

Idaho Fish and Game Commission

Annual Meeting - January 27-29, 2010

Fish and Game Headquarters, 600 S. Walnut, Boise, Idaho

Note: Times on the agenda are approximate and subject to change.

JANUARY 27

- 1:30 pm** Commissioners to meet with House Resources and Conservation Committee, East Atrium Wing, EW40, Statehouse, 1:30-3:30 pm.
- 7:00 pm** **Public Hearing** — Fish and Game Headquarters, 600 S. Walnut, Boise, Idaho

JANUARY 28

- 8:00 am** Posting of the Colors and Pledge of Allegiance, Idaho Department of Fish and Game Honor Guard
- 8:05 am** 1. Opening Comments — Wayne Wright, Commission Chairman
- 8:10 am** 2. Agenda Changes — Wayne Wright, Commission Chairman
- 8:15 am** 3. Review of Public Comment — Wayne Wright, Commission Chairman
- 8:30 am** 4. Director's Report — Cal Groen, Director
- 8:50 am** 5. Commission Reports — Commissioners
- 9:45 am** 6. Consent Calendar (Action Requested by Department)

- a. Minutes
- b. [Financial Report](#)
- c. [Appointments Winter Feeding Advisory Committee](#)

- 9:55 am** 7. [Idaho Fish and Wildlife Foundation Report](#), Gayle Valentine, Executive Director
- 10:05 am** 8. [Legislative Update](#), Sharon Kiefer, Assistant Director-Policy

10:20 AM — BREAK

- 10:35 am** 9. [Update on Mandatory Harvest Report](#), Jon Rachael, State Wildlife Manager
- 10:50 am** 10. [Deer and Elk Status Overview](#), Jon Rachael, State Wildlife Manager
- 11:20 am** 11. [Upland/Small Game & Furbearer Season Setting Biennial 2010-2011 Proclamations](#) (Action Requested by Department), Jeff Knetter, Upland Game & Waterfowl Staff Biologist

- **Background:** [Preliminary Recommendations Provided to Public for Input](#)

- 11:50 am** 12. [Bear Lake Management Plan](#) (Action Requested by Department), Ed Schriever, Chief, Fisheries Bureau

12:00 — LUNCH

- 1:15 pm** 13. [Pelican Management Plan Update](#), Rex Sallabanks, Conservation Sciences Manager

- 1:30 pm** 14. [Preliminary Scoping Topics for Big Game Season Recommendation](#), Jon Rachael, State Wildlife Manager
- 1:45 pm** 15. Fish and Wildlife Mitigation Overview, [Amended 1-22-2010](#). [Postpone - will be addressed at the March 17-19, 2010 meeting](#), Sharon Kiefer, Assistant Director-Policy
- 2:15 pm** 16. [Update on Fish Rules Process for 2011-2012](#), Ed Schriever, Chief, Fisheries Bureau
- 2:35 pm** 17. [Update on Salmon Forecasts and Potential Seasons in 2010](#), Ed Schriever, Chief, Fisheries Bureau
- 3:00 pm** 18. [JFAC Budget Preview](#), Director Groen
- 3:15 PM — BREAK**
- 3:30 pm** 19. [Nonresident Deer Tag Fee Reduction](#) (Action Requested by Department), Director Groen
- 4:00 pm** 20. [Wolf Hunting Season Update](#), Jim Unsworth, Deputy Director
- 4:15 pm** 21. [Director's Annual Report to the Commission](#), Director Groen
- 4:30 pm** 22. Executive Session I.C. 67-2345(1) (f) (c)
- TBA** **Additional Item Added 1-25-10:** Delegation of Commission authority to Director to sign on behalf of the Commission Chairman any and all papers required for closing mitigation properties purchased by the Bonneville Power Administration. (Action Requested by Department), Dallas Burkhalter, Deputy Attorney General

JANUARY 29

- 1:30 pm** Commissioners to meet with Senate Resources & Environment Committee, West Atrium Wing, WW55, Statehouse, 1:30-3:30 pm.

Individuals with disabilities may request meeting accommodations by contacting the Idaho Department of Fish and Game Director's office at (208) 334-5159 or through the Idaho Relay Service at 1-800-377-2529 (TDD).

