

**Idaho Fish and Game Commission
Annual Meeting -- January 27-29, 2010
Idaho Department of Fish and Game
Trophy Room
600 South Walnut
Boise, Idaho**

January 27

MISCELLANEOUS

Chairman Wright called the meeting to order at 12:44 p.m.

Commissioners met with the House Resources and Conservation Committee at 1:30 p.m. to 3:00 p.m.

Public Hearing

Chairman Wright called the meeting to order at 7:15 p.m. Commissioners Tony McDermott, Fred Trevey, Robert Barowsky, Randy Budge, Cameron Wheeler and Gary Power were present

Chairman Wright introduced Donna Jones, State Controller; Representatives Bert Stevenson and Marv Hagedorn.

Chairman Wright stated that the Commission takes the public comments seriously and the comments will be reviewed at the regular meeting. Commissioners and staff are available after the meeting to answer questions.

Rob Brazie, representing the National Wild Turkey Federation (NWTF) stated that the NWTF would like to propose a change for the 2010-2011 turkey regulations. Historically, turkey hunters in Idaho have been given the opportunity to hunt and take 2 spring birds, with limitations on the harvest of the second bird only after May 1. The NWTF would like to be able to utilize both tags anytime during the April 1 to May 25 season, but maintain a one bird per day bag limit.

Gabe McMasters, NWTF, stated that he is here to support the Idaho State Chapter's proposal to eliminate the waiting period for use of the 2nd turkey tag during the spring season. Mr. McMasters reports that Idaho has 26,512 turkey hunters, 1,000 have 2 tags and the percent that harvest their second tag is 3.8%.

Rick Lawson, NWTF, thanks the Commission for service to the state and service that you put in for wildlife and sportsmen in the state. He would like for the Commission to consider the NWTF proposal for the second turkey tag and feels it would encourage more people to hunt if they have the ability to harvest 2 birds.

Tom Demorest, representing Diamond D Ranch has been an outfitter since 1960. Mr. Demorest reports that nonresident hunters from Pennsylvania hunted Idaho with no success and will not come back to Idaho. The outfitter business is down due to the wolf. Suggestions for the

legislature that no plant or animal could be introduced/ reintroduced/ or receive federal funds into the state of Idaho without a 2/3 vote from the legislature and a 90 day transparent and promotion and development with the residents of the state of Idaho. Elk are being decimated in our wilderness areas.

John Robison, Idaho Conservation League (ICL), Public Lands Director. Mr. Robison represents over 9,000 members who value Idaho's fish and wildlife. Concerns over the feral pigs in Bruneau and encourages Fish and Game to take immediate action on this matter. ICL has concerns with Fish and Game expanding the wolf quotas and seasons; a follow up letter will be sent to the Department. ICL believes that wolves are a remarkable conservation success story and ICL supports the state management of this recovered species. Monitoring is a critical important of managing wildlife including wolves. Mr. Robison states this monitoring may not be consistent with federal laws, in this case the minimal tool analysis as written in the Frank Church wilderness plan. ICL would like to re-examine ground trapping as a feasible alternative. Invited the Commission to attend a wolf viewing field trip on April 3rd. Mr. Robison stated that the Idaho Wolf Management plan does describe an intent to develop a wolf viewing areas in non consumptive uses. There is a concern with ICL members that the Department is not following through on this.

Jim Hagedorn thanks Commissioners Wright, Budge and Wheeler for their attendance at the pheasant program meeting in Southeast Idaho. Mr. Hagedorn referenced some new property areas for the pheasant program in north Idaho. These areas are great pheasant habitat where they will plant pheasants and will be open for limited hunting. Mr. Hagedorn has concerns over elk and moose and referenced a power point that describes "What has happened to elk in Idaho". He will present to several sportsmen groups across the state.

Burk Mantel, representing self, spoke regarding a citizen's initiative to pick the Fish and Game Commissioners. Mr. Mantel provided a brief history on turkey stocking for IDFG. Mr. Mantel did not like the Commission decision in July regarding the auction tag for bighorn sheep and would have liked the Commission to hold the agenda item and notified all of the application process.

