A Message From Your Fish & Game Commission

The California Fish and Game Commission is pleased to present its Strategic Plan. This Plan focuses on California's diminishing fish and wildlife resources, their importance to California, their management and the role of the Commission in meeting this challenge.

The Plan includes a strategic agenda (mission, vision, critical initial strategic goals) and a commitment to ensure the future sustainability of California's fish and wildlife resources through proactive and creative approaches and meeting constitutionally and statutorily mandated responsibilities.

California's fish and wildlife resources are at a critical crossroad. From the early 1980s to 1998 our State's population grew from 22 million people to over 32 million people. This growth has resulted in an increased pressure and demand on limited fish and wildlife resources. Loss of critical resource habitats due to competing uses have accompanied this growth.

Since the Commission was formed in 1870 to protect California's fish and wildlife resources, there has been a change in emphasis from resource utilization to resource sustainability. The Commission's greatest challenge today is finding the right resource management approaches given complex, competing resource uses. Setting proper management policies is critical to present and future resource needs.

We Commissioners are rethinking the roles and responsibilities of the Commission. As the stewards of California's fish and wildlife resources, the Commission must not only provide for hunting and fishing opportunities, but act as the trustee of these same resources. The Commission will be examining its existing policies and developing new policies for the Department of Fish and Game to better meet these joint resource challenges.

The Commission recognizes the unique interdependencies between individual fish and wildlife resources, their habitats and man. This has led to a shift toward policies aimed at managing resources on an ecosystem basis rather than on a species by species basis.

The Commission has also found that it needs better processes to involve the public and key interest groups, in policy development and implementation. Education efforts and outreach to both consumptive and non-consumptive users of fish and wildlife resources are critical pathways to this end.

Public input received during our workshops and focus groups held around California, strongly influenced the strategic direction of the Plan. Our sincere thanks to all who gave time and expertise to this effort. This strategic plan is a dynamic document subject to periodic review, evaluation, and updating. We must work together to develop partnerships to implement its important priorities and to achieve the critical "Vision" that we all share for California's fish and wildlife resources.

We, the undersigned Commissioners, commit to doing the above in a manner that provides for public access to the Commission, ensures accountability of our actions, and is anticipatory rather than reactive.

Richard T. Thieriot, President

Ted Weggeland, Vice President

Douglas B. McGeoghegan, Member

Frank D. Boren, Member

Michael Chrisman, Member

Richard T. Thieriot, President

Mr. Thieriot has served as chairman of the Parrott Investment Company since 1985. From 1977 to 1993, he served as president and chief executive officer of The Chronicle Publishing Company, as well as publisher and editor of the San Francisco Chronicle. Mr. Thieriot was instrumental in creating the 15,000-acre "Llano Seco Wildlife Area" outside Chico, California in 1990. This project involved an unprecedented joint effort by federal, state and non-profit agencies along with private landowners to create a unique wildlife-and-wetland complex in the Sacramento Valley. He also served as chairman of "Farms and Wetlands, Inc.," a pioneer wetlands project which later was developed into The Nature Conservancy's "Cosumnes Wildlife Area."

Ted Weggeland, Vice President

Mr. Weggeland served in the California Legislature representing the 64th Assembly District from 1992 to 1996. While in the Assembly, he served as the Republican Whip and Chairman of the Banking and Finance Committee. He authored numerous bills signed into law including measures to deter frivolous lawsuits, reform California's Greater Avenues for Independence program, and redevelop March Air Force Base. He also authored AB 2060 which created the nation's first certification program for environmental technologies which was selected as a winner for the 1996 Innovations in American Government Award selected by the Ford Foundation and the John F. Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University.

Douglas B. McGeoghegan, Member

Mr. McGeoghegan is a general partner in C-5 Leasing, an equipment leasing, land grading and wildlife habitat restoration firm; Vice President and General Manager of Gunnersfield Enterprises, Inc., specializing in rice and other crop production and related agribusiness including land and resource management, wildlife habitat restoration and consulting; and a partner in McGeoghegan Farming Venture, a rice production agribusiness firm. In 1989 he received a citation from the United States Fish and Wildlife Service for "Appreciation for Outstanding Contributions to America's Natural and Cultural Resources." In 1990, he received the "Distinguished Service to Agriculture" award from the United States Department of Agriculture. He received national conservation honors in 1994 from the National Rice Foundation for his work with the conservation community in developing farming practices beneficial to wildlife and the environment.