Meeting Date: January 28, 2010

Agenda Item No. 6b

Agenda Item: Financial Report

Bureau Chief Approval: _____

Prepared by: Jim Lau, Chief, Bureau of Administration

Background:

Update the Commission on the Financial Status of the Department

Statutory Authority and/or Policy Issues:

None

Public Involvement Process:

None

Staff Recommendation:

None

Justification:

None

Meeting Date: January 28, 2010

Agenda Item No. 6C

Agenda Item: Winter Feeding Advisory Committee
Appointments (Action)

Approved by: _____

Prepared by: Brad Compton and Jon Rachael

Background:

Regional Winter Feeding Advisory Committees (WFAC) were established following passage of Senate Bill 1406 in 1994. Committees are charged with assisting the Department in implementing the Commission's Emergency Big Game Feeding Policy (attached). Committees exist in every region where emergency winter feeding is a normal occurrence (Southwest, Magic Valley, Southeast, Upper Snake, and Salmon regions). Committee members are appointed by unanimous vote of the Commission with appointments lasting 2 years.

Statutory Authority and/or Policy Issues:

Idaho Code 36-123. WINTER FEEDING ADVISORY COMMITTEES.

(1) A winter feeding advisory committee shall be established for each district where winter feeding of antelope, elk, and deer normally occurs. Each committee shall consist of five (5) members. The members shall be appointed and removed for cause by unanimous vote of the Idaho fish and game commission. It is intended that the committees reflect the cross section of the major interest groups associated with each district. Each committee shall meet at such times as appropriate, but not less frequently than annually, on or before December 1, before the winter feeding season arrives, whichever is earlier.

(2) The term of office of a member shall be two (2) years, except a portion of the initial appointments may be for a term of one (1) year to provide staggered terms. Appointments to fill vacancies shall be for the balance of the unexpired term. The committees shall serve without compensation.

(3) Each winter feeding advisory committee established pursuant to subsection (1) of this section shall appoint a chairman. The chairmen of the committees shall meet at least annually to coordinate activities and promote consensus on issues of common interest among the winter feeding advisory committees. The chairmen may elect a leader from among the chairmen to call meetings and conduct and coordinate activities of the group.

(4) The department of fish and game shall provide staff assistance and support for the committees.

(5) The committees shall have the authority to:

(a) Act as an independent resource in each district to give advice and recommendations on the administration of winter feeding programs;

(b) Act as a liaison between the commission, the department, interest groups, and the public on winter feeding issues.

Public Involvement Process:

Nominees are selected by Regional Supervisors with input from various stakeholders, including Department staff, sportsmen organizations, and local publics.

Staff Recommendation:

Appoint/reappoint WFAC members. Current committee members are provided on the next page. A final list of recommended appointments/reappointments will be provided to the Commission during presentation of this agenda item.

Justification:

Commission action required to appoint Winter Feeding Advisory Committee members.

REVISED: April 30, 1996

APPROVED:

TITLE: BIG GAME FEEDING POLICY (Deer, Elk, Antelope, Moose)

The Idaho Fish and Game Commission recognizes that the big game population should be maintained under natural conditions and by naturally available forage. Winter forage is the major limiting factor that determines the basic size of the big game populations and it must be maintained if these animals are to prosper and propagate. The Department will work with the appropriate land management agencies in an effort to maintain winter ranges in a condition suitable to meet big game management objectives, including the restoration of ranges damaged from such long-term impacts as disease, weed infestation, and/or overgrazing. These restorations could include temporary solutions for short-term impacts caused by fire and/or drought. In order to maintain these winter ranges, big game numbers must be controlled through adequate harvest. We, therefore, do not sanction any wide-spread supplemental winter feeding programs.

Big game animals, especially elk, when concentrated by supplemental feeding, are very susceptible to infectious disease, which can be transmitted to livestock and to other big game animals. Every effort should be made to lessen this threat.

We are aware that big game harvests and weather will vary from year to year throughout the state. In most years, snow depths, temperatures, and animal body condition do not create adverse conditions for wintering animals. However, there are times when unusual weather patterns may create critical periods of stress when winter forage becomes limited, unavailable, or animals are forced into areas involving public safety. We recognize that we cannot manage game populations for these extreme weather conditions--nor should we.

The Department is authorized to feed big game only if the following conditions exist:

1. To prevent damage to private property or for public safety when other methods of preventing damage and providing safety measures are determined to be impractical, inappropriate, or ineffective and the amount of damage or cost of protection is expected to exceed the cost of feeding.
2. To prevent the excessive mortality of big game populations in drainages that would affect the recovery of the herd. Some mortality should be expected, especially from the young and old segments of the population.

It is the responsibility of all field personnel to advise the regional supervisor of weather, animal conditions and numbers, and public input on situations that meet the feeding criteria outlined above. If the regional supervisor, in consultation with the regional winter feeding advisory committee, determines that the criteria has been met and that an emergency exists, he will inform the Bureau of Wildlife of his decision and the Bureau of Wildlife will notify the Director's Office, Bureau of Enforcement, and the Bureau of Information and Education. The regional big game operational plan will then be implemented.