Herb Meyer reported he saw feral pigs in the Bruneau area and states they are fairly large size. Mr. Meyer spoke regarding WMA's and the use of lead shot for upland game and is against this. Would like to see the fishing at Harriman state park improved. Mr. Meyer supports helicopter landing to monitor and radio collar wolves. He would like to see more information provided on wolves to the public.

Richard Renstrom is an independent researcher on forest grouse in Region 3. Mr. Renstrom provided commissioners with his recommendations for the forest grouse management plan in region 3. Mr. Renstrom feels the September 1 hunting season opener for forest grouse, especially ruffed grouse, violates every accepted standard of fair chase.

Marty Morache, representing Ada County Fish and Game League, spoke regarding upland game birds and recommended potential change from lead shot to steel shot on WMAs providing pheasant hunting. The Ada County Fish and Game League is against any changes to the current

regulations without evidence of issues caused by lead on WMAs. In addition, he believes weather and habitat control upland bird populations annually. The League does not support delaying the opener of the forest grouse season.

Bill Dillon is an avid blue grouse hunter who lives in Payette County and has been hunting blue grouse since 1983. Mr. Dillon has kept a diary of every hunt. He is not seeing a decline in the blue grouse population. Mr. Dillon feels that the birds are holding up pretty well in Weiser and feels there is no need to change the regulations and is against shortening the season.

Miles Empery asked the Commission what the cost of aerial predator control is and who pays the bill. Has there ever been a cost effectiveness analysis done using this method of predator control and where can documentation be found. Is there an alternative method of predator control? Deputy Director Unsworth will follow up on this question.

Kevin Swigert, Hailey, spoke regarding elk decline due to wolves. Mr. Swigert reports that 6 years ago they had 60 bull elk that would winter on the south face of Kelly Mountain, last winter there were 2 and this year there are none. Mr. Swigert is not happy with the management of Idaho's wildlife and feels there is no balance with wolves. Nonresidents will not come to Idaho to hunt and lowering the cost of the nonresident tag is an insult. Currently there are two predators in the state that are doing a huge amount of damage, wolves and ravens. You need to look at what Ravens do in the spring time to Sage grouse chicks.

Jan Swigert feels that there is a catastrophic situation with wolves. The elk are decimated and will not come back. Ms. Swigert commented on tapeworms spreading diseases in the ungulate population and has concerns for humans being infected.

Grant Simonds, Director, Idaho Outfitters and Guides Association, appreciates Cal and Department staff attending their annual meetings and presentations given. Mr. Simonds referenced the nonresident survey and why nonresidents are not coming to Idaho to hunt; wolves and the economy. IOGA supports legislation to bundle wolf tags for nonresident deer and elk tags. IOGA supports helicopter landings to collar wolves in the Frank Church area.

Butch Suor spoke regarding parasite diseases and the dangers of tape worm. Mr. Suor is concerned about the lack of game. Idaho Department of Fish and Game's job is to manage and provide a hunting population.

Kelton Larsen shared comments on the nonresident survey. He feels nonresidents will not come to Idaho because of quality. Mr. Larsen feels the government should not be telling the state what to do regarding wolves; the agreed upon number was 150 wolves and 10 packs. He referenced an article dated January 14, 2010 titled F& Game finances in "deep trouble" by Rob Thornberry. Mr. Larsen commented on deer hunting in Colorado.

Jesse Timberlake, representing self, stated that he supports youth fishing and the "Take Me Fishing Trailers" and commends the Department for providing these programs. Mr. Timberlake reported that the Fish and Game website is good and easy to use.

Nate Helm, Idaho SFW, the bighorn sheep tag will be auctioned at the Western Hunting Expo in Salt Lake City and will produce dollars for the species. Thanks to staff at Region 3 for their participation in the upcoming Youth Ice Fishing Day in Cascade. Watershed restorations are very rewarding and good to see so many acres treated for the benefit of wildlife. A wildlife vehicle collisions symposium is in the process for this year to bring some of the partners together. Mr. Helm reports a good meeting with landowners on the surrogate program. SFW supports the recommendations of the NWTF as they were presented tonight. Thanks for the expanded seasons for wolves. Supports the Minimum tool analysis and supports helicopter landings to complete the work.