Frank D. Boren, Member

Mr. Boren's primary interest is in defining the role that private business should play in solving our environmental problems. To that end he is involved in a number of public/private ventures. He is president of Sustainable Conservation, a project of Tides Center, a private non-profit organization dedicated to enhancing the environment through business and the private sector. Since 1980, he has been a partner in McNeill Enterprises, a real estate development company in Sherman Oaks, California. In addition, he is a director of the Atlantic Richfield Corporation and chairman of the Board's Committee on the Environment, Health and Safety. He is a member of the Yosemite Concession Services Advisory Committee.

Michael Chrisman, Member

Mr. Chrisman is the owner/partner of Chrisman Ranches, a Visalia-based family ranching and farming operation in Tulare County. Mr. Chrisman is currently the Regional Manager for Southern California Edison Company managing all phases of company/customer business, political and civic activities in Edison's San Joaquin Valley service area. Previously, he served as Undersecretary of the California Department of Food and Agriculture from 1994 to 1996 where he developed and implemented agricultural policy for the state's industry and consumers. Mr. Chrisman served as the Deputy Secretary for Operations/ Legislation in The Resources Agency from 1991 to 1994. He served as Staff Director of the Assembly Republican Caucus and Chief of Staff for former Assemblyman Bill Jones specializing in agriculture, water and environmental issues. Mr. Chrisman serves on the California Conservation Council of the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation and the boards of directors of the Great Valley Center, Sequoia Kings Canyon National Parks Foundation, and Self Help Enterprises. He is affiliated with The Nature Conservancy, California Waterfowl Association, Ducks Unlimited, and the California Farm Bureau Federation.

Our Vision

The vision of the California Fish & Game Commission, in partnership with the Department of Fish and Game and the public, is to assure California has...

"Sustainable Fish and Wildlife Resources."

Our Mission

The Mission of the California Fish and Game Commission is, on behalf of California citizens, to ensure the long term sustainability of California's fish and wildlife resources by:

- Guiding the ongoing scientific evaluation and assessment of California's fish and wildlife resources;
- Setting California's fish and wildlife resource management policies and insuring these are implemented by the Department of Fish and Game;
- Establishing appropriate fish and wildlife resource management rules and regulations; and
- Building active fish and wildlife resource management partnerships with individual landowners, the public and interest groups, and federal, State and local resource management agencies.

Identified Strategic Challenges and Goals *

* See Implementation Strategies on page 19

Strategic Challenge Number One:

To Develop a Resource Policy Agenda for California's Fish and Wildlife Resources That Assures Resource Sustainability.

Goal 1: Determine the current status of California's fish and wildlife resources and the ecosystems that are needed to support them.

Goal 2: Based on an annual resource assessment, develop resource management policies that meet the mission of the Commission and assure the sustainability of California's fish and wildlife resources.

Strategic Challenge Number Two:

To Fully Implement the Commission's Roles and Responsibilities.

Goal 1: Develop fish and wildlife policies that focus on and prioritize resource management needs.

Goal 2: Be proactive in the protection of the state's fish and wildlife.

Goal 3: Ensure that resource-related decisions are based primarily on the best scientific methodology and information available.

Goal 4: Review current statutory mandates, assess their current appropriateness and effectiveness, and assess all unfunded mandates.

Goal 5: Increase coordination with appropriate state and federal agencies, boards, and commissions whose responsibilities impact fish and wildlife.

Goal 6: Work more closely and cooperatively with the Department of Fish and Game.

Goal 7: Protect as much of the state's remaining wildlife habitat as is possible.

Goal 8: Support the law enforcement activities of the Department's wardens by taking consistent action to suspend licenses and permits when appropriate.

Strategic Challenge Number Three:

To Improve the Commission's Organizational Effectiveness.

Goal 1: Determine the required staffing levels to carry out the Commission's responsibilities and mandates.

Goal 2: Develop adequate Commission procedures, policies and materials.

Goal 3: Establish an independent budget for the Commission based on current resource requirements and also be supportive of adequate funding for Department programs.

Goal 4: Develop procedures for the Commission's Budget Subcommittee to work closely with the Department in formulating its annual budget.

Goal 5: Determine whether the Commission's organizational structure is the most efficient and productive approach to carrying out its mission.

Goal 6: Determine if the Commission's organizational structure provides the adequate exercise of its authority over the Department of Fish and Game.

