



GAINES & ASSOCIATES

“GAINES REPORT”

CALIFORNIA FISH AND GAME COMMISSION UPDATE

JUNE 24, 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 webinar and teleconference meeting of the Commission, and a recap of what took place at the Commission’s April 2020 meeting.

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 – June 2020 Meeting Agenda

The June 2020 meeting of the California Fish and Game Commission (Commission) is a two-day meeting teleconference scheduled for Wednesday, June 24th, and Thursday, June 25th.

To listen to the audio only, visit [FGC Home Page](#)
and click on “Live Stream of Commission Meetings”

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

Although the June 2020 webinar and teleconference meeting of the Fish and Game Commission is a two-day meeting, the first day (Wednesday, June 24) is dedicated to marine fishery related issues. As such, this *Gaines Report* will focus on day two, Thursday, June 25th. All agenda items of interest and concern to clients of *Gaines & Associates* are highlighted below.

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

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

Thursday, June 25, 2020 – 9:00 AM

Agenda Item 19 – Annual and Five-Year PLM Licenses and Plans (Consent Calendar)

Under this agenda item, the Commission will consider approving or amending annual and five-year private lands wildlife habitat enhancement and management (PLM) plan renewals and licenses for 49 properties, including:

- New five-year PLM plans and 2020-2024 licenses for 13 properties continuing their participation in the PLM program
- Annual PLM plans and 2020/2021 licenses for 35 properties
- A correction to the 2020/2021 proposed seasons for one property’s annual plan (approved at the April 2020 Commission meeting with incorrect seasons)

The Department of Fish and Wildlife’s (DFW) PLM program provides incentives for landholders to manage their property for the benefit of wildlife in exchange for hunting tags or extended seasons (a.k.a. “harvest program”). In return, the landholder must prepare a biologically-sound wildlife management plan and complete specific wildlife habitat improvements on the PLM property. There are generally three types of actions associated with the PLM program: (1) an initial five-year PLM license; (2) an annual list of PLM seasons, harvests, and habitat improvements; and (3) a “new” five-year PLM license renewal. Conditions are unique to each participant’s property.

To review the complete Commission staff summary for agenda item 19 – including detail on each of the properties under consideration, click [FGC Staff Summary – PLM Licenses/Plans](#)

Agenda Item 23 – Duck Stamps (Consent Calendar)

Under this agenda item, the Commission will consider approving proposed projects for Duck Stamp Account funds in FY 2020/2021.

The California Fish and Game Code requires that the Fish and Game Commission approve projects funded via the dedicated Duck Stamp Account – the account that holds the revenues generated via the annual sale of our state duck stamp. Pursuant to code, funds deposited into this account can only be used for projects or endowments which protect, preserve, restore, enhance, and develop migratory waterfowl breeding and wintering habitat, evaluate habitat projects, and conduct waterfowl resource assessments and other waterfowl related research.

DFW annually requests proposals for projects that meet the statutory goals of the Duck Stamp Account. Projects submitted are reviewed by DFW, and the DFW Duck Stamp Advisory Committee prior to being submitted to the Commission. For FY 2020/2021, spending authority for the fund is \$2,500,000. At this meeting, DFW will bring forth a total of 10 projects for Commission consideration – including a \$139,037 mandatory allocation to Canada for the purposes of the North American Waterfowl Management Plan, and the following three new projects totaling \$2,040,000:

- Pintail Harvest Strategy Analysis and Review – \$150,000
- Butte Valley Wildlife Area – Solar Array Project – \$890,000
- Yolo Basin Wildlife Area – Green’s Lake Water Conveyance Improvement – \$1,000,000

To review the complete Commission staff summary for agenda item 23 – including detail on all of the projects brought forth by DFW for Commission consideration, click [FGC Staff Summary – Duck Stamp Account](#)

Agenda Item 25 – Wildlife Resources Committee

(A) May 14, 2020 Meeting Summary

(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) meeting held via webinar and teleconference on May 14, 2020. Mr. Cornman will note that the May 14th meeting of the WRC covered the following subject areas:

- Initial vetting of possible regulation changes in 2021 for:
 - Mammal hunting
 - Waterfowl hunting
 - Central Valley sport fishing
 - Klamath River Basin sport fishing
 - Inland sport fishing

- An update on the stakeholder engagement process for the bullfrogs and nonnative turtles project.