Meeting Date: January 28, 2010

Agenda Item No. 7

Agenda Item: Idaho Fish and Wildlife Foundation
Report

Bureau Chief Approval: _____

Prepared by: Gayle Valentine

Background: Commission has requested updates about the Idaho Fish and Wildlife Foundation activities.

Statutory Authority and/or Policy issues: None.

Public Involvement Process: None.

Staff Recommendation: Present update as follows.

Justification: Requested by Commission.

1. The Wild Sheep Foundation completed their third and final payment towards the purchase of Redbird. Total contribution was \$184,000.
2. The Foundation Board of Directors met on December 5, 2009 and set their 2010 budget. Board meetings were also scheduled for 2010. For meeting schedule please contact Gayle Valentine.
3. The next board meeting will be a teleconference call on Friday, February 5, 2010 at 10:00 am MT/9 am PACIFIC. Topics include updates on trip auction, April board meeting and insurance renewal.
4. The Idaho Fish and Wildlife Foundation 2010 Online Trip Auction begins February 19 and ends February 28, 2010. Active Network has agreed to be the major sponsor and will underwrite costs associated with the auction. As of January 6, 2010, 40 trips will be auctioned.
5. Wildlife license plate billboard marketing begins January 2010 through February 2010. The new digitized design for cutthroat plate was available for sale beginning January 4, 2010 at all DMV offices throughout Idaho. Banners promoting purchase of wildlife license plates and income tax check-off for the "wildlife conservation fund" (tax form name for the nongame trust fund) will be displayed at all regional offices.
6. Lure crop payments were made in October 2009 in accordance with the Sandhill Crane Lure Crop Agreement.

Meeting Date: January 28

Agenda Item No. 8

Agenda Item: Legislative Update

Bureau Chief Approval: _____

Prepared by: Sharon W. Kiefer

Background:

Staff will update the Commission about legislative activity since the December, 2009 Commission meeting (teleconference), including initiation of the 2010 Legislature.

Staff will request affirmation of a Commission liaison to the Idaho Fish and Wildlife Foundation (IFWF) for 2010. The 2009 liaison was Chairman Wayne Wright.

Statutory Authority and/or Policy issues:

Informational. Commission has authority to appoint IFWF liaison and provide legislative policy guidance.

Public Involvement Process:

None.

Staff Recommendation:

Continue implementation of the legislative process already discussed by the Commission.

Justification:

Legislative and IFWF process requested by the Commission.

Meeting Date: January 28, 2010

Agenda Item No. 9

Agenda Item: Update on Mandatory Harvest Report

Approved by: _____

Prepared by: Jon Rachael and Bruce Ackerman

Background:

Mandatory Harvest Reporting is underway for the 2009 Deer, Elk, and Pronghorn hunting season. There have been 123,000 reports received as of January 5 out of the 229,000 tags sold. A higher percentage of the reports (65%) have been received on-line compared to other methods of reporting. On-line reporting has been an increasing trend in recent years. In fall 2010, we will be moving to all-digital reporting.

Phone surveys began in December and continued through January to a random sample of 40,000 hunters who had not yet reported. Harvest data is being analyzed so 2009 harvest results are available to regional staff to aid in development of final recommendations for changes to regulations in March.

Commissioners will be briefed on preliminary harvest results.

Policy issues:

Information only.

Public Involvement Process:

Information only.

Justification:

Information will aid Commissioners as they respond to requests, clarifications, or recommendations from the public.

Action Requested:

None. This item is provided for Commissioner information only.

Meeting Date: January 28, 2010

Agenda Item No. 10

Agenda Item: Deer and Elk Status Overview

Bureau Chief Approval: _____

Prepared by: Jon Rachael, State Game Manager

Background:

Staff will present a statewide overview of the status of deer and elk populations in relation to deer Population Management Unit objectives and elk zone objectives. The Commission will also be briefed on upcoming aerial surveys that will aid in the development of deer and elk hunt recommendations for the Commission meeting in March 2010.

Statutory Authority and/or Policy issues:

Information only.

Public Involvement Process:

Status of all big game species except for moose, sheep, and goat is made available to the public during regional open houses in February and March 2010. The department will collect public input on big game season proposals at that time.

Staff Recommendation:

None. This item is provided for Commissioner information only.

Justification:

Information will aid Commissioners as they respond to requests, clarifications, or recommendations from the public.

Meeting Date: January 28, 2010

Agenda Item No. 11

Agenda Item: Upland Game and Furbearer Season
Setting Biennial 2010-2011

Bureau Chief Approval: _____

Prepared by: Jeffrey M. Knetter

Background:

To adopt changes to the Rules governing the taking of Game Birds (IDAPA 13, Title 01, Chapter 09), the taking of Game Animals (IDAPA 13, Title 01, Chapter 07), the taking of Migratory Birds (IDAPA 13, Title 01, Chapter 13), and Falconry (IDAPA 13, Title 01, Chapter 14).