Strategic Challenge Number Four:

To Improve Commission Outreach.

Goal 1: Increase public participation and representation in Commission decision-making processes and operations.

Northern Pintails
File photo

Commission Overview

The California Fish and Game Commission is over 128 years old. In 1870 the Board of Fish Commissioners, the forerunner of the modern day Fish and Game Commission, was established "to provide for the restoration and preservation" of fish in California waters. This was the first wildlife conservation agency in the United States, predating even the U.S. Commission of Fish and Fisheries.

California's first three "fish commissioners" were appointed by the Governor and received no compensation for their service. The Legislature appropriated $5,000 to the Board for its first two years of operations. This same year (1870) the first fish ladder was built on a tributary of the Truckee River and a state fish "hatching house" was established at the University of California in Berkeley.

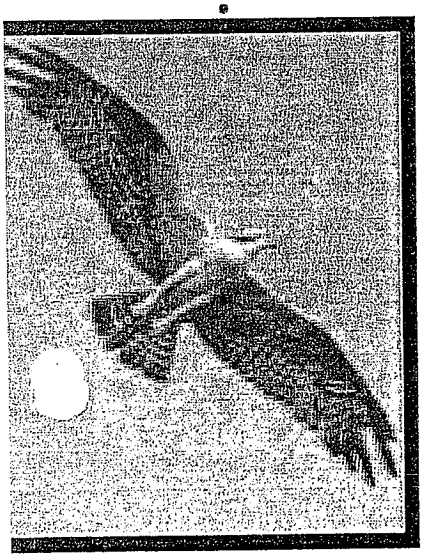
In 1909 the Board of Fish Commissioners' name was changed to the Fish and Game Commission, which reflected the growing importance of game conservation. The complex fish and game regulation and administration of today dates from these years when the Commission was given more authority to expand and to undertake new responsibilities in the areas of conservation.

In 1927 the administrative functions of the original Commission were assumed by the newly established Division of Fish and Game, set up within the Department of Natural Resources. As compared with other divisions within the Department, Fish and Game was unique in that it was administered by the Fish and Game Commission and not under the direct control of the Department of Natural Resources. In 1927 the first deer tag ($1.00) was issued.

In 1937 the Fish and Game Commission was increased from three to its current five members, and in 1940 a constitutional amendment provided for six-year staggered terms for the commissioners and made their appointments "by the governor subject to confirmation by the Senate."

In 1945 the Legislature, through a constitutional amendment, delegated to the Fish and Game Commission the responsibility for making regulations for sport fishing and hunting.

To achieve its current mission the Commission must deal with many major challenges:



Osprey

- A California population of 32+ million people which is growing rapidly and impacting wildlife and their habitats in many ways: from competition for resource use; to pollution; to growth pressures; to the importation of non-native species; to poaching, etc.
- A land area of some 159,000 square miles.
- Habitat and fish and wildlife diversity that is unequaled by any other state. California includes more than 1,100 miles of coastline, 30,000 miles of rivers and streams, 4,800 lakes and reservoirs, 80 major rivers, three of the four North American desert habitats, and scores of rugged high mountain peaks.
- More than 1,000 native fish and wildlife species.
- More than 5,000 native plant species.
- Nearly 350 threatened and endangered species.

While the Fish and Game Commission and Department of Fish and Game are intertwined in many ways there is a considerable difference in the statutory charges of each. The Commission is a separate entity and has the statutory authority to formulate policies for the guidance of the Department.

The Commission has over 200 other powers and duties listed in the statutes of the Fish and Game Code. Principal among these are legislatively-granted powers for the regulation of the sport take and possession of birds, mammals, fish, amphibians, and reptiles. These resource protection responsibilities involve the setting of seasons, bag and size limits, and methods and areas of take.

Coyote
File pho...

The Commission also regulates aspects of commercial fishing including: fish reduction; shellfish cultivation; take of herring, lobster, sea urchins and abalone; kelp leases; lease of state water bottoms for oyster allotments; aquaculture operations; and other activities.

The Commission oversees the establishment of wildlife areas and ecological reserves and regulates their use. It also prescribes the terms and conditions under which permits or licenses may be issued by the Department and considers the revocation or suspension of commercial and sport licenses and permits of individuals convicted of violating Fish and Game laws and regulations.