Given that topics covered at the May 14th meeting were at the initial vetting or update stage, Mr. Cornman will not bring forward any WRC recommendations for Commission consideration at this time.

Mr. Cornman should then state that no new topics have been identified for referral to WRC. He should then note that WRC is requesting the Commission approve a revised timeline for the stakeholder engagement process for bullfrogs and nonnative turtles project, and that the revised timeline is included in the Commission’s meeting binder.

The next meeting of the WRC is scheduled for September 17, 2020 in Sacramento.

To review the complete Commission staff summary for agenda item 25 – including the documents from the May 14, 2020 WRC meeting, click [FGC Staff Summary – WRC](#)

Agenda Item 26 – Simplification of Statewide Inland Fishing

Under this item, DFW will bring forth their request for the Commission to authorize publication of notice of intent to amend/simplify statewide inland sport fishing regulations.

In response to concerns from anglers regarding the complexity of freshwater sport fishing regulations, DFW is bringing forth sweeping proposed regulation changes intended to increase regulatory consistency statewide, reduce complexity of inland sport fishing regulations, and remove regulations that are no longer biologically justifiable.

Major proposed changes under consideration include:

- Separate regulations for inland trout (non-anadromous waters) from those for steelhead and salmon (anadromous waters) to help provide clarity to anglers
- Replacing district regulations with statewide regulations separated for trout
- Standardizing and consolidating “special fishing” regulations

Regulations used to manage trout populations in California to be addressed under this proposal include:

- Seasons (specified dates for opening and closing)
- Bag and possession limits
- Size limits
- Gear and bait restrictions

Under this effort, DFW designed a framework for the simplification based on a “menu” concept, where one of several predefined season and bag limit combinations would be chosen for specific waterways. The menu framework on which these proposed regulations are based was endorsed by the Commission at their February 2019 meeting, following a WRC recommendation. The proposal was further vetted at the January 16, 2020 WRC meeting in Long Beach and the March 5, 2020 WRC webinar/teleconference meeting.

To review the complete Commission staff summary for agenda item 26 – including proposed regulatory text changes, click [FGC Staff Summary – Simplify Statewide Fishing](#)

Agenda Item 32 – Wildlife and Inland Fisheries Items of Interest from Previous Meetings

Coyotes in California’s urban areas have become a source of human-wildlife conflict that is primarily addressed by local government agencies. After several commenters brought forth concerns at WRC’s January 2020 meeting in Long Beach, WRC recommended that the Commission host open discussions on steps that can be taken to address the conflicts. The Commission approved the WRC recommendation at their February 2020 meeting and scheduled the discussion of this topic for their June 2020 meeting based on its originally planned location in southern California. Due to a variety of factors, Commission staff is recommending that this item be postponed to a future meeting.

CALIFORNIA FISH & GAME COMMISSION – April 2020 Meeting Recap

The April 2020 meeting of the California Fish and Game Commission (Commission) was a two-day meeting held via webinar and teleconference on April 15th and 16th.

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

Wednesday, April 15, 2020 – 10:00 AM

The April 15, 2020 meeting of the Commission was held via webinar and teleconference and gaveled open by Commission President Eric Sklar with all five Commissioners present.

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

Under this agenda item, the Commission considered adopting an emergency regulation authorizing 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.

This item was opened by Commission President Eric Sklar who briefly noted that the emergency regulation being considered today was initiated at the request of several rural counties who had limited COVID-19 cases in their area, but who had concerns regarding large numbers of people coming from urban areas heavily impacted by the virus to fish in their area. President Sklar noted that the emergency regulation was very surgical in nature, was limited in scope, and limited to a one-month timeframe. President Sklar then handed the floor over to DFW Director Chuck Bonham.