Lance Sellers submitted written comments regarding archery hunters. He would like to recap Unit 18, open Unit 14 – 20 tags draw and split 93 Southhills Hunt.

F.H. Rowdy Davis submitted written comments on game management.

Mark Sauerwald submitted written comments regarding the restrictions imposed on hunters prohibiting ATV/OHV use on open trail systems. Mr. Sauerwald suggestion is to allow all ATV/OHV travelers, including hunters, on any open trail system, but for hunters, mandate all hunting weapons must be unloaded while traveling on the trail and on ATV/OHV. This would allow Fish and Game officers to identify “hunting from a motor vehicle” while eliminating the discriminating issue.

January 28

MISCELLANEOUS

Posting of the Colors and Pledge of Allegiance

The Enforcement Honor Guard (Meghan Roos, Brian Flatter, Dan Kelsey, and Nathan Stohosky) presented the colors and Chief Jon Heggen led the group in the pledge of allegiance.

Opening Comments

Chairman Wright stated that the meeting with the House Resources and Conservation committee went well on Wednesday.

Agenda Changes

Director Groen noted that agenda item #15 Fish and Wildlife Mitigation Overview would be postponed to the March meeting. Agenda item #14 will be presented after agenda item #11, agenda item # 21 will be covered during the Director’s Report. Since the mailout (but reposted more than 48 hours before the meeting) an additional item was added to address a Bonneville Power Administration request for signatures for finalizing acquisition of BPA-funded mitigation properties; the recommendation is for the commission to approve the director’s signing on behalf of the commission for closing mitigation properties.

The confirmation hearing for Tony McDermott is on Friday before the Senate Resources and Environment Committee.

Director Groen introduced Tyler Mallard, Governor's office; and welcomed Kimberley Cox, Administrative Assistant, Region 3; and Mike Reggar, Orofino, Idaho who were in attendance.

Chairman Wright acknowledged Director Groen for his 20 years of service to the Idaho Department of Fish and Game. Chairman Wright noted that Director Groen was presented a letter and certificate from Governor Otter at the February Cabinet meeting.

Review of Public Comment

The Commission addressed comments relating to sage grouse and chukars. Director Groen stated that there were some focused comments on the grouse issues including the author of a research paper (Appendix 43, Exhibit1) and 2 avid hunters with different views and providing good testimony. ICL's, Jon Robison made comments regarding helicopter landings, wolf collaring and concern about the minimum tool analysis not being followed. Comments about wolves and elk and the frustration people are feeling. Turkey Federation proposal missed public scoping, but provided good testimony from the Turkey Federation members in attendance. Good comments' regarding what the Department is doing such as Kid's Fishing in Cascade, fishing overall good in Idaho and the fishing trailers. No public support for leadshot on WMAs for pheasants and will not be included in the proposals. There is concern on inaccurate information from the public regarding wolves; suggestions of a fact statement regarding the history of wolves to be read at the beginning of a Commission meeting.

Director's Report

- Director Groen noted that most of the Director's Report was presented at the House Resources and Conservation Committee on Wednesday
- Reports that fishing has been strong
- Nonresident sales are still down
- Enforcement
 - Citizens Against Poaching (CAP)
 - CAP is sometimes overlooked but do a very important job
 - Reports received 712
 - Citations issued 185
 - Rewards Paid \$20,600
- Communications
 - The Hunter Education Program curriculum is being streamlined
- Candidate Conservation Agreement with Assurances (CCAA)
 - Will be the first agreement for greater sage-grouse anywhere in the bird's range
- Fish and Game Advisory Committee
 - Restructured with new members
 - Informed members that they are a liaison between Commission, landowners and