In carrying out its responsibilities the Commission holds eleven regularly-scheduled public meetings per year around California. It hears from the public on a myriad of subjects during its decision-making process. A primary responsibility of the Commission is to afford an opportunity for full public input and participation in the decision and policy making process of adopting regulations or taking other actions related to the well-being of California's fish and wildlife resources.

The Commission also provides an appeal process for those members of the public dissatisfied with actions taken by the Department.

The relationship of the Commission and the Department has evolved over time. The Commission sets policy for the Department, while the Department is the lead state agency charged with implementing, safeguarding and regulating the uses of wildlife. The mission of the Department is to "manage California's diverse fish, wildlife, and plant resources, and the habitats upon which they depend, for their ecological values and for their use and enjoyment by the public."

The Department manages more than 840,000 acres of wildlife habitat, including 107 wildlife areas and 99 ecological reserves; many areas were purchased to safeguard species at risk. Department wardens enforce laws and regulations relating to fish, wildlife, and habitat within the state and its offshore waters. Department staff also reviews timber harvest plans and a variety of environmental documents for land and water projects that may affect fish and wildlife.

Department scientists are critical to the identification of species and ecosystem status and are an important resource to the Commission in its determination of the health and resource management policy needs of specific ecosystems. While the Commission relies on the Department's biological data and scientific recommendations there is an increasing emphasis on the use of peer review and best available science.

While the Commission has many powers given to it by the California Legislature those powers not specifically given to the Commission by the California Legislature are retained by them. Over time the Commission's powers have been broadened as the Legislature gives it further regulatory and management authority.

It is becoming clear that the Commission, which can rapidly and expertly deal with resource issues, is an effective means of meeting the needs of the public and the resources. This is both a major opportunity and challenge for the Commission. Any effective management of California's fish and wildlife resources, however, will depend on an effective working partnership between the Commission, the Department and the public.

What follows is a summary of the specific authorities of the Commission.

Summary of Fish and Game Commission Authority

Powers and Duties of the Commission:

- The Fish and Game Commission is authorized by Article IV, Section 20, of the Constitution of the State of California. The Commission is to be composed of five members; two of them are elected to serve as president and vice president. The Commission is appointed by the Governor, with appointments subject to confirmation by the Senate.

- The Commission shall formulate general policies for the conduct of the Department. The Director shall be guided by these policies and is responsible to the Commission for administration of the Department therewith. (Section 703, Fish and Game Code.)

- The Commission is required to hold certain meetings each year. (Sections 206, 207 and 208, Fish and Game Code.)

- The Commission may hold other meetings or hearings on such dates, or in such locations, as may be deemed necessary or proper, and in accordance with the provisions of various sections of the Fish and Game Code.

- The Commission carries out a quasi-judicial role when it considers the revocation or suspension of licenses and permits for violation of sport and commercial laws and regulations.

.aguna Beach Dudleya
state-listed "rare")
'hoto by Reid Moran

General Regulatory Powers:

Under the provisions of sections 200 through 221 of the Fish and Game Code, the Commission is empowered to regulate the taking of fish and game. These statutes do not extend to the taking, processing or use of fish, mollusks, crustaceans, kelp or other aquatic plants for commercial purposes.

The general statutory powers and duties vested in the Commission related to the take of birds, mammals, fish, mollusks, crustaceans, amphibians and

reptiles include the following:

1. Establish, extend, shorten or abolish open and closed seasons;
2. Establish, change or abolish bag, possession and size limits;
3. Establish and change territorial limits for taking any or all species or varieties; and
4. Prescribe the manner and means of taking any species or variety.

American Peregrine Falcon
(state-listed "endangered")
Photo by Brian Woodbridge

Other Powers:

Other powers and duties which are vested in the Commission total approximately 200 and are found throughout the Fish and Game Code. Generally, they are as follows:

- The Commission establishes policies for the guidance of the Department and prescribes the terms and conditions under which permits or licenses may be issued by the Department;
- Regulates the following aspects of commercial fishing: fish reduction, the ocean shrimp fishery, kelp leases, oyster allotments, shellfish cultivation and abalone regulations;
- Accepts mitigation lands on behalf of the state; and
- Reviews the Department's budget, but has no powers in relation the administration of the Department.
- In preparing its strategic plan, the Commission reviewed its full scope of responsibilities and authorities granted to it by the Legislature. If anyone is interested in those mandates, a list can be obtained from the Commission office.