To put to bed any possible rumors of 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, Director Bonham focused his comments with an overview of what the proposed emergency regulation would actually do. In the days leading up to this meeting, to help get accurate information on the street and ease the fears of anglers and hunters, *Gaines & Associates* was pleased to work with DFW Director Chuck Bonham on creating and distributing a “DFW Fact Sheet” on the proposed emergency regulation which separated “fact from fiction”. Director Bonham’s opening statement largely focused on this fact sheet. To view this fact sheet, click [DFW Fact Sheet](#)

Following Director Bonham’s comments, President Sklar opened the topic up for public comment, allowing public officials to testify first. Following three full hours of public testimony, the Commission voted unanimously to approve the emergency regulation.

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

Thursday, April 16, 2020 – 9:00 AM

The April 16, 2020 meeting of the Commission was held via webinar and teleconference and gavelled open by Commission President Eric Sklar with all five Commissioners present.

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

Commission staff Wildlife Advisor Ari Cornman opened this item by providing the Commission with a review of the March 5, 2020 WRC meeting which covered only one topic – discussion and consideration of approving recommendations for the Statewide Inland Sport Fishing Regulations Revision and Simplification Project (Project).

Mr. Cornman then noted that, based on the discussion at the meeting, WRC is recommending that the Commission support the proposed regulation changes for the Project, as proposed by DFW and presented during the meeting. Mr. Cornman then stated that DFW had made some changes to the proposal since the WRC meeting. He then ran through the changes, which include:

- 1) Bifurcate the statewide regulation into two:
 - Rivers, streams, and creeks:
 - i. Last Saturday in April through November 15 with a five trout daily bag limit, 10 trout in possession; and
 - ii. November 16 through the Friday preceding the last Saturday in April with a 0 trout bag limit, and artificial lures/barbless hooks only, and
 - Lakes and reservoirs – open all year, five trout daily bag limit, 10 trout in possession.

- 2) Add some waters to the list of *Special Fishing Regulations* in response to bifurcating the statewide regulation:
 - Lake Isabella (Kern County)
 - Downstream of Lake Isabella (Kern County)
 - Kings River (Fresno Co.) – (1) downstream of Hwy 180 crossing, and (2) from Pine Flat Road downstream to Cobbles (Alta) Weir
 - Santa Ana River and Tributaries
 - Lytle Creek and Tributaries
 - Miller Canyon Creek

- 3) Change the bag/possession limits and/or seasons in:
 - Walker River, East Fork
 - Bear Creek (Shasta and Siskiyou counties)
 - Bridgeport Reservoir and Bridgeport Reservoir Tributaries
 - Hobart Creek (Tuolumne County)
 - Mammoth Pool (Fresno and Madera counties)
 - Mammoth Pool tributaries (Fresno and Madera counties)
 - Salmon Creek (Monterey County)
 - Mono Creek and tributaries (Fresno County)
 - Arroyo Seco River
 - Arroyo Grande Creek
 - Fish Slough
 - Kirman Lake and Tributaries
 - Owens River (134) and (134)(C)

Mr. Cornman then provided the Commission with an update on the WRC work plan, noting that the next WRC meeting was 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 then closed this agenda item by noting that there are no new agenda topics proposed for the May 14, 2020 WRC meeting.

Following Mr. Cornman’s presentation, the Commission voted unanimously to approve the WRC recommendation that the Commission support the proposed regulation changes for the Statewide Inland Sport Fishing Regulations Revision and Simplification Project, as proposed by DFW and presented during the meeting – including the changes made to the proposal subsequent to the WRC meeting, as noted above.

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 served as the final “adoption” hearing on DFW’s recommended changes to elk, bighorn sheep, deer, and antelope hunting regulations for the 2020 season.

Discussion on this topic was opened with a presentation by Brad Burkholder, DFW Game Program Supervisor. Beginning with deer, Mr. Burkholder stated that the only changes from the 2019 deer hunting regulations recommended in the 2020 regulations was in relation to Fort Hunter Liggett Military Base hunts. Previously, Fort Hunter Liggett tags were evenly split between military and public. Mr. Burkholder noted that, at the request of the Base Commander, in 2020 all tags will be made available to the general public.