- Department of Agriculture, and that they are advisory and give recommendations
- Directors Groen and Celia Gould gave a charge to the committee to look at the current Landowner Appreciation Program
- Department staff have been evaluating the Access Yes program in order to make recommendations to improve efficiencies of the program and will work with the Advisory Committee on this
- Sal Palazzolo, Private Lands/Farm Bill Coordinator, working on Access Yes
- Depredation on wolves that is a federal government obligation
- Virgil Moore working with Jake Howard on a collaborative process
 - Outfitted Waterfowl and Turkey Advisory Work Group
- A Commission workshop is being planned to discuss LAP, Access Yes, Bonus points and Trophy tags
- Idaho Watershed Initiative Program
 - Modeled after the Utah Watershed Restoration Initiative
 - Project Review Board reviewed and ranked 20 proposals
 - Funded 9 projects
 - The funded proposals represent a total of \$227,000 in funding commitment
 - The nine proposals provide \$1,197,400 in leverages matching funds
 - Will benefit 40,346 acres and 12,340 linear feet of streambank
 - Kudos to Don Kemner for the work that he did to lay this project out
- Counting fish at Lower Granite Dam is complete for 2009
 - This year's steelhead run is the largest on record for the fall management period
- Past Chairman Cameron Wheeler was presented with a framed sockeye print acknowledging his participation at the Redfish Lake sockeye release in 2008
- Idaho Department of Fish and Game Director's Annual Report to the Commission
 - Will be presented at the March meeting
 - Replaces the old Stockholders Report
 - Will allow you to see where the money goes (funding sources) and that the numbers for harvest trends are consistent and resource issues

Commission Reports

Each Commissioner provided their regional report in written format see (Appendix 43, Exhibit 2).

Consent Calendar

Items included in the consent calendar:

- A. Minutes, October 29, and November 17, 2009
- B. Financial Report, November – December, 2009
- C. Appointments Winter Feeding Advisory Committee
 - Reappoint: Terry Bennett, Dino Hugon, Al Marion, Southwest Region
 - Ron Klimes, Magic Valley
 - Dennis Caywood, Randy Moser, Southeast Region
 - Andy Wagoner, Upper Snake Region

Joe Lamb, Marily Mueller, Brett Wooley, Salmon Region
Appoint: Leon Bleggi, Upper Snake Region

10-01 Commissioner Budge moved and Commissioner Barowsky seconded a motion TO ACCEPT THE CONSENT CALENDAR AS PRESENTED. The motion carried in a unanimous vote.

REPORTS

Idaho Fish and Wildlife Foundation Report

Gayle Valentine, Executive Director, presented the Idaho Fish and Wildlife (IFWF) report.

The Wild Sheep Foundation completed their third and final payment towards the purchase of Redbird. Total contribution was \$184,000.

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.

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.

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.

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.

Lure crop payments were made in October 2009 in accordance with the Sandhill Crane Lure Crop Agreement.

Chairman Wright stated that the Commission appreciates Ms. Valentine and the work that she does and is impressed with the Board and the dedication and time and effort of the members.

Director Groen noted that Ms. Valentine is retiring and her last day in the office will be April 30.

LEGISLATION

Legislative Update

Sharon Kiefer, Assistant Director – Policy presented an update to the Commission.

Ms. Kiefer reported that the Department has 14 rule dockets that are up for consideration. One docket that is problematic is the one regarding Department land use rules. There is concern with this docket to change the context of the designated roads and trails from being open unless posted closed to a context of being closed unless posted open. The rules committee would like the Department to conduct an analysis of HB 602 passed in 2008. Other key questions received are clarity on lands owned by the Department; this rule docket also applies to lands controlled by the Department. The staff will continue to provide guidance on questions from the committee.

New Bill Analysis

(Appendix 43, Exhibit 3)

House Bill 389 – Adds to existing law to provide that the Idaho giant salamander is designated and declared to be the state amphibian of the state of Idaho. The Commission takes no position and will continue to monitor, answer questions and testify.

House Bill 416 – Clarify waste penalty, clarify waste definitions, expand species exempted from waste.