Length of Term of Office:

The Constitution places the term of office of each Commissioner at six years. A Commissioner, whose term has expired, may serve until the Governor appoints a successor.

The terms of office for the Commissioners are staggered so that the term of not more than one Commissioner will expire in any one year. If, for any reason, a vacancy on the Commission occurs before the "normal" expiration of term of a member, the successor may only serve out the replaced member's original term.

Functions of President:

The President of the Commission presides over Commission meetings, appoints Commission members to special subcommittees, signs documents on behalf of the Commission and generally represents the Commission in all matters involving it. The President is a member of the Wildlife Conservation Board (Section 1320, Fish and Game Code) and may be a member ex officio of the Migratory Bird Conservation Commission created by the Migratory Bird Act of Congress in 1929. (Section 357, Fish and Game Code.)

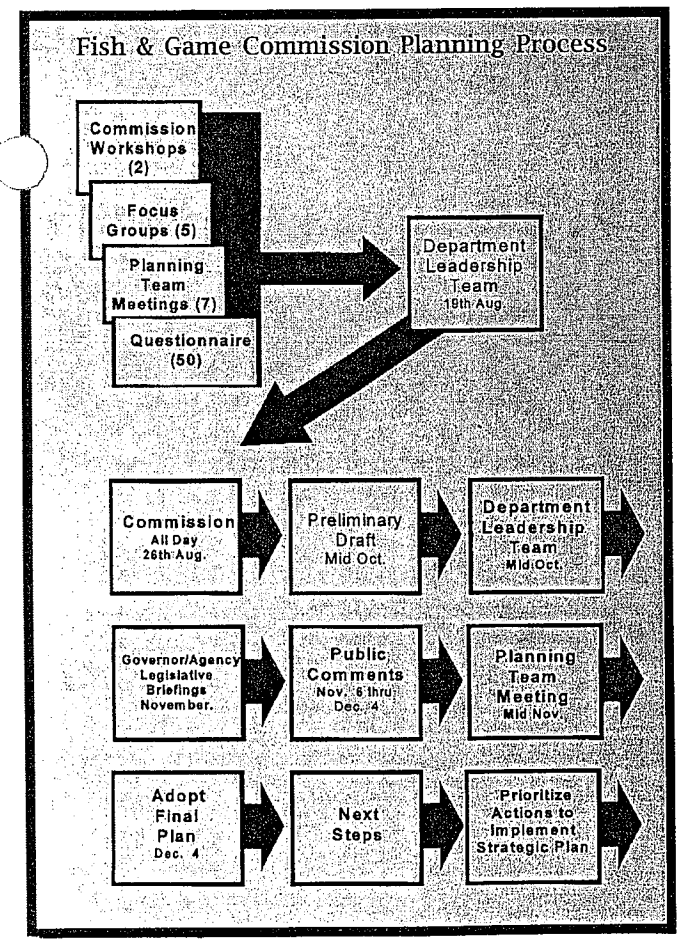
The Process of Developing A Strategic Plan

Formulating The Plan Through The Public Process

Public Meetings

The key emphasis of the Commission's strategic planning and policy efforts is to more effectively reach out to all of our critical constituencies—you the citizens of California. It is critical to develop effective two-way, working relationships with existing and new interest groups, to address common resource concerns, to establish working partnerships and to better understand diverse resource needs.

During our strategic planning process, five focus group meetings were held across the state in Redding, Sacramento, Fresno, Monterey and Riverside. We invited a broad cross section of individuals and interest group representatives to share their opinions and expertise. While not everyone who was invited to the focus groups was able to attend the meetings, over 80 people did attend and actively participated. (Focus Group attendees are listed in the Appendix.)