- Upland game bird, upland game animal, and migratory bird (crow, dove, and crane) season dates, bag, and possession limits will be set on even-numbered years and cover a two-year period.
- Pheasant seasons and shooting hours are not consistent throughout the state.
- A substantial amount of lead shot is being deposited on WMAs that include important waterfowl habitat.
- The youth-only turkey season varies in length on an annual basis.
- There are nuisance turkey issues on private land in Units 13, 14, 15, and 18.
- Turkey populations in controlled hunt areas can support more hunting opportunity.
- The beaver trapping closure in Lincoln County is no longer necessary.
- Otter populations in the Southeast Region can support additional trapping opportunity.

Policy Issues:

“Increase hunting opportunity” and “Provide hunting opportunities specific to youth” are strategies of the Department’s Compass.

Public Involvement Process:

Regions provided the public with opportunities to comment on Department-proposed changes, and the Department website had a questionnaire asking for public input on the proposed changes to upland game rules.

Justification:

Seasons are designed to manage Idaho’s upland game and furbearer resources for maximum hunting opportunity while considering biological and sociological implications.

Action Requested:

Commission adoption of the Department’s recommendations.

Staff Recommendation:

Preliminary recommendations provided to the public for input are attached. Final recommendations, after considering public input, will be presented at the Commission meeting.

Public Scoping Sheet for 2010-2011 and 2011-2012 – Upland Game Seasons

In which Idaho Fish and Game Region do you live? (Please circle only one).

Panhandle Clearwater Southwest Magic Valley Southeast
Upper Snake Salmon Non-resident I don't know

Pheasants

Affects Southeast, Upper Snake, and Salmon regions

Currently, the pheasant season in Area 2 ends on 30 November. The Department would like to incorporate regulations that maintain consistency, simplicity, and opportunity for hunters. The Department is considering extending the pheasant season in Area 2 through 31 December to make it consistent with the rest of the state. This does not mean that stocking will continue on WMAs beyond 30 November.

I support_____ I do not support_____ I have no opinion_____

Extending the pheasant season in Area 2 through 31 December to be consistent with the rest of the state.

Pheasants

Affects Southwest, Magic Valley, Southeast, Upper Snake, and Salmon regions

Currently, the pheasant season in Areas 2 and 3 opens at noon on opening day of the pheasant season. The Department would like to incorporate regulations that maintain consistency, simplicity, and opportunity for hunters. The Department is considering changing the shooting hours on opening day of pheasant season to begin a half hour before sunrise, instead of noon, in Areas 2 and 3 to make it consistent with the rest of the state.

I support_____ I do not support_____ I have no opinion_____

Changing the shooting hours on opening day of the pheasant season from noon to ½ hour before sunrise in Areas 2 and 3 to be consistent with the rest of the state.

WMA Pheasants

Affects Southwest Region

Currently, the pheasant season on WMAs where pheasants are stocked in the Southwest Region opens at noon on opening day of the pheasant season. The Department would like to incorporate regulations that maintain consistency, simplicity, and opportunity for hunters. The Department is considering changing the shooting hours on opening day of the pheasant season to begin at 10 a.m., instead of noon, on WMAs where pheasants are stocked in the Southwest Region to make them consistent throughout the season.

I support_____ I do not support_____ I have no opinion_____

Changing the shooting hours on opening day of pheasant season from noon to 10 a.m. on WMAs where pheasants are stocked in the Southwest Region.

WMA Pheasants

Affects Southwest, Magic Valley, Southeast, and Upper Snake regions

Currently, hunters may use any shot type to pursue upland game on WMAs where pheasants are stocked. A substantial amount of lead shot is being deposited on WMAs that include important waterfowl habitat. Fish and Game is considering requiring nontoxic shot for waterfowl, upland game, and turkeys on nine wildlife management areas where pheasants are stocked. They include the Fort Boise, Payette River, Montour, C.J. Strike, Sterling, Market Lake, Mud Lake, Cartier Slough, and Niagara Springs WMAs.

I support_____ I do not support_____ I have no opinion_____

Requiring non-toxic shot to pursue waterfowl, upland game, and turkeys on all WMAs where pheasants are stocked.

Turkeys

Affects Statewide

The youth-only (15 and younger) turkey season is currently the first full weekend (Saturday and Sunday) and the weekdays prior to the general season opener. Depending on the calendar year, this can range from 2 to 7 days. Providing hunting opportunity and recruiting of new hunters are objectives of the Department's strategic plan. The Department is considering starting the youth-only turkey season (general and controlled hunts) 7 days prior to the general turkey season opener.