Ms. Kiefer stated that HB 416 is being carried by Representative Fred Wood. Waste is defined in I.C. 36-1202, which states it is a misdemeanor to waste any game bird, game animals or game fish or any portion thereof usually eaten by humans. “Portion usually eaten by humans” is not statutorily defined. “Game animal” is not statutorily defined.

10-02 Commissioner Wheeler moved and Commissioner Barowsky seconded a motion TO SUPPORT HB 416. The motion carried in a unanimous vote.

House Bill 417 – Establish a 3 day nonresident small game license.

Representative Fred Wood is carrying HB 417. There is no hearing date at this time. Previously the Commission directed the staff to create HB 417 and to testify on behalf of the bill.

Senate Bill 1286 - Amends existing law relating to fish and game to provide that raccoons shall be classified as predatory wildlife.

10-03 Commissioner Trevey moved and Commissioner McDermott seconded a motion TO SUPPORT SB 1286. The motion carried in a unanimous vote.

Senate Bill 1291 - Amends existing law relating to fish and game to provide for the release of certain captured wildlife.

10-04 Commissioner McDermott moved and Commissioner Wheeler seconded a motion

TO MONITOR SB 1291. The motion carried in a unanimous vote.

SCR 113 - IDAHO CHILDREN AND NATURE NETWORK - Stating findings of the Legislature and commending the Idaho Children and Nature Network.

New Bill FYI

Ms. Kiefer provided a copy of the Department bills to Commissioners (Appendix 43, Exhibit 4). Ms. Kiefer reported that all IDFG sponsored bills have been printed. No hearings scheduled yet in Senate Resources and Environment or House Resource Committees.

REPORTS

Update on Mandatory Harvest Report

Jon Rachael, State Wildlife Manager, provided an update on the mandatory harvest report to the Commission (Appendix 43, Exhibit 5). Mr. Rachael reported that 228,600 deer, elk, pronghorn tags sold in 2009. There were 14,000 fewer deer, elk, and pronghorn tags sold in 2009 vs. 2008. The Department is moving towards all-electronic, paperless system for the 2010 season. Benefits of this would reduce costs by approximately \$75,000-\$100,000 and it would expedite data collection time so the Department could analyze and share harvest information with wildlife managers and the public sooner.

Deer and Elk Status Overview

Jon Rachael, State Wildlife Manager, provided a statewide overview of the status of deer and elk populations in relation to deer Population Management Unit objectives and elk zone objectives. (Appendix 43, Exhibit 6).

Preliminary Scoping Topics for Big Game Season Recommendation

Jon Rachael, State Wildlife Manager, presented a preliminary briefing on topics (Appendix 43, Exhibit 7) 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. Mr. Rachael stated that the 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.

RULES

Upland / Small Game & Furbearer Season Setting Biennial 2010-2011 Proclamations

Jeff Knetter, Upland Game & Waterfowl Staff Biologist, presented the Department recommendations (Appendix 43, Exhibit 8). Mr. Knetter stated that the following 3 items were

not scoped: 1) delay the opener of the chukar/gray partridge season, 2) eliminate the waiting period to use the extra turkey tag, and 3) delay the opener of forest grouse season in Southwest Region.

Chairman Wright stated that what he is hearing from hunters in his region that there are fewer birds. And feels the September 15th season opener creates a situation where young birds around water are more susceptible to harvest and that the bag limit of 8 is too many. Chairman Wright would like to see the chukar season start on October 1st with a bag limit of 6. Commissioner Trevey agrees with the Chairman and reports it is the same situation in the Clearwater. Mr. Knetter stated that increased vulnerability to harvest is only a concern if overharvest is an issue. The Department does not have data to support this.

The Chairman has concerns that the Commission would not be able to address this issue again for two years.

Commissioner Power states that he will abstain from voting on the chukar and Gray partridge season. Commissioner Power has concerns that there are outfitters that may have hunts booked for the fall season.

Commissioner Wheeler stated that he would like the Commission to keep the regulations simple and easy to understand for the sportsmen.