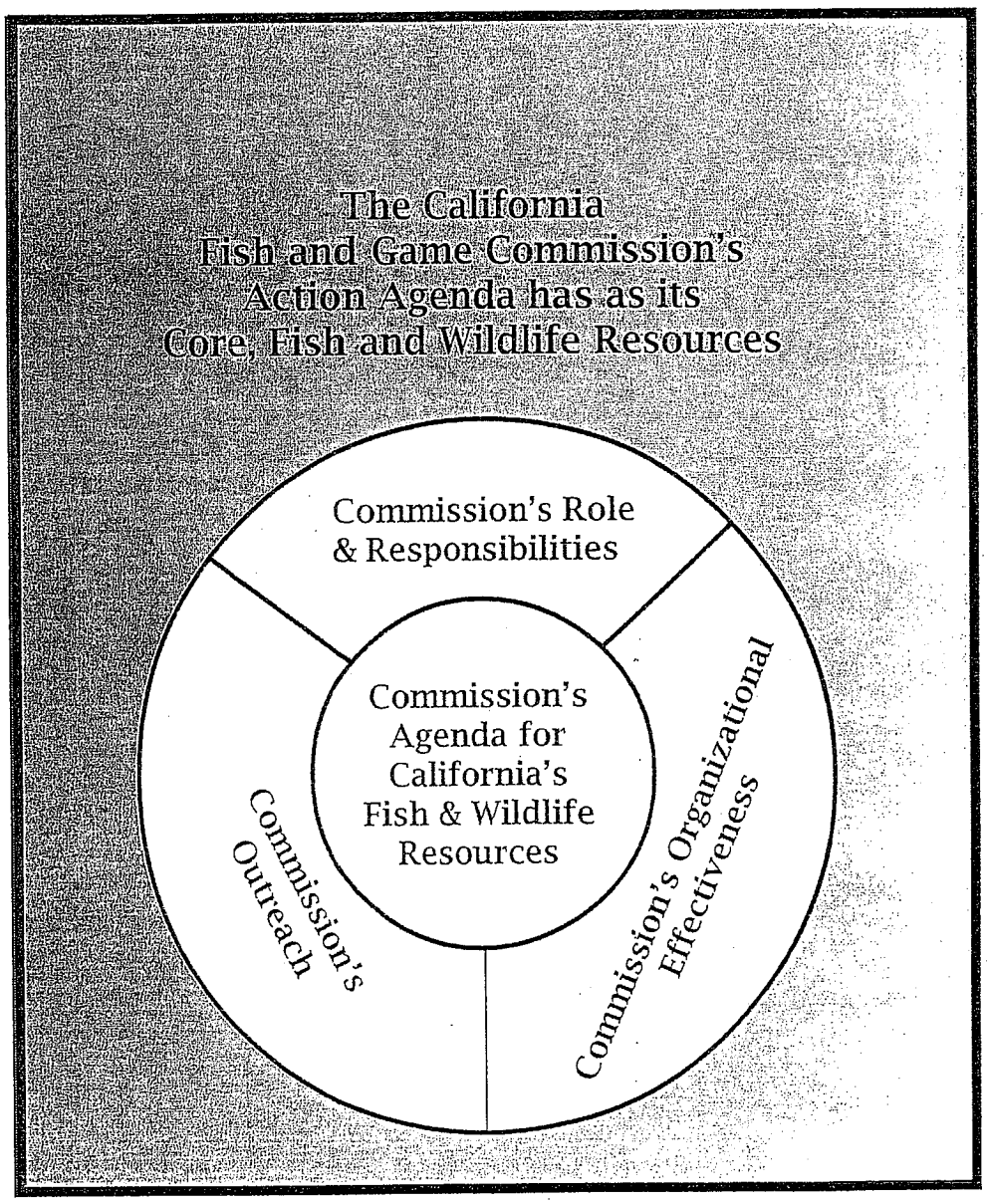
Participants were asked for their views on the most important issues facing the Commission and what the future role of the Commission should be. Individual questionnaires were also used to obtain additional ideas and comments from Commission and Department staffs, focus group participants and those not able to attend a meeting. In addition to the five focus group meetings, two public workshops and seven work sessions were held on the strategic plan. The all day workshop in Sacramento, for example, drew over 100 participants who shared their comments and suggestions with us both verbally and in writing.

The Commission is greatly indebted to everyone who took the time to participate in this effort. Public comments and concerns helped shape and guide our thinking in developing our strategic plan and its priorities. In a real sense, this is a strategic plan and agenda for the public and its resources. We commit as a Commission to continue this important dialogue initiated between the public and Commission on fish and wildlife resource management and policy setting. This rethinking and reforming of approaches will long serve the public, the public's resources and the Commission as it does its business.