Full detail on DFW’s recommended tag and season changes for the 2020 season is provided below. Note that recommended tag allocations for all other deer hunting zones remain the same as 2019:

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; 50 general public tags – and increase of 25 general public tags over 2019.
- 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; 20 general public tags – and increase of 10 general public tags over 2019.
- 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. 30 general public tags – a decrease of 30 general public tags from 2019.

Moving on to bighorn sheep, Mr. Burkholder stated that surveys indicate that herds in the Kelso/Old Dad Mountains zone are showing recovery from an “all age” disease die-off that has plagued that region for the past eight years. Noting that only one tag has been allocated in Zone 2 since 2013, Mr. Burkholder stated that – with herd numbers in that area now showing improvement – DFW was pleased to recommend one tag be allocated to the Kelso/Old Dad Mountains zone for 2020.

Full detail on DFW’s recommended bighorn sheep tag allocations for the 2020 season is provided below:

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
(A net increase of one tag over 2019)

Turning to elk, Mr. Burkholder opened by stating that, similar to deer, the Base Commander at Fort Hunter Liggett has requested that all tags be made available to the general public in 2020. In addition, to accommodate training schedule at the base, some changes were also being recommended to Fort Hunter Liggett season dates.

Mr. Burkholder then went into some detail regarding changes to elk hunting tag allocations for 2020, which are summarized as follows:

Elk:

- 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>

Then, to address questions and confusion from the public regarding the elk tag numbers and allocation, Mr. Burkholder then went into some detail regarding the types of elk tags and how DFW determines their allocation, with a primary focus on the Northwestern hunt zone.

Turning to the reduction of 54 tags on Grizzly Island wildlife area, Mr. Burkholder explained that when Grizzly Island was well over its population objective in 2013, DFW began to increase the number of elk tags to bring the population back down within their objective. After several years of increased harvest, with the Grizzly Island herd now within objective, DFW would like to go back to a "maintenance level" of harvest. Mr. Burkholder was careful to note that DFW is also embarking on a monitoring study on Grizzly Island to gain a better understanding of what is going on with elk in that area – including their increased movements, and establishment of elk in areas where they haven't been established in the past. The study will include GPS collars and ear tagging to help them count elk and track their movement. He stated that results from the study will help DFW improve Grizzly Island elk management and could conceivably help DFW expand the hunt area.

DFW did not recommend any changes in 2020 from 2019 antelope hunting regulations, other than adjustments to season dates to accommodate calendar shift.

Following Mr. Burkholder's presentation, Commission President Sklar opened the item up for public comment. *Gaines & Associates* opened public testimony by thanking DFW staff for working closely with the *California Chapter of the Wild Sheep Foundation*, *California Deer Association*, the *Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation*, *California Bowmen Hunters/State Archery Association* and other conservation organizations to provide maximum scientifically-supportable hunting opportunity for deer, bighorn sheep and elk in 2020. Following *Gaines & Associates* opening testimony, numerous animal-rights advocates spoke in opposition to the Commission supporting any big game hunting opportunity.

Following public testimony, the Commission voted unanimously to adopt the 2020 mammal hunting regulations, as recommended by DFW.

To view Mr. Burkholder's presentation to the Commission, click on [DFW Mammal Reg Presentation](#) and scroll down to page 33.

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 served as the final "adoption" hearing on changes to waterfowl regulations DFW was proposing for the 2020/2021 waterfowl season.

DFW Waterfowl Program Lead Melanie Weaver opened this item with a presentation

on DFW's recommended seasons and bag limits for ducks and geese in all five of California's waterfowl hunting zones. Ms. Weaver began her presentation with an overview of the federal frameworks approved by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service 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 then provided the following overall summary of DFW's recommendations:

- Season length in Northeastern Zone to be reduced from 105 to 103 days to accommodate the Veteran Hunt Days
- All other zones – January 31st falls on last Sunday resulting in 100-day seasons
- 2 days for Veterans and Active Military Personnel (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 then provided 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.