10-05 Commissioner Barowsky moved to add an amendment to the motion TO POSTPONE DELAYING THE SEASON OPENER ON CHUKARS FROM SEPTEMBER 15TH TO OCTOBER 1 FOR ONE YEAR (2010). The motion failed. (Aye: Commissioners Barowsky and McDermott ; Nay: Budge, Wheeler ,Trevey, Wright; Abstaining: Power.

10-06 Commissioner Budge moved and Commissioner Wheeler seconded a motion TO ACCEPT THE DEPARTMENT'S RECOMMENDATION ON THE UPLAND GAME, FURBEARER, AND TURKEY SEASON SETTING RULES WITH 2 EXCEPTIONS. THE FIRST THAT THE OPENING ON CHUKAR/GRAY PARTRIDGE BE DELAYED TO OCTOBER 1ST AND ELIMINATE THE DELAYED TURKEY SEASON ON THE SECOND TAG (ELIMINATE THE WAITING PERIOD TO USE THE EXTRA TURKEY TAG) AND REDUCE THE BAG AND POSSESSION LIMITS ON CHUKARS FROM 8 TO 6, AND FROM 16 TO 12, RESPECTIVELY. The motion carried in a unanimous vote with Commissioner Power abstaining on the chukar and gray partridge season.

MANAGEMENT PLANS

Bear Lake Management Plan

Ed Schriever, Chief, Fisheries, stated that 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.

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.

10-07 Commissioner Budge moved and Commissioner Wheeler seconded a motion TO ADOPT THE BEAR LAKE MANAGEMENT PLAN. The motion carried in a unanimous vote.

Pelican Management Plan Update

Rex Sallabanks, Conservation Sciences Manager provided an update on the Pelican Management Plan (Appendix 43, Exhibit 9). Mr. Sallabanks stated that 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.

RULES

Update on Fish Rules Process for 2011-2012

Ed Schriever, Chief, Fisheries, stated that 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 (Appendix 43, Exhibit 10).

In the spring of 2010 the Department will start the public scoping process for rule changes for the 2011-2012 fishing seasons.

Rule Change Process:

- Informal scoping period (ongoing)
- Formal scoping period (March – April)
- IDFG Staff develops proposals for commission review (May)
- Commission approves taking proposals to the public for formal comment (July)
- Public comment on proposals (August – September)
- IDFG Staff develops recommended rule package for Commission consideration (October)
- Commission Action (November)
- Rules Printed (December)
- Rules Take Effect (January 1, 2011)

Update on Salmon Forecasts and Potential Seasons in 2010

Ed Schriever, Chief, Fisheries, provided an update on the salmon forecasts and potential seasons in 2010. Mr. Schriever stated that 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 returning 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.

**2010 Forecasts of Adult Snake River Spring & Summer
Chinook Salmon Returns .**

Origin of Adult Returns	Counting Locations	
	Columbia River Mouth	Lower Ganite Dam
Hatchery Returns		
Salmon / Snake River	180,321	140,650
Clearwater	19,178	14,959
OR - Grande Ronde/Imnaha	5,069	3,954
Totals		
IDFG	204,568	159,563
TAC for comparison	198,600	154,908
Natural Returns		
IDFG	32,449	28,555
TAC for comparison	73,400	64,592
Totals Hatchery & Natural		
IDFG	237,017	188,118
TAC for comparison	272,000	219,500

FISCAL

JFAC Presentation

Director Groen stated that 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. Director Groen provided 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 focused 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 updated the Commission regarding Department cash position and the impact that statewide budget adjustments have had on the Department.

LANDS

Delegation of Signing Authority to the Director for closing Documents for Property Acquisitions

Dallas Burkhalter, Deputy Attorney General, stated that for many real property acquisitions,

requests are made for either the Commission Chairman or multiple Commissioners to sign documents. This presents certain timing and logistical challenges. On a case by case basis, the Commission has addressed this problem by including with the acquisition motion instructions for the Director to sign closing documents. Recently, Bonneville Power Administration has requested either the Chairman's signature on documents or written documentation of delegated authority for the Director to sign documents (closing document, deed, mitigation Covenant) on the Commission's behalf.