Basic Needs Identified by the Public

From the public meetings, an important strategic agenda emerged. While many diverse interest groups and individual citizens participated, there was an overwhelming agreement on the most critical challenges facing the Commission. Four basic needs consistently surfaced:

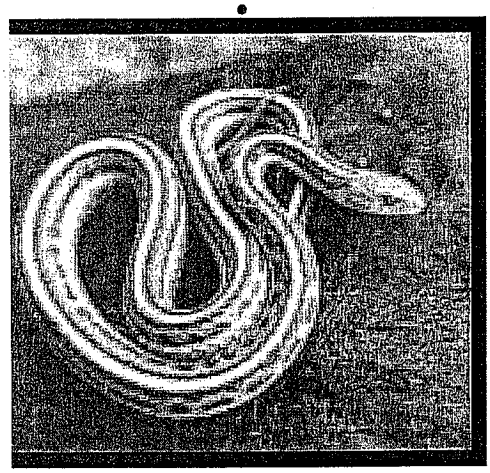
- There is a need for the Commission to set effective management policies aimed at assuring a sustainable resource base.
- The Commission must be innovative in addressing the challenges presented by the many changes impacting fish and wildlife resources and their habitat.
- The Commission must become more effective through adequate staffing, adequate funding and a workable structure.
- The Commission must continue to build communication bridges to the public, particularly partnerships, to effectively manage resources.



Action Agenda: Strategic Challenges, Goals and Implementation Strategies

Strategic Challenge #1:

To Develop a Resource Policy for California's Fish and Wildlife Resources that Assures Resource Sustainability.



n Francisco Garter Snake
tate-listed "endangered")
le photo

California's fish and wildlife resources and the habitats that they depend on, are at a critical crossroad. Increasing pressures from long-term resource use and expanding population growth have greatly impacted these finite resources. Increasing pollution and poaching are also threatening these fragile resources. Declining revenues from license sales have greatly impacted the Commission's and the Department's ability to adequately manage and preserve these funding resources. Additional funding sources have not been commensurate with new mandates given to the Department and Commission.

In light of these concerns the Commission needs to develop and implement resource policies and a management direction to assure sustainable California fish and wildlife resources and to meet the mission of the Commission.

In order to accomplish this, the Commission is setting forth the following goals and strategies:

Goal 1: Determine the current status of California's fish and wildlife resources and the ecosystems that are needed to support them.

Strategies:

- Oversee the development of an annual assessment of California's fish and wildlife resources and ecosystems. Work with the Department and public and private organizations to conduct this assessment using the best available science.
- Assess the current and potential impacts on California's fish and wildlife resources from all sources (users, competing uses, population growth, pollution, policy and legislation, etc). Develop recommendations for a comprehensive resource management policy that builds on the Department's ecosystem plans and those of other agencies and organizations.

Goal 2: Based on an annual resource assessment, develop resource management policies that meet the mission of the Commission and assure the sustainability of California's fish and wildlife resources.

Strategies:

- Utilize an annual assessment of California's fish and wildlife resources and ecosystems, to develop resource management policies and strategies for the Department and the Commission.
- Identify ways to reward good resource management and stewardship by private landowners and organizations.
- Work to assure adequate funding of fish and wildlife oriented programs and projects.
- Monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of resource policies in attaining intended objectives and outcomes.
- Monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of enforcement activities in attaining the intended objectives and outcomes.

Adobe lily
File photo

Strategic Challenge #2:

To Fully Implement the Commission's Roles and Responsibilities.

A shift of fish and wildlife resource management and policy from resource utilization (1800s to 1950s) to resource utilization and enjoyment consistent with resource sustainability (1950s to today) has required that the Commission's historic roles and responsibilities be reevaluated. As a result, the Commission will now focus on the following goals and strategies to further clarify its contemporary roles and responsibilities as a steward of the state's fish and wildlife resources:

Goal 1: Develop fish and wildlife policies that focus on and prioritize resource management needs.

Strategies:

- Actively set fish and wildlife policy priorities with management focus.
- Concentrate Commission activities on strategic policy issues.

Goal 2: Be proactive in the protection of the state's fish and wildlife.

Strategies:

- Respond quickly to early signs of species declining in numbers and take steps toward their protection.

Goal 3: Ensure that resource-related decisions are based primarily on the best science and scientific methodology and information available.

Strategies:

- Rely on the best science, using the Department as the primary source of information, but also using peer review and outside sources of expertise.
- Use the most current resource information available.
- Produce an annual "Status of the Resources" report.
- Actively solicit public input in making best science decisions.

ing-necked Pheasant
ile photo

Goal 4: Review current statutory mandates, assess their current appropriateness and effectiveness and assess all unfunded mandates.

