



GAINES & ASSOCIATES

“GAINES REPORT”

CALIFORNIA FISH AND GAME COMMISSION UPDATE

APRIL 14, 2020

This *Gaines & Associates* “California Fish and Game Commission Update” is intended to provide our clients with the status of items of concern currently in front of the California Fish and Game Commission – including what to expect at this week’s teleconference meeting of the Commission, and a recap of what took place at the Commission’s February 2020 meeting in Sacramento.

This “*Gaines Report*” is client privileged and provided as a service to clients of *Gaines & Associates*.

For more information on any of the issues below, or more detail on our efforts to protect and promote our client’s interests, please contact us at info@gainesandassociates.net

CALIFORNIA FISH & GAME COMMISSION – April 2020 Meeting Agenda

The April 2020 meeting of the California Fish and Game Commission (Commission) is a two-day meeting teleconference scheduled for Wednesday, April 15th, and Thursday, April 16th.

To listen to the audio only “Live Stream” visit [FGC Meeting Audio](#)

To view presentations made during the meeting visit at [FGC Mtg Presentations](#)

For instructions on how to provide public comment during the meeting visit [FGC Mtg - Public Comment](#)

All agenda items of interest and concern to clients of *Gaines & Associates* are highlighted below:

To view the full agenda, click [FGC – April 2020 Mtg Agenda](#)

Wednesday, April 15, 2020 – 10:00 AM

Agenda Item 2 – Emergency Regulation Concerning Suspending, Delaying or Restricting Sport and Recreational Fishing

Under this agenda item, the Commission will consider adopting an emergency regulation authorizing the Department of Fish and Wildlife (DFW) to temporarily suspend, delay, or restrict sport and recreational fishing in specific areas within the state when necessary to protect public health from the threat posed by COVID-19.

Serious concern and speculation generated by the Commission's effort to schedule an "emergency" teleconference/webinar meeting last week dealing with this agenda topic created such an uproar that the angling community overwhelmed phone and internet access and the meeting had to be canceled and rescheduled under this agenda item.

However, much of the concern was caused by inaccurate information and erroneous rumors ranging from the Commission and/or DFW calling for a statewide fishing shutdown, sweeping local closures, and/or even long-term closures to both hunting and fishing seasons. To help get accurate information on the street and ease the fears of anglers, *Gaines & Associates* was pleased to work with DFW Director Chuck Bonham to distribute a "DFW Fact Sheet" which separated "fact from fiction" last weekend. To view the "DFW Fact Sheet", click [DFW Fact Sheet](#)

To review the complete Commission staff summary for agenda item 2, click [FGC Staff Summary – Emergency Reg](#)

Thursday, April 16, 2020 – 9:00 AM

Agenda Item 3 – Executive Director's Report

(A) Staff Report

(B) Legislative Report and Possible Action

I. Discuss recent legislative actions and consider authorizing staff visits to legislative members to share the Commission's 150-year history

II. Discuss the DFW's Recruitment, Retention, and Reactivation (R3) Initiative in conjunction with moving forward with potential "365 day" fishing license legislation.

This agenda item is intended to allow Commission Executive Director Melissa Miller-Henson to provide an update on staffing and legislative information.

Note that Commission staff will recommend that item 3(B) be continued to the June 2020 meeting.

To review the Commission staff summary on agenda item 3(A), click [FGC Staff Summary – Staff Report](#)

A Commission staff summary is not available for agenda item 3(B).

Agenda Item 13 – Strategic Planning

Strategic planning is a standing item on Commission meeting agendas as the Commission develops a new strategic plan. Under this item Commission staff is to provide an update on the strategic planning effort and review feedback provided by Commissioners and the public regarding potential revisions to the mission and draft goals, potentially adopt draft goals and a revised mission statement, and provide direction on a draft plan.

Note that Commission staff will recommend that this item be continued to the June 2020 meeting.

Gaines & Associates was pleased to work with our clients and partners in conservation to provide detailed comments to the Commission earlier this week on the latest drafts of their strategic planning documents.

To view the comment cover letter signed by 24 conservation organizations, click [Coalition Cover Letter – FGC Strat Plan Comments](#)

To view our comments on the Commission core values, mission and vision statements, click [Recommended Amends – FGC Strat Plan Values, Mission & Vision](#)

To view our comments on the recommended strategic planning draft goals, click [Recommended Amends – FGC Strat Plan Goals](#)

A Commission staff summary is not available for agenda item 13.