Following Ms. Weaver's presentation, President Sklar called for public testimony. Testifying on behalf of the *Suisun Resource Conservation District*, the *Tulare Basin Wetlands Association*, the *Cal-Ore Wetlands and Waterfowl Council*, the *California Hawking Club* and the *Black Brant Group*, *Gaines & Associates* opened our testimony by thanking DFW staff for working with us for the past several months leading up to this meeting to develop recommendations which take full advantage of the hunting opportunity allowed by the federal framework. We then noted that, although we are not pleased with the one pintail daily bag or the reduction in the length of the blank brant season, we recognize that those restrictions are called out in the federal framework, are not the call of DFW, and are based on science and in the best interest of the species.

In our testimony, *Gaines & Associates* also took the opportunity to confirm in public forum that – although the California junior hunting license reverts back to 15 years and under in the coming waterfowl season – pursuant to the federal regulation, youth 17 years and under can participate in the Youth Waterfowl Weekend this coming season, as long as they are accompanied by a hunter 18 years or older. In the past, to participate in the Junior Waterfowl Weekend in California, hunters had to possess a junior hunting license.

Gaines & Associates closed our testimony by thanking DFW for working with us and the *California Hawking Club* to establish the first ever “falconry-only” season for three days after the close of the general season, and for allowing falconers to also join veterans in the field during the two-day VAMP Hunt Weekend.

Following the close of public testimony, the Commission voted unanimously to adopt the 2020/2021 waterfowl hunting regulations, as recommended by DFW.

To view Ms. Weaver's presentation to the Commission, click on [DFW Waterfowl Reg Presentation](#) and scroll down to page 42.

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

Agenda Item 28 – Central Valley Sport Fishing Regulations

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

Acting DFW Fisheries Branch Chief Roger Bloom opened this item by first clarifying the waterways that fall under this regulation. Mr. Bloom then reminded the Commission that the

2019 regulation for SFRC was two fish per day with a possession limit of four. Mr. Bloom then stated that for 2020 DFW was considering the following three regulatory options:

- Option 1: Take of any size Chinook salmon 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.

Mr. Bloom then noted that the seasons, bag and possession limits being recommended by DFW would apply to all the rivers covered in the Central Valley regulations – with the exception of the Feather River where DFW is considering a three fish daily bag and a possession limit of six.

(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.)

Mr. Bloom then stated that DFW was also considering the following four additional changes:

- Extend the sport fishing season by two 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 at some flood control structures that have the tendency to pool and aggregate federally listed species.

Following Mr. Bloom’s verbal presentation and brief public testimony, with no action required from the Commission, the agenda item was closed.

Commission final adoption of 2020 Central Valley salmon regulations will take place via teleconference call on May 14, 2020. (See “UPDATE” below)

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

UPDATE: On their May 14, 2020 teleconference call, the Commission adopted 2020 regulations which include the take of any size Sacramento River Chinook salmon up to a daily bag limit of two, and a possession limit of four on the Sacramento, Feather, Mokelumne and Lower American Rivers:

The Commission also adopted the four additional changes outlined during the April 2020 Commission meeting. (See above).

To review the Commission staff summary regarding 2020 Central Valley salmon regulations for the May 14, 2020 teleconference meeting, click

[FGC Staff Summary – 2020 Central Valley Salmon Adopt – May 14 Telecon](#)

Agenda Item 29 – Klamath River Basin Sport Fishing Regulations

This item served as the second “discussion” hearing on the 2020 Klamath River Basin sport fishing regulations.

Acting DFW Fisheries Branch Chief Roger Bloom also opened this item by reminding the Commission of the 2019 regulations for Klamath River Basin fall-run Chinook salmon (KRFC). Mr. Bloom then stated that for 2020 DFW was considering the following regulatory changes:

- Increase in the minimum adult KRFC salmon size:
 - Increasing the minimum KFRC adult salmon size from 22 inches in total length to 23 inches total length, which would offer greater fishing opportunity for grilse size salmon in this region
- Increase bag and possession limit for brown trout in the mainstem Trinity River:
 - Increase allowable harvest from the current 5 fish daily bag and 10 fish in possession to a 10 fish daily bag and 20 fish in possession to increase fishing opportunity on a nonnative trout species

Mr. Bloom then stated that, at this time, the 2020 KFRC regulation would fall between a range of 1,296 to 1,356 adult fish (greater than 23 inches in length), with a daily bag of no more than one adult fish and a possession limit of six fish, of which no more than three can be adults.