I support_____ I do not support_____ I have no opinion_____

A youth-only turkey season that is one week long (rather than a weekend and the remaining weekdays) prior to the general season. For example, in 2010 the youth-only turkey season would be April 8 – April 14.

Turkeys

Affects Clearwater Region

There are nuisance turkey issues on private land in Units 13, 14, 15, and 18. The Department is considering offering a late season from November 21 to December 31 on private lands to help address this issue. This framework currently exists for Units 8, 8A, 10, 11, and 11A. This approach should be viewed as a tool to address depredations rather than a population control measure in these units.

Turkeys

Affects Southeast Region

Currently, each of the spring controlled hunts in Unit 71 (9012, 9013, and 9014) allow for 50 permits. IDFG believes turkey populations in this Unit can support more hunting opportunity. Providing hunting opportunity and recruiting of new hunters are objectives of the Department's strategic plan. The Department is considering increasing the number of permits for each controlled hunt to 75 permits.

Turkeys

Affects Salmon Region

Currently, the hunt area for controlled hunts 9015 and 9016 does not include a small area of expansion of the turkey population, and the area description has caused some confusion. To increase opportunity and simplify the regulations, the Department proposes to increase the hunt area as follows: All of Unit 36B, 37, 37A, and that part of Unit 28 upstream from and including the Hat Creek drainage.

Public Scoping Sheet for 2010-2011 and 2011-2012 – Furbearer Rules

In which Idaho Fish and Game Region do you live? (Please circle only one).

Panhandle Clearwater Southwest Magic Valley Southeast
Upper Snake Salmon Non-resident I don't know

Beaver

Affects Magic Valley Region

Currently, there is a beaver trapping closure in Lincoln County. The closure was originally implemented in cooperation with the Wood River RC&D Beaver Committee and is no longer needed. The Department is considering elimination of the beaver trapping closure in Lincoln County.

Otter

Affects Southeast Region

Currently, in the Southeast Region there is an otter harvest limit (quota) of 2. Otter populations in this region exist in the major drainages (Snake, Blackfoot, and Bear) and can support a higher harvest. The Department proposes to increase the harvest limit to 5.

Meeting Date: 1/28/2010

Agenda Item No. 12

Agenda Item: Bear Lake Management Plan

Bureau Chief Approval: _____

Prepared by: Bill Horton

Background:

In May 2009 the Commission approved the draft Bear Lake Fisheries Management Plan to be sent to the public for review. The Department in cooperation with the Utah Division of Wildlife Resources developed this plan for guiding management of Idaho's second largest natural lake. The public review is complete and we now seek to move forward with adoption of the plan.

Statutory Authority and/or Policy issues:

The Department's strategic plan has a goal to "Improve public understanding of and involvement in fish and wildlife management." This management plan considers public desires and biological needs and sets management direction and goals. The Commission establishes policy and provides direction, considers input from the public, and has the authority to adopt, amend, or reject Department-recommended plans. The Fisheries Bureau seeks Commission approval of the Bear Lake Fisheries Management Plan.

Public Involvement Process: The Department posted the management plan on its website in mid-May 2008 and solicited comments from the public and others through mid-June 2008. Only three comments were received and considered by the Department. These minor responses are available for Commission review.

Staff Recommendation:

The Department recommends adoption of this management plan by the Commission.

Justification:

Bear Lake has four endemic fish species (Bear Lake whitefish, Bonneville whitefish, Bonneville cisco and Bear Lake sculpin) that should have defined management programs and goals. This plan lays out a cooperative approach between Utah and Idaho to manage these species, and the primary sport fish of the lake, the Bonneville cutthroat trout.

Meeting Date: January 28, 2010

Agenda Item No. 13

Agenda Item: Pelican Management Plan Update

Bureau Chief Approval: _____

Prepared by: Rex Sallabanks, Conservation Sciences Program Manager

Background:

The Pelican Management Plan was approved by the Idaho Fish and Game Commission in May 2009. During the August 2009 meeting of the Commission, the Department was subsequently authorized and directed to pursue all legal means to eliminate growth and reduce populations of pelicans as directed by the plan, pending approval by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) in the Blackfoot River drainage where Yellowstone cutthroat trout are being adversely effected by pelicans (and in the Bear Lake, Bear River drainage where Bonneville cutthroat trout are being adversely effected by pelicans).

Since plan approval in May 2009, the Department has taken numerous steps toward implementation. Department staff provided a written response to technical comments on the draft plan received from the USFWS during the April 2009 public comment period. Several meetings have been held with the USFWS and other federal agencies to clarify plan content, proposed actions, and permit requirements. An implementation strategy using a variety of tools and methods to reduce pelican predation on important fish resources in 2010 is currently being developed.