Agenda Item 23 – Wildlife Resources Committee

(A) March 5, 2020 Meeting Summary

I. Discuss proposed changes to the simplification of statewide inland sport fishing regulations proposal since last WRC meeting

II. Receive and consider adopting recommendations

(B) Work Plan Development

I. Update on work plan

II. Discuss and consider approving new topics

Under this item Commission staff Wildlife Advisor Ari Cornman will provide the Commission with a review of the Wildlife Resources Committee (WRC) March 5, 2020 meeting which covered discussion and consideration of approving recommendations for the Statewide Inland Sport Fishing Regulations Revision and Simplification Project (Project), and discussion of proposed changes as they apply to specific waterways.

Mr. Cornman will then provide the Commission with WRC recommendations based on public input and meeting discussions for proposed regulation changes for the Project, as proposed by DFW and presented during the March 5, 2020 WRC meeting.

To view the documents for the March 5, 2020 WRC meeting, click [WRC – March 5th Meeting Binder](#)

Mr. Cornman will then provide the Commission with an update on the WRC work plan, noting that the next WRC meeting is currently scheduled for May 14, 2020 with the proposed agenda topics for the meeting being:

- *Update on Bullfrog and Non-Native Turtle Stakeholder Engagement Process*
- *Initial Vetting of Annual Regulatory Packages For:*
 - *Mammal Hunting*
 - *Waterfowl Hunting*
 - *Central Valley Sport Fishing*
 - *Klamath River Basin Sport Fishing*

Mr. Cornman should then close by noting that there are no new agenda topics proposed for the May 14, 2020 WRC meeting.

To review the Commission staff summary on agenda item 23 – including a summary of the March 5, 2020 meeting, full detail on changes incorporated to the Project as a result of the WRC meeting discussions and the WRC recommendations to the Commission, click [FGC Staff Summary – WRC](#)

Agenda Item 25 – Mammal Hunting Regulations

This item will serve as the third and final “adoption” hearing on DFW’s recommended changes to mammal hunting regulations for the 2020 season. In addition to changes to season dates to account for the annual calendar shift and other minor changes, DFW will present their recommended regulation changes for deer, elk and wild sheep for 2020. Note that changes recommended by DFW for Fort Hunter Liggett Military Base hunts for elk and deer – including changes to season dates and making all tags available to the general public – are made at the request of the Base Commander.

DFW will present the following recommended tag and season changes for the 2020 mammal hunting:

Deer:

- *Fort Hunter Liggett Late Season Archery Hunt (A-33): Delete the current tag split between military and public to make all the tags available to general public;*
- *Fort Hunter Liggett Antlerless Deer Hunt (G-8): Modify the season to open on October 3 and continue for two consecutive days, including the Columbus Day holiday, and reopen on October 10 and continue for three consecutive days. Delete the tag split between military and public to make all the tags available to the general public;*
- *Fort Hunter Liggett Junior Either-Sex Deer Hunt (J-10): Modify seasons to begin season dates to open on October 3 and continue for two consecutive 3 days, including the Columbus Day holiday, and reopen on October 10 and continue for three consecutive days. on October 7 and October 14, and continue for 3 and 2 days respectively, including the Columbus Day holiday. Delete the tag split between military and public to make all the tags available to general public.*

Elk:

- *Fort Hunter Liggett General Public Hunt G-8: Shall open on the fourth Tuesday in December and continue for 13 consecutive days;*
- *General Method Apprentice Hunt J-10: Shall open on the fourth Tuesday in December and continue for 13 consecutive days;*
- *Archery Only Hunt: Shall open on the first Saturday in November and continue for 9 consecutive days;*
- *Northwestern Unit: Increase by 40 tags (split among PLM, SHARE and landowner)*
- *Fort Hunter Liggett: Increase by 7 antlerless, decrease by 5 bull tags; no military tags;*
- *Grizzly Island: Decrease by 54 tags;*
- *Bear Valley: Increase by 1 bull tag;*
- *Goodale: Increase by 1 bull tag, decrease by 1 antlerless tag;*
- *Independence: Decrease by 2 tags (1 antlerless, 1 bull);*
- *Lone Pine: Decrease by 4 tags (3 antlerless, 1 bull);*
- *West Tinemaha: Increase by 1 bull tag;*
- *Whitney: Increase by 1 bull tag;*

Total net change from 2019 in recommended elk tags for 2020 = <-15>

Regarding the recommended reduction in Grizzly Island elk tags for 2020 – when that unit was over its population objective a few years ago, DFW increased the number of tags to bring the population back down within their objective. After several years of increased harvest to bring the Grizzly Island population back into objective, DFW is now looking to go back to a "maintenance level" of harvest. DFW also noted that in the last couple of years there were quite a few sub-adults in the harvest and less adults.