Mr. Bloom closed by stating that DFW was recommending that the seasons are as follows:

- Klamath River: August 15th to December 31st
- Trinity River: September 1st to December 31st

Following Mr. Bloom's verbal presentation and brief public testimony, with no action required from the Commission, the agenda item was closed.

Commission final adoption of 2020 Klamath River Basin sport fishing regulations will take place via teleconference call on May 14, 2020. (See "UPDATE" below)

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](#)

UPDATE: On their May 14, 2020 teleconference call, the Commission adopted the following 2020 regulations for Klamath River Basin fall-run Chinook salmon:

- *Increasing the minimum KFRC salmon adult size to greater than 23 inches total length*
- *A daily bag limit of two KFRC salmon, of which no more than one may be greater than 23 inches in length, and a possession limit of six fish, of which no more than three may be greater than 23 inches in length.*
- *Increasing bag and possession limit for brown trout in the mainstem Trinity River to 10 fish per day and 20 in possession*

The Commission also adopted the following KRFC salmon season dates for 2020:

- *Klamath River: August 15th to December 31st*
- *Trinity River: September 1st to December 31st*

To review the Commission staff summary regarding 2020 Klamath River Basin fall-run Chinook salmon regulations for the May 14, 2020 teleconference meeting, click [FGC Staff Summary – 2020 Klamath River Basin Salmon Adopt – May 14 Telecon](#)

Agenda Item 32 – Mountain Lion CESA Petition

This agenda item was 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.

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. 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. At their February 2020 meeting the Commission formally received DFW’s evaluation report and at today’s meeting the Commission will determine if the petitioned action may be warranted. Should the Commission determine that the petitioned action is warranted, the species will become a “candidate species” for listing while DFW conducts a 12-month status review. Based on the results of that 12-month review, the Commission will determine if the species should be formally listed under CESA.

At this meeting, this controversial item was opened with a few words by Commission President Sklar who briefly covered the process the Commission must follow when considering a listing under CESA. Following President Sklar’s comments, DFW Director Chuck Bonham made a few comments – including highlighting the three formal steps in the listing process: 1) someone petitions the Commission to consider a listing; 2) after a petition evaluation report is completed by DFW, the Commission determines if the proposed action is warranted. If the Commission’s answer is “yes”, then; 3) DFW conducts a 12-month status review of the species. Director Bonham stated that we are at “Step 2” today.

Director Bonham then handed the floor over to Ms. Esther Burkett, DFW Statewide Coordinator for Carnivore Conservation. Ms. Burkett then provided the Commission with a detailed presentation which included the conservation status of the mountain lion, and overview of the life history of the species, a summary of DFW’s petition evaluation process, the petition evaluation, and discussion and mapping of the six genetic Southern California/Central Coast Evolutionarily Significant Units (ESUs) of mountain lions the petition is proposing for listing:

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

Ms. Burkett then closed her detailed 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.

Following Ms. Burkett’s presentation and comments provided by the petitioners, President Sklar opened the item up for public testimony. Following nearly two hours of testimony from public officials and the general public on both sides of this controversial issue, the Commission voted unanimously that the petition action may be warranted – initiating a 12-month status review by DFW of the ESUs of mountain lion identified in the petition, and thereby making the lions in those ESU’s a “candidate species” and who will enjoy full protection under CESA throughout the DFW one-year status review of the species.

When this item was first heard during the August 2019 meeting of the Commission, *Gaines & Associates* testified 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.

To review the complete Commission staff summary for agenda item 32 – including the CBD/MLF Petition, DFW’s presentation and DFW’s 90 Day Evaluation Report and presentation at today’s meeting, click [FGC Staff Summary - Mountain Lion - Petition to List](#)

PLAN AHEAD!!!

BELOW ARE THE DATES/LOCATIONS OF UPCOMING COMMISSION MEETINGS!

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***

WILDLIFE RESOURCES COMMITTEE – September 17, 2020 Meeting

***Natural Resources Building
Redwood Room, 14th Floor
1416 Ninth Street
Sacramento, CA 95814***

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