Department intentions for moving forward in the immediate future are summarized as follows:

1. Actively engage federal partners in order to develop and move forward with plan implementation.
2. Apply for a new scientific collecting permit to better determine pelican diet.
3. Apply for a depredation permit under the Migratory Bird Treaty Act (MBTA) for direct population control methods.
4. Pursue management actions that do not require an MBTA permit.
5. Hazing (including lethal control of up to 50 birds currently authorized under existing scientific collecting permit).
6. Place animals indigenous to the ecosystem from surrounding habitat onto nesting islands to seek predatory balance (letters of intent have been sent to appropriate land management agencies responsible for nesting islands).
7. Modify island habitat to preclude or limit pelican nesting.
8. Increase efforts to estimate total annual pelican exploitation of sub-adult and adult Yellowstone cutthroat trout.
9. Continue to monitor pelican populations including statewide estimates of total bird numbers.
10. Work with the Pacific Flyway Council to develop rangewide pelican conservation objectives and avian predator policies.

Statutory Authority and/or Policy issues:

Because the pelican is federally protected under the MBTA, the Department requires a USFWS permit for any management actions resulting in take of adult birds, young, or eggs.

Public Involvement Process:

None – information note only.

Staff Recommendation:

None – information note only.

Meeting Date: January 28, 2010

Agenda Item No. 14

Agenda Item: Preliminary Scoping Topics for Big Game
Season Recommendations

Bureau Chief Approval: _____

Prepared by: Jon Rachael, State Game Manager

Background:

Staff will present a preliminary briefing on topics anticipated for public scoping during February and early March open houses for 2010 changes to big game seasons. Regional staff will identify key issues during January. Wildlife Bureau staff will coordinate with regional staff during January and early February to develop proposals for changes to big game seasons, permit levels, and regulations. Public comment on proposals will be solicited in February and early March to aid in development in recommendations for Commission action at the March meeting.

Statutory Authority and/or Policy issues:

Information only

Public Involvement Process:

Input from the public on big game season structure and opportunity is accepted year-round. Regional staff are developing proposals for season changes based on evaluation of biological data public comment from personal contact, email, and scoping meetings. Following regional coordination meetings in early February, proposals will be developed. Public comment on those proposals will be solicited in late February and early March. Public comment will be summarized and final recommendations for season changes will be submitted to the Commission for consideration and action at the March meeting.

Staff Recommendation:

None. This item is provided for Commissioner information only.

Justification:

Information will aid Commissioners as they respond to requests, clarifications, or recommendations from the public.

Meeting Date: 1-28-2010

Agenda Item No. 16

Agenda Item: Update on fish Rules process for 2011-2012 **Bureau Chief Approval:** _____

Prepared by: Bill Horton

Background:

The Department has taken on a sincere challenge of simplifying the fishing rules for the 2011-2012 fishing seasons. The Fisheries Bureau and the Regional Fisheries Managers have held numerous meetings during the last year and a half to find ways to simplify the rules. The Fisheries Bureau wants to present progress to this point and share general change concepts.

Statutory Authority and/or Policy issues:

N/A

Public Involvement Process:

In the spring of 2010 the Department will start the public scoping process for rule changes for the 2011-2012 fishing seasons. This informational presentation is intended to set the stage for that process.

Staff Recommendation:

N/A

Justification:

This is an informational presentation with no action required by the Commission. However, the need of communicating with the Commission to assure that the policy makers and staff are aligned is important.

Meeting Date: January 28, 2010

Agenda Item No. 17

Agenda Item: 2010 Chinook Salmon Forecast

Bureau Chief Approval: _____

Prepared by: Peter Hassemer, Anadromous Fish Manager

Background:

This is an explanation, to inform the Commission, of the forecasts for spring and summer Chinook salmon returning to the Snake River this spring. These salmon will begin leaving the ocean and entering the Columbia River in late February and early March. Fisheries staff will be retuning to the Commission in March with recommendations for 2010 Chinook salmon sport fisheries to be conducted in the Clearwater River, Salmon River and Snake River drainages.

Statutory Authority and/or Policy issues:

None

Public Involvement Process:

None

Staff Recommendation:

None

Justification:

Keeps Commission informed prior to setting Chinook salmon fishing seasons in March.