Bighorn Sheep:

- *Zone 1 - Marble Mountains – 5*
- *Zone 2 - Kelso Peak/Old Dad Mountains – 1*
- *Zone 3 - Clark/Kingston Mountain Ranges – 4*
- *Zone 4 - Orocopia Mountains – 1*
- *Zone 5 - San Gorgonio Wilderness – 0*
- *Zone 6 - Sheep Hole Mountains – 0*
- *Zone 7 - White Mountains – 6*
- *Zone 8 - South Bristol Mountains – 2*
- *Zone 9 - Cady Mountains – 2*
- *Zone 10 - Newberry, Rodman, Ord Mountains (New) – 6*
- *Open Zone Fund-Raising Tag – 1*
- *Marble/Clipper/South Bristol Mountains Fund-Raising Tag – 1*
- *Cady Mountains Fund-Raising Tag (New) – 1*

Total recommended bighorn sheep tag quota for 2020 = 30

Unless noted above, tag quotas for deer and elk remain the same as 2019 for the 2020 season. Season dates not noted above will change only due to calendar shift.

To review the Commission staff summary on agenda item 25 regarding 2020 mammal hunting regulations – including full detail on DFW’s recommended changes to mammal hunting regulations for the 2020 season, click [FGC Staff Summary – 2020 Mammal](#)

Agenda Item 25 – Waterfowl Hunting Regulations (Annual)

This item will serve as the third and final “adoption” hearing on changes to waterfowl regulations DFW is proposing for the 2020/2021 waterfowl season.

Since waterfowl are migratory and cross international and state boundaries, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) must first establish a season and bag limit “federal framework” within which the states may be more restrictive, but not more liberal.

At this meeting, DFW Waterfowl Program Lead Melanie Weaver will provide an overview of on DFW’s recommended seasons and bag limits for ducks and geese in all five of California’s waterfowl hunting zones for the 2020/2021 waterfowl season.

Ms. Weaver should note that DFW is recommending that California take full advantage of the liberal federal frameworks approved by USFWS for the 2020/2021 waterfowl season which are as follows:

Duck Frameworks

107-day season from the Saturday closest to September 24th to January 31st, and which includes a 7-duck daily bag limit, including up to:

- 7 Mallards (only 2 hens)
- 1 Pintail
- 2 Canvasback
- 2 Redheads
- 2 Scaup (during an 86-day Season)

Goose Frameworks

Between 100 and 107 day seasons

Generally 30/day, including:

- 20 white geese
- 10 dark geese
- 2 Brant/day

No changes to 2019/2020 regulations, except:

- Black Brant - Reduced to 27-day season

(Based on 3-year average winter brant survey = 144,700
Moderate regulation package between 122,000 - 147,000)

Ms. Weaver will then offer the below overall summary of DFW's recommendations:

- Season length in Northeastern Zone to be reduced from 105 to 103 days to accommodate the Vet Days
- All other zones - January 31st falls on last Sunday resulting in 100-day seasons
- 2 days for VAMP** Days
- 3 days for "falconry-only" plus 2 days of overlap with VAMP days in the Balance of State, Southern San Joaquin Valley and Southern California Zones.

Ms. Weaver will then offer DFW's recommended waterfowl seasons for the 2020/2021 season by zone, as follows:

DFW Recommended Duck Seasons

- *Northeastern Zone Season:*
 - Regular Season: October 3 – January 13 (103 days)
 - Scaup: October 3 – November 29 (58 days)
and December 17 – January 13 (28 days)
- *Balance of the State/Southern San Joaquin Valley/Southern California Zones:*
 - Regular Season: October 24 – January 31 (100 days)
 - Scaup: November 7 – January 31 (86 days)
- *Colorado River Zone:*
 - Regular Season: October 23 – January 31 (101 days)
 - Scaup: November 7 – January 31 (86 days)
(Must Match AZ Regulations)

DFW Recommended Goose Seasons & Bag Limits

- *Northeastern Zone Goose Seasons:*
 - *Regular Season:*
 - *Canada Geese: October 3 – January 10 (100 days)*
 - *White Geese and Whitefronts Geese: October 3 – November 29 (58 days) and January 2 – January 15 (14 days)*
 - *Late Season: White Geese & Whitefronts: February 6 – March 10 (33 days)*

- *Northeastern Zone Goose Bag Limits:*
 - *30 Birds Total/Day:*
 - *20 White Geese*
 - *10 Dark Geese*
 - *No More Than 2 Large Canada Geese*

- *Balance of the State Zone Goose Seasons:*
 - *Early Canada Goose Season: October 3 – October 7 (5 days)*
 - *Regular Season: October 24 – January 31 (100 days)*
 - *Late Season: White Geese & Whitefronts: February 20 – February 24 (5 days)*

- *Balance of the State Zone Goose Bag Limits:*
 - *30 Birds Total/Day:*
 - *20 White Geese*
 - *10 Dark Geese*