The staff recommendation is to seek Commission action delegating authority to the Director to sign real property acquisition documents on the Commission's behalf as Commission Secretary. This authority will only apply to real property acquisitions which have been approved by the Commission in open session.

10-08 Commissioner Budge moved and Commissioner Power seconded a motion TO AUTHORIZE AND DIRECT THE DIRECTOR TO SIGN ANY AND ALL REAL PROPERTY ACQUISITION DOCUMENTS ON BEHALF OF THE COMMISSION AS COMMISSION SECRETARY ON ALL REAL PROPERTY ACQUISITIONS WHICH HAVE BEEN APPROVED BY THE COMMISSION IN ADVANCE OR PREVIOUSLY APPROVED BY THE COMMISSION IN AN OPEN SESSION. The motion carried in a unanimous vote.

RULES

Nonresident Deer Tag Fee Reduction

Sharon Kiefer, Assistant Director-Policy, presented the options for a nonresident deer tag fee reduction on behalf of Director Groen (Appendix 43, exhibit 11). Ms. Kiefer reported that 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, 2008, deer tags were sold

out. The result was a reduction in nonresident general deer tag revenue of \$666,000 compared to 2008.

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.

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.

10-09 Commissioner McDermott moved and Commissioner Power seconded a motion THAT THE COMMISSION ISSUE AN ORDER TO REDUCE THE NONRESIDENT DEER TAG TO \$255 EXCLUDING VENDOR FEES FOR THE 2010 SEASON WHICH WOULD LOWER THE NONRESIDENT COST FOR THE GENERAL DEER HUNT TO \$411.50 WITH THE VENDOR FEES INCLUDED. CONTROLLED HUNT WOULD STAY THE SAME AT \$300.00.

The motion did not carry. Commissioners Power, McDermott and Budge voting aye and Commissioners Trevey, Wheeler, Barowsky, Chairman Wright voting nay.

REPORT

Wolf Hunting Season Update

Jim Unsworth, Deputy Director, presented an update on the wolf hunting season. Deputy Director Unsworth reported that as of January 28th 145 wolves have been harvested.

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.

Deputy Director Unsworth referenced an attachment in the commission agenda book (Appendix 43, Exhibit 12) showing total known wolf mortality by cause, January 1, 2009- December 31, 2009 and confirmed wolf depredations and mortalities in Idaho from 2003 to December 31, 2009.

MISCELLANEOUS

Executive Session

10-10 Commissioner Power moved and Commissioner Barowsky seconded a motion TO HOLD AN EXECUTIVE SESSION PURSUANT TO IDAHO CODE SECTION 67-2345(1)(F) (C) TO DISCUSS PENDING LITIGATION AND LAND ACQUISITIONS..

Roll Call Vote: McDermott: aye; Trevey aye; Barowsky: aye; Budge: aye; Wheeler: aye; Power: aye; Wright aye. Vote tally: 7 ayes.

The executive session ended at 5:41 p.m. with no official action taken.

MISCELLANEOUS

The Commission reconvened at 5:41p.m. to discuss the following issues.

November Commission Meeting Dates

Chairman Wright stated that there is a conflict of schedules for the November meeting and would like to change the dates from November 3-5, 2010 to November 17-19, 2010. The Commission will address at the March meeting or at one of the legislative conference calls.

Chairman Wright stated that there may be a public perception on echinococcus granulosus and that the public might be fearful that there would be significant danger of disease from this. Chairman Wright suggests that to further clarify this issue that the Department contact CDC or the Public Health Department to help in a proactive manner for follow up.

Commissioner Power distributed a copy of an article (Appendix 43, Exhibit 13) from American Hunter, February 2010 titled Turning the Next Generation Into Hunter-Conservationists.

January 29

Meeting with Senate Resources and Environment Committee

Commissioners met with the Senate Resources and Environment Committee from 1:30 – 3:00 p.m. Commissioner McDermott was before the Committee for his confirmation hearing.

Adjournment