Meeting Date: January 28, 2010

Agenda Item No. 18

Agenda Item: JFAC Budget Preview

Bureau Chief Approval: _____

Prepared by: Jim Lau

Background: The annual presentation of the Governor's fiscal year 2011 Idaho Fish and Game budget to the Joint Finance Appropriations Committee (JFAC) is scheduled for February 2. The Director will provide to the Commission an overview of the key aspects of his planned presentation to JFAC. Important items will be the Department's request for additional FTE's to facilitate the employee consolidation plan to reduce temporary staff and to restore funding for the Department's Fleet Management program. The Director will also focus on the expanded role of the Department in managing many species and issues such as wolves, sage grouse, and bighorn sheep and the resulting demands made upon the Department resources. The Director will update the Commission regarding our cash position and the impact that statewide budget adjustments have had on the Department.

Statutory Authority and/or Policy Issues: The Commission has previously approved the Department's budget request for FY 2011.

Public Involvement Process: N/A

Staff Recommendation: N/A

Justification: Information Update Only.

Meeting Date: January 28, 2010

Agenda Item No. 19

Agenda Item: Nonresident Deer Tag Fee Reduction

Bureau Chief Approval: _____

Prepared by: Sharon W. Kiefer

Background: In 2007, Idaho was the most expensive of eleven western states for a nonresident to hunt general season deer (\$400 including a general nonresident deer tag of \$256.75 and vendor fees) but the cost differential between Idaho and the next two most expensive states (Washington and Nevada) was less than \$6.00.

As part of a legislative fee increase proposal in 2009, the Department proposed to raise resident and nonresident fees. The Department proposal ultimately became Senate Bill 1141 and would have raised the nonresident cost to hunt general deer to \$415.50, which included a nonresident general deer tag cost of \$259 and associated vendor fees.

Senate Bill 1141 was amended in the Senate and the amended version (S1141a) passed the legislature and was signed into law. The amended bill raised the nonresident cost to hunt general deer to \$456.50 including a nonresident deer tag cost of \$300 and vendor fees. A survey of the same eleven western states in 2009 showed that Idaho remained the most expensive state for a nonresident to hunt deer but the differential between Idaho and the next two most expensive states (Washington and Nevada) increased to \$61.50.

By the end of 2009, the number of general deer tags sold to nonresidents declined by 26% compared to the previous year (11,647 vs. 15,822). By October 28 of 2008, deer tags were sold out. The result was a reduction in nonresident general deer tag revenue of \$666,000 compared to 2008.

Statutory Authority and/or Policy issues: Idaho Code 36-415 gives the Commission authority to order a discount in tag fees or specific species, units, areas, zones, or gender as necessary to encourage increased tag sales, hunting or use of the resource upon finding a biological need, public need, or unsold tags. The discounted tag fee shall be effective only for the time period set by commission order and holders of tags purchased before the discount shall not be entitled to a refund except as provided by rule.

Public Involvement Process: The Department previously sent out a survey to about 30,000 nonresidents who had previously purchased Idaho tags but had not purchased tags in 2009, resulting in 2,550 responses. The three primary reasons for not purchasing tags in 2009 were the impacts of wolves on elk and the hunting experience, the 2009 nonresident fee increase, and overall economic concern.

Staff Recommendation: Staff analysis of the 2009 data supports a finding of unsold tags and that a public need, as identified by the nonresident survey, exists. Staff believes these findings will also apply to 2010.

Staff recommends the Commission issue an order to reduce the nonresident general deer tag to \$255 excluding vendor fee for the 2010 season. This would lower the nonresident cost to hunt general deer to \$411.50 with vendor fees. Based on 2009 reported fees, the cost differential with the next most expensive states compared to Idaho would decrease. However, Oregon increased their 2010 fees, raising their nonresident price to hunt deer to \$516, likely making Oregon the most expensive western state to hunt deer. Staff is reviewing

2010 fees for other western states and will update the Commission with this information to inform decision-making.

It should be noted that if the fee reduction does not boost nonresident general deer tag sales over 2009 sales, then this price reduction will actually result in an additional \$524,000 loss in general tag revenue. Staff estimates an additional 2,000 general deer tags will need to be sold to recoup this revenue; higher tag sales provide additional revenue over 2009. Staff recommends extensive communications with nonresidents to update them about the fee change and 2010 hunting opportunity.

Staff does not recommend a reduction in the fee for a nonresident control hunt deer tag, currently \$300 excluding vendor fee. Because of the differential fee, nonresidents who exchange a general tag for a control hunt tag will owe additional money at the time of exchange.

There is a moratorium on nonbiological rulemaking during the legislative session which precludes the Commission from establishing a refund rule. Staff will request temporary nonbiological rulemaking authority for the May meeting to establish a discount rule for nonresident customers who may have bought their deer tag prior to Commission action. Through early January, less than 200 nonresident general deer tags had been sold.

Justification: Criteria for the Commission to provide a temporary price reduction have been met. Nonresident customer feedback suggests a temporary price reduction should facilitate customer ability to hunt in Idaho and assist with stabilizing Department revenue to provide services.