- *Southern San Joaquin and Southern California Zone Goose Season:*
 - *Regular Season: October 24 – January 31 (100 days)*

- *Southern San Joaquin and Southern California Zone Goose Bag Limits:*
 - *30 Birds Total/Day:*
 - *20 White Geese*
 - *10 Dark Geese (Southern San Joaquin Zone)*
 - *3 Dark Geese (Southern California Zone)*

- *Colorado River Zone Goose Season:*
 - *Regular Season: October 23 – January 31 (101 days)*
(Must Match AZ Regulations)

- *Colorado River Zone Goose Bag Limits:*
 - *20 Birds Total/Day:*
 - *Up to 20 White Geese*
 - *4 Dark Geese*
(Must Match AZ Regulations)

- *Black Brant*
 - *Northern Zone: November 18 – December 14 (27 Days)*
 - *Balance of the State Zone: November 19 – December 15 (27 Days)*

- *Black Brant Bag Limits*
 - *2 Birds/Day*
- *Special Management Areas*
 - *North Coast*
 - *Regular Season: November 7 – January 31 (86 Days)*
 - *Late Season: February 20 – March 10 (19 Days)*
 - *Klamath Basin*
 - *White Geese & Whitefronts: October 3 – January 15 (105 days)*
 - *Canada Geese: October 3 – January 10 (100 Days)*
 - *Sacramento Valley*
 - *Regular Season: October 24 – December 21 (59 Days)*
 - *Imperial Valley*
 - *Regular Season: November 7 – January 31 (86 Days)*
 - *Late Season: February 1 – 5, 8 – 12, 15 – 21 (17 Days)*
- *Youth Hunt Weekend*
 - *Northeastern Zone: September 19 and 20*
 - *All Other Zones: February 6 and 7*

NOTE: To participate in these Youth Waterfowl Hunts, youth must be accompanied by a non-hunting adult 18 years of age or older. Federal regulations require that hunters must be 17 years of age or younger.

- *VAMP** Hunt Weekend*
 - *Northeastern Zone: January 16 and 17*
 - *All Other Zones: February 13 and 14*
 - *Colorado River Zone: None*
- *Falconry-Only*
 - *Northeastern Zone: None*
 - *All Other Zones: February 10 – 14 (5 days)*
 - *Colorado River Zone: February 1 – 4 (4 days)*

**Federal legislation was recently passed which allows states to designate up to two special days as Veterans and Active Military Personnel (VAMP) Days, if states choose. These days may coincide with the Youth Hunt Days or be held separately and must occur with 14 days of the regular duck season opening and closing dates. VAMP Days can be held on weekdays, unlike the Youth Hunt Days.

Persons participating in this special hunt must possess and present upon demand verification of eligibility to participate in this hunt. Verification for veterans includes: Veterans Affairs issued Veterans ID Card; or State issued driver's license or Identification Card with Veteran Designation. Active Duty and Retired must present a current Military Identification Card. Veterans can apply for a Veteran ID card

Note that Veterans (as defined in Section 101 of Title 38, United States Code) and members of the Armed Forces on active duty, including members of the National Guard and Reserves on active duty (other than training), may participate in the VAMP Days. Persons participating in this special hunt must possess and present upon demand verification of eligibility to participate in this hunt. Verification includes: Veteran's ID Card and/or Military ID Card for active duty, or a State issued driver's license or Identification Card with Veteran Designation.

To review the Commission staff summary on agenda item 25 regarding 2020/2021 waterfowl Regulations – including DFW's presentation, click [FGC Staff Summary – 2020/2021 Waterfowl](#)

Agenda Item 28 – Central Valley Sport Fishing Regulations

This item will serve as another “discussion” hearing on the 2020 regulations for Sacramento River fall-run Chinook salmon (SRFC) for the Sacramento, Feather, Mokelumne and Lower American Rivers.

The three regulatory options DFW is considering for 2020 include:

Option 1: Take of any size Chinook Salmon fishery up to the daily bag and possession limits;

Option 2: Take of a limited number of adult (3-5 year-old) Chinook salmon, with grilse (2 year-old) salmon making up the remainder of the daily bag and possession limits;

Option 3: Take of only grilse Chinook salmon.

Note that for the options that include a grilse fishery, DFW recommends a size limit of less than or equal to 27 inches total length.

