORMANCE MEASURES

Performance Measure	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029	Benchmark
9: Attract and retain highly qualified personnel (% successful announcements / % retention of hired FTEs after 2 years employment)	92 / 83						93 / 88

### Performance Measure Explanatory Notes:

9. This performance measure was edited in FY2024 to more accurately assess success metrics. A "successful announcement" is defined as an announcement that closed without altering the closing date and resulted in a hire. This benchmark is based on current labor market conditions.





# The Landscape 2026: Key External Factors

As Idaho changes, the Idaho Department of Fish and Game (IDFG) must make strategic decisions to continue to achieve its mission within the new environment created by those changes. Below are the key external factors IDFG must navigate to maintain Idaho's fish and wildlife resources.

## Population Increase

- o Population growth in urban and rural areas can lead to diminished and/or reduced wildlife habitat and increased human/wildlife conflict.
- A growing number of new residents can lead to increased expectations for the Department to resolve wildlife conflicts.
- o Increased demand for outdoor recreation caused by growing populations and nonresident visitors can create crowding at Department-owned or managed properties, including wildlife management areas and fishing and boating access sites. Sportsmen and sportswomen often become frustrated by crowded facilities paid for by their hunting/fishing/trapping license dollars that become popular destinations for people who are not hunting, fishing or trapping.
- Maintenance, repair and personnel costs increase as new facilities are made available to meet increased demand.

## Weather and Climate

- o Heat waves, harsh winters, droughts, large wildfires, flooding, landslides and other climactic events create challenges to managing and sustaining populations of fish and wildlife.

## Energy and Mineral Development

- o Proposed development of energy resources, and proposed mineral extraction, require the Department to evaluate and mitigate potential effects on fish and wildlife resources and access to them. This is done in collaboration with the Governor's Office of Species Conservation and Energy and Mineral Resources.

## Wildlife Disease

- o Prevention and control of disease continues to be a priority for establishing and maintaining wildlife populations that meet management objectives.

## Invasive species

- o Ongoing testing and mitigation for quagga mussels in the Snake River, including efforts to eradicate them, resulted in large fish die-offs and reinforces the challenges of protecting Idaho's waters and landscapes from damage done by invasive species.

## Funding

- o The Federal budget landscape is experiencing increased change, resulting in uncertainty for programs funded through federal grants, which may impact work on the ground or require programmatic budget shifts within the Department.







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