Nonresident cost to hunt general deer summary

	Total Cost	Deer Tag only (no vendor fee)
2008 Idaho	\$400.00	\$256.75
Senate Bill 1141	\$415.50	\$259.00
2009 Fee	\$456.50	\$300.00
2010 Staff Recommendation	\$411.50	\$255.00

Meeting Date: January 28, 2010

Agenda Item No. 20

Agenda Item: Wolf Hunting Season Update

Bureau Chief Approval: _____

Prepared by: Jon Rachael, State Game Manger for Jim Unsworth, Deputy Director

Background:

Wolf harvest seasons have closed in 5 wolf management zones when harvest limits were met: Upper Snake zone (November 2), McCall-Weiser zone (November 9), Dworshak-Elk City zone (November 17), Palouse-Hells Canyon zone (December 18), and the Southern Mountains zone (December 31). All 7 remaining zones are open until March 31, 2010, or until harvest limits for individual zones are met, whichever comes first.

From September 1 through December 31, 135 wolves were legally harvested. The heaviest harvest occurred October 10-12 when 16 wolves were taken by hunters over the 3-day weekend when deer season opened in most of the state. Hunters harvested 21 wolves in December.

Harvest in 3 zones (Panhandle, Lolo, and Selway) is currently less than 50% of harvest limit. Hunter harvest under current season framework is least effective in remote, rugged, or heavily forested terrain.

Ten of 135 harvested wolves were wearing radio collars. Capturing and radio-collaring efforts will need to be increased to compensate for lost collars.

The Department sold 26,428 wolf tags (25,744 resident, 684 nonresident) in 2009.

The Commission will be provided with a current update of total mortality by zone at the commission meeting.

Policy issues:

Information only.

Public Involvement Process:

Information only.

Justification:

None. This item is provided for Commissioner information only.

Action Requested:

Information will aid Commissioners as they respond to requests, clarifications, or recommendations from the public.

ATTACHMENT

Table 1. Total known wolf mortality by cause, Jan. 1, 2009 – Dec. 31, 2009 (preliminary).

Wolf Mgt Zone	Control	Harvest	Illegal ^a	Legal (protection of livestock)	Other	Unk	Total
Dworshak-Elk City	4	18			1	2	25
Lolo		6	1 ^b			5	11
McCall-Weiser	25	14	1	3		1	44
Middle Fork		14	1			2	17
Palouse-Hells Canyon		5					5
Panhandle		13	3		1		17
Salmon		10					10
Sawtooth	28	33	5		3	8	77
Selway		6					6
South Idaho	2	1					3
Southern Mountains	22	10	1	3	2	6	44
Upper Snake	6	5	2		1		14
Total	87	135	13	6	8	24	273

^a Five wolves were documented to have been either killed illegally or shot and not recovered after September 1, one in each of the following zones: Panhandle, Lolo, Middle Fork, McCall-Weiser, and Sawtooth. These 5 wolves were counted against the harvest limits for these zones.

^b The wolf killed in the Lolo wolf management zone was counted against the harvest limit, but the mortality will be counted toward annual statewide wolf mortality totals in Montana rather than in Idaho because this radio-marked wolf was known to be a member of a pack that denned in Montana in 2009.

Table 2. Confirmed wolf depredations and mortalities in Idaho from 2003 to December 31, 2009 (2009 numbers are preliminary).

Year	Confirmed Depredations ¹				Documented Wolf Mortality				
	Cattle	Sheep	Dogs	Total	WS ²	10j/36-1107 ³	Other ⁴	Hunter Harvest	Total
2003	7	130	3	140	7	0	8		15
2004	19	176	4	199	17	0	21		38
2005	29	166	12	207	24	3	16		43
2006	41	237	4	282	35	7	19		61
2007	57	211	10	278	43	7	27		77
2008	104	215	14	333	94	14	45		153
2009	76	295	14	385	87	6	46	135	274

¹ Includes confirmed wolf depredations resulting in death or injury.

² Wolves taken by USDA Wildlife Services in response to depredation on livestock.

³ Authorized take under 10j, or legal take after delisting under state law for protection of stock and dogs (Idaho Code 36-1107).

⁴ Other includes of mortalities of unknown cause, documented natural mortality, collisions with automobiles, and illegal take.

Meeting Date: January 28, 2010

Agenda Item No. 21

**Agenda Item: IDFG Director's Annual Report to
the Commission**

Bureau Chief Approval: _____

Prepared by:

Background: Director Groen will present a report to the Commission showing Department financial summaries for FY09 and an overview of major Department programs.

Statutory Authority and/or Policy Issues: N/A

Public Involvement Process: N/A

Staff Recommendation: N/A

Justification: N/A