All three options will also:

- Extend the sport fishing season by 2 weeks on the Sacramento River between Deschutes Road Bridge and Red Bluff Diversion Dam (from December 16th to December 31st);*
- Remove outdated Coho salmon regulations pertaining to take on the Feather River from the Diversion Pool Dam to the Fish Barrier Dam;*
- Prohibit fishing below control weirs in the Central Valley and clarify a fishing closure of 0-250 feet downstream from the overflow side of Moulton, Tisdale, Fremont, and Sacramento weirs; and*
- Make minor corrections for formatting consistency.*

At this meeting, DFW will recommend specific size, bag and possession limits for SRFC based on the final escapement goals established by the Pacific Fishery Management Council (PFMC). However, at the time of writing, this data was unavailable. DFW is considering the below ranges of possible bag and possession limits for Central Valley salmon sport fishing in 2020:

- Lower American River – Bag limit: 0-4 fish; Possession limit: 0-12 fish*
- Feather River – Bag limit: 0-4 fish; Possession limit: 0-12 fish*
- Mokelumne River – Bag limit: 0-4 fish; Possession limit: 0-12 fish*
- Sacramento River – Bag limit: 0-4 fish; Possession limit: 0-12 fish*

Commission final adoption of 2020 Central Valley salmon regulations will take place via teleconference call on May 14, 2020.

To review the Commission staff summary on agenda item 28 regarding 2020 Central Valley salmon regulations, click [FGC Staff Summary – 2020 Central Valley Salmon](#)

Agenda Item 28 – Klamath River Basin Sport Fishing Regulations

This item will serve as another “discussion” hearing on the 2020 Klamath River Basin sport fishing regulations. At this time, the regulatory options DFW is considering for Klamath River Basin fall-run Chinook salmon (KRFC) in the Klamath River Basin in 2020 include the following ranges:

- *Klamath Basin Quota Range: 0-67,600 fish*
- *Bag Limit Range: 0-4 Chinook salmon, of which no more than 0-4 fish over 22-23 inches total length may be retained until the subquota is met, then 0 fish over 22-23 inches total length.*
- *Possession limit range: 0-12 Chinook salmon, of which no more than 0-4 fish over 22-23 inches total length may be retained when the take of salmon over 22-23 inches total length is allowed.*

Other proposed changes DFW is considering for 2020 include:

- *Potential change to the grilse KRFC size limit cutoff:*
 - *DFW is proposing a grilse salmon size limit cutoff range of less than or equal to 22 inches to 23 inches total length for discussion by the Commission before DFW makes a final recommendation. The proposal is based on an evaluation of the potential impacts to KRFC from increasing the size limit cutoff distinguishing age-two fish from age-three fish for in-river recreational harvest.*
- *Increase bag and possession limit for Brown Trout in the mainstem Trinity River:*
 - *Increase allowable harvest to 10 fish daily bag/20 fish possession limit to increase fishing opportunity on a nonnative trout species*

Commission final adoption of 2020 Klamath River Basin sport fishing regulations will take place via teleconference call on May 14, 2020.

To review the Commission staff summary on agenda item 29 regarding 2020 Klamath River Basin sport fishing regulations, click [FGC Staff Summary – 2020 Klamath River Sport Fish](#)

Agenda Item 32 – Mountain Lion CESA Petition

This agenda item is intended to allow for the Commission to consider whether listing certain populations of mountain lion as threatened or endangered under the California Endangered Species Act (CESA) may be warranted. At this meeting the Commission will receive a presentation by DFW on their evaluation of the petition. Should the Commission determine that the listing may be warranted, DFW will undertake a one-year status review before the Commission can make a final decision on listing.

At this meeting, Esther Burkett from the DFW Wildlife Branch/Nongame Wildlife Program will provide the Commission with a presentation which includes the conservation status of the mountain lion, and overview of the life history of the species, and a summary of DFW’s petition evaluation process. Ms. Burkett will also show mapping of the following six genetic Southern California/Central Coast Evolutionarily Significant Units (ESUs) of mountain lions the petition is proposes for listing:

- *Central Coast North*
- *Central Coast Central*

- *Central Coast South*
- *San Gabriel/San Bernardino Mountains*
- *Santa Ana Mountains*
- *East Peninsular Range*

Ms. Burkett will close her presentation by stating that DFW has concluded that the petition *does* include enough scientific information to indicate that the petitioned action may be warranted and recommends the Commission accept the petition for further consideration under CESA. If the Commission agrees and determines that this petitioned action may be warranted, the ESUs of mountain lion identified in the petition would become a “candidate species”, and would thereby be protected under the ESA throughout the DFW one-year status review of the species.

Note that CESA and the Commission’s listing regulation require that petitions for listing of a species contain specific scientific information related to the status of the species. CESA – and case law interpreting it – make clear that the Commission must accept a petition when the petition contains sufficient information to lead a reasonable person to conclude that there is a substantial possibility that the requested listing could occur; whether the species’ continued existence is in serious danger or is threatened by a number of factors, and does not relate to economic consequences that might result from listing.

When this item was first heard during the August 2019 meeting of the Commission, *Gaines & Associates* was pleased to testify in strong opposition to the listing of these mountain lion ESUs under CESA – noting that the species already enjoys the strongest protection possible in our state due to their classification as a “specially protected species” via the passage of Proposition 117 on the June 1990 statewide California ballot. In that testimony, *Gaines & Associates* noted that even the Commission does not have the authority to reverse the “specially protected species” designation placed on mountain lions by the California electorate – even if were critically needed and warranted. *Gaines & Associates* continued by stating that because mature, dominate lions occupy the preferred habitats, they force young lions that are more likely to be threat to humans and domestic animals into fringe areas like the southern/central coastal regions called out in this petition. *Gaines & Associates* closed its testimony by noting, because of this predicament and many other reasons, it is essential that the ability of DFW, ranchers and others to manage problem lions is not substantially restricted via an unnecessary listing of the species under CESA.

For greater background on the petition to list certain ESUs of mountain lion as threatened or endangered under CESA, see Agenda Item 7 in the February 2020 Commission Meeting Recap below.

To view the Commission’s Notice of Receipt of Petition, click [FGC Notice of Receipt](#)

To view the full petition filed by CBD and MLF to the Commission, click [CBD/MLF Petition to List](#)

To review the complete Commission staff summary for agenda item 32 – including DFW’s presentation and evaluation report, click [FGC Staff Summary - Mountain Lion - Petition to List](#)

CALIFORNIA FISH & GAME COMMISSION – February 2020 Meeting Recap

The February 2020 meeting of the California Fish and Game Commission (Commission) was held on February 21st Sacramento. All notable activity associated with agenda items of concern to clients of *Gaines & Associates* is highlighted below:

To view the full agenda, click [FGC – February 2020 Mtg Agenda](#)

Friday, February 21, 2020 – 8:00 AM

The February 21, 2020 meeting of the Commission was gavelled open by Commission President Eric Sklar with four Commissioners present. In addition to President Sklar, Commissioners Jacque Hostler-Carmesin, Russell Burns and Peter Silva were all present. Commissioner Samantha Murray was absent.

Agenda Item 2 – Election of Commission President and Vice President

This agenda item was opened by Commission President Eric Sklar. After calling for public comment (there was none), Commission Hostler-Carmesin quickly nominated current Commission President Sklar for another term as President and Commissioner Samantha Murray for Vice-President. Commissioner Russell Burns seconded the motion and the slate passed unanimously.

Among other things, the responsibilities of the Commission President include:

- *Chairing Commission meetings*
- *Representing the Commission as a voting member of the Wildlife Conservation Board*
- *Providing guidance to Commission staff*
- *Serving as primary contact with Department of Fish and Wildlife Director*
- *May be an ex-officio member of the Migratory Bird Conservation Commission created by the Migratory Bird Treaty Act if there are any projects in California under consideration*

In the absence of the president, the Commission Vice-President fulfills the duties of the President where permitted.

To review the Commission staff summary for agenda item 2, click [FGC Staff Summary – Elections](#)

Agenda Item 3 – Committee Assignments

(A) Marine Resources Committee

(B) Wildlife Resources Committee

(C) Tribal Committee

Commission President Sklar opened this item by explaining that the Commission has three standing committees – the Marine Resources Committee (MRC), the Wildlife Resources Committee (WRC) and the Tribal Committee (TC) – and that no more than two Commissioners may Co-Chair each committee. President Sklar then noted that, in 2019, the committee Co-Chairs were as follows:

- *WRC – Co-Chairs: Commissioners Eric Sklar and Russell Burns*
- *MRC – Co-Chairs: Commissioner Samantha Murray and Peter Silva*

- *TC – Co-Chairs: Commissioners Jacque Hostler-Carmesin and Peter Silva*

He then asked if any of the Commissioners would like to change committees. When all Commissioners present indicated that they were pleased with their 2019 committee assignment, the Commission motioned and approved that the 2019 Committee assignments remain the same for 2020.

Each committee meets three times per year. MRC is charged with providing recommendations to the Commission regarding marine issues, the WRC is tasked with providing recommendations to the Commission regarding wildlife related/sport fish related issues. The TC provides the Commission with recommendations relative to matters associated with California's Native American tribes and tribal communities.

To review the Commission staff summary for agenda item 3, click [FGC Staff Summary – Committee Assign](#)

Agenda Item 7 – Mountain Lion

This item was originally placed on the Consent Calendar but was pulled to allow for full public testimony. Commission President Sklar opened this item by clarifying that this agenda item was only for the Commission to receive DFW's evaluation report of the petition to list certain populations (ESUs) of the mountain lion as a threatened or endangered species under the California Endangered Species Act (CESA). President Sklar noted that at the Commission's next meeting in April 2020 the Commission would be discussing this item at length.

DFW Director Chuck Bonham then was given the floor. Director Bonham opened by offering some of his personal views on mountain lions – noting, among other things, that he believes they are majestic creatures. He then gave an historic perspective of lions and their management during his 9 year tenure as Director, beginning with the note that, in 2013, DFW updated their 2007 policy to build into it an emphasis on non-lethal options for lion management when there is human/lion conflict. He then stated that DFW's ever evolving policy now has greater focus on maintaining genetically diverse and demographically viable populations, minimizing conflicts between mountain lions and humans, identifying and protecting important habitats, improving public awareness and identifying and researching emerging management and scientific issues.

Moving forward to current times, among many other things, Director Bonham stated that he had recently received a letter signed by several members of the State Legislature from southern California who strongly urged DFW to take action to protect the genetic diversity of populations of lions in their region who are isolated by freeways and other infrastructure barriers. Director Bonham then offered his personal opinions on the several steps he believes California should take to help protect and promote healthy mountain lion populations – including better collaboration and planning between local governments and agencies, and much enhanced habitat connectivity – especially in southern California.

Director Bonham continued his comments by stating the DFW scientists have reached the conclusion that the petition is warranted, but that a decision by the Commission is not to be made at this meeting. He then closed by stating that he does expect a fully engaged public and a very robust discussion between interests on all sides of this issue at the Commission's April 2020 meeting.

Following public testimony which included a presentation by the petitioners – the Center for Biological Diversity and the Mountain Lion Foundation – the Commission unanimously voted to receive the DFW petition evaluation and consider DFW’s recommendation at their April 2020 Commission meeting.

To provide some background, on June 25, 2019 the Center for Biological Diversity and the Mountain Lion Foundation submitted a petition to the Commission to list an “evolutionarily significant unit” of mountain lions in southern/central coastal California as threatened or endangered under CESA. On July 5, 2019 the Commission transmitted the petition to DFW for review. On July 26, 2019 the Commission published notice of receipt of the petition in the California Regulatory Notice Register.

Pursuant to the California Fish and Game Code, DFW has 90 days from receipt to analyze the petition and submit a written evaluation and recommendation back to the Commission. Fish and Game Code does, however, allow DFW to request an extension of up to 30 days to complete the evaluation. At the August 2019 meeting of the Commission, DFW requested, and the Commission granted, a 30-day extension for DFW to review the petition – changing the due date for their evaluation from October 3, 2019, to November 2, 2019. However, at Commission’s December 2019 meeting, DFW recommended, and the Commission granted, that the item be continued to the February 2020 meeting of the Commission.

To review the complete Commission staff summary for agenda item 7 – including DFW’s evaluation report, click [FGC Staff Summary - Mountain Lion - Petition to List](#)

Agenda Item 22 – Wildlife Resources Committee

This item was opened by Commission staff Wildlife Advisor Ari Cornman who provided the Commission with a summary of the January 16, 2020 meeting of the WRC meeting in Long Beach which covered the following two topics:

- 1) *Update and discussion of simplification of statewide inland fishing regulations;*
- 2) *Update on bullfrogs and non-native turtle stakeholder engagement process*

Mr. Cornman then stated that the one recommendation that came out of the January 2020 WRC meeting was for the Commission to consider adding a discussion of urban coyote issues to a future Commission meeting, and that staff further recommends that the item be added to the agenda for the June 2020 Commission meeting in Santa Ana.

Mr. Cornman then closed his comments by stating that the next WRC meeting is scheduled for March 5, 2020 in Sacramento for sole purpose of WRC discussion and potential recommendation on the simplification of statewide inland fishing regulations.

Following Mr. Cornman’s comments, the Commission unanimously approved a motion to approve the WRC recommendation and direct staff to add a discussion on urban coyotes for the June 2020 Commission meeting in Santa Ana.

To review the Commission staff summary for agenda item 22 – including the meeting minutes from the January 16, 2020 meeting of the WRC, click [FGC Staff Summary - WRC](#)

Agenda Item 24 – Mammal Hunting

This item served as the second, or “discussion” hearing on DFW’s recommended changes to mammal hunting regulations for the 2020 season. The item was opened by DFW Acting Wildlife

Branch Chief Kevin Shaffer, who noted that DFW had presented some detail on this topic at the December 2019 meeting of the Commission and that nothing had changed since then. But that DFW was prepared to answer any questions that the Commissioners may have.

Following no questions from the dais, very short public testimony and some brief comments from DFW Deputy Director for Fish and Wildlife Stafford Lehr, the item was closed.

Note that, at this juncture, DFW could only provide proposed ranges for the number of big game tags for all existing zones. Final DFW tag quota recommendations for big game species could not be determined until spring herd data was collected later this spring and would be brought forward just prior to the April 2020 Commission adoption hearing following completion of all surveys and data analyses.

The Commission is scheduled to consider final adoption of the 2020 mammal hunting regulations at their April 16, 2020 meeting in Sacramento.

To review the Commission staff summary on agenda item 24 regarding 2020 mammal hunting regulations – including more specificity on some of the changes DFW is considering recommending for 2020, click [FGC Staff Summary – 2020 Mammal](#)

Agenda Item 25 – Waterfowl Hunting (Annual)

This item served as the second, or “discussion” hearing on changes to waterfowl regulations DFW is proposing for the 2020/2021 waterfowl season. The item was also opened by DFW Acting Wildlife Branch Chief Kevin Shaffer, who noted that DFW Waterfowl Program Lead Melanie Weaver had provided a detailed overview of DFW’s recommended 2020/2021 seasons and bag limits for ducks and geese at the December 2019 Commission meeting. Mr. Shaffer stated that Ms. Weaver was also here today to answer any questions that the Commission may have.

Following no questions from the dais and very brief public testimony the item was closed.

The Commission is scheduled to consider final adoption of the 2020/2021 waterfowl package at their April 16, 2020 meeting in Sacramento.

To review the Commission staff summary on agenda item 25 regarding 2020/2021 waterfowl regulations, click [FGC Staff Summary – 2020/2021 Waterfowl](#)

Agenda Item 27 – Central Valley Salmon Sport Fishing

This item served as a “discussion” hearing on the 2020 Central Valley salmon regulations for the Sacramento, Feather, Mokelumne and Lower American Rivers. This item was also opened by Kevin Shaffer, this time in his capacity as DFW Fisheries Branch Chief. Having provided a detailed presentation to the Commission on this topic at the December 2019 Commission meeting, Mr. Shaffer simply stated that he would answer any questions that the Commission may have.

Following no questions from the dais and no public testimony, the item was closed.

Further discussion on 2020 Central Valley salmon regulations is scheduled to take place at the Commission’s April 16, 2020 meeting in Sacramento, with final adoption taking place via Commission teleconference call on May 14, 2020.

To review the Commission staff summary on agenda item 27 regarding 2020 Central Valley salmon regulations, click [FGC Staff Summary – 2020 Central Valley Salmon](#)

Agenda Item 28 – Klamath River Basin Sport Fishing

This agenda item served as a “discussion” hearing on the 2020 Klamath River Basin sport fishing regulations. DFW Fisheries Branch Chief Kevin Shaffer also opened this item. Having also provided a detailed presentation to the Commission on this topic at the December 2019 Commission meeting, Mr. Shaffer again simply asked if the Commission had any questions.

Following no questions from the dais and no public testimony, the item was quickly closed.

Further discussion on 2020 Klamath River Basin sport fishing regulations is scheduled to take place at the Commission’s April 16, 2020 meeting in Sacramento, with final adoption taking place via Commission teleconference call on May 14, 2020.

To review the Commission staff summary on agenda item 28 regarding 2020 Klamath River Basin sport fishing regulations, click [FGC Staff Summary – 2020 Klamath River Sport Fish](#)

PLAN AHEAD!!!

BELOW ARE THE DATES/LOCATIONS OF UPCOMING COMMISSION MEETINGS!

WILDLIFE RESOURCES COMMITTEE – May 14, 2020 Meeting

The May 14, 2020 meeting of the California Fish and Game Commission Wildlife Resources Committee will provide for initial vetting of the 2021 regulatory packages for mammal hunting, waterfowl hunting, Central Valley sport fishing and Klamath River Basin sport fishing.

How individuals can “attend” the May 14, 2020 WRC meeting is yet to be determined.

CALIFORNIA FISH & GAME COMMISSION – May 14, 2020 Teleconference

How individuals can “attend” the May 14, 2020 Teleconference meeting of the California Fish and Game Commission is yet to be determined.

CALIFORNIA FISH & GAME COMMISSION – June 2020 Meeting

The June 2020 meeting of the California Fish and Game Commission is scheduled for June 24th and 25th at the:

***Holiday Inn - Orange County Airport
2726 S. Grand Avenue
Santa Ana, CA 92705***

CALIFORNIA FISH & GAME COMMISSION – August 2020 Meeting

The August 2020 meeting of the California Fish and Game Commission is scheduled for August 19th and 20th at the:

***River Lodge Conference Center
1800 Riverwalk Drive
Fortuna, CA 95540***

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