Strategies:

- Sponsor legislation to eliminate outdated statutory mandates and streamline those cumbersome in structure.
- Use existing authority or seek legislation to delegate licensing and permit issues to subcommittees of the Commission or administrative hearing officers.
- Eliminate unfunded mandates or obtain funding for them if they are still needed.
- Pursue legislation to ensure sufficient budgetary support from the General Fund, or other funding sources, to allow the Department to properly carry out all Commission directives and policies.

Goal 5: Increase coordination with appropriate state and federal agencies, boards, and commissions whose responsibilities impact fish and wildlife.

Strategies:

- Use all available measures, including legal action if necessary, to ensure that fish and wildlife agencies fulfill their responsibilities.
- Schedule joint meetings with fish and wildlife agencies on issues of importance to resources.
- Focus coordination efforts on those governmental agencies with responsibility over the state's waters and forests.

Goal 6: Work more closely and cooperatively with the Department of Fish and Game.

Strategies:

- Provide policy direction and review the budget of the Department and assist it in meeting its mission.
- Establish regular meetings between the Commission and the Department director.
- Promote the image of the Department and its employees as credible professionals.

- Utilize subcommittees and work groups more to work with the Department to become familiar with large, complex issues.
- Sponsor, with the Department, special workshops on emerging resource issues.
- Utilize the Marine Subcommittee to help implement the Marine Life Management Act of 1998.

Goal 7: Protect as much of the state's remaining wildlife habitat as is possible.

Strategies:

- Encourage the Department to obtain valuable habitat through easements on private property or outright acquisition.
- Support the concept that management of acquired protected lands should be contracted out by the Department where possible and management of Department-owned lands should be fully funded.
- The Commission should support maximum funding for the Wildlife Conservation Board.
- Encourage the Department to maximize efforts to preserve and protect farmland because of its benefits to wildlife.
- Optimize habitat on lands already owned or managed by the Department for maximum benefit in the protection and enhancement of wildlife.

Strategic Challenge #3:

To Improve the Commission's Organizational Effectiveness.

To meet its Mission, the Commission must improve its effectiveness through organizational changes involving adequate staffing, workable policies and procedures, adequate funding and sound structure. The following goals focus on those critical areas.

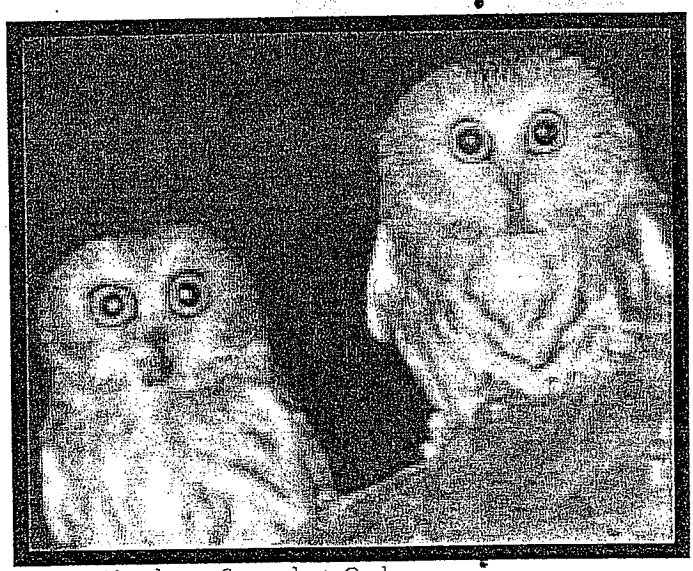
STAFFING

The Commission needs to assure an adequately supported, informed, efficient and available organization to carry out its Mission.

Goal 1: Determine the required staffing levels to carry out the Commission's responsibilities and mandates.

Strategies:

- Identify all Commission mandates and related workload and seek staffing and resources needed to effectively meet them.



Northern Saw-whet Owl
File photo

- Develop partnerships and communication bridges with constituencies to help gain support for adequate staffing.

- Work with the Legislature and the Attorney General's Office to evaluate the Commission's Deputy Attorney General's duties and salary.

POLICIES

Goal 2: Develop adequate Commission procedures, policies and materials.

Strategies:

- Develop annual work plans for Commission activities.
- Develop procedure to hire independent technical staff (peer reviewers).
- Develop an orientation program for new Commissioners.
- Develop a Commissioner's Procedures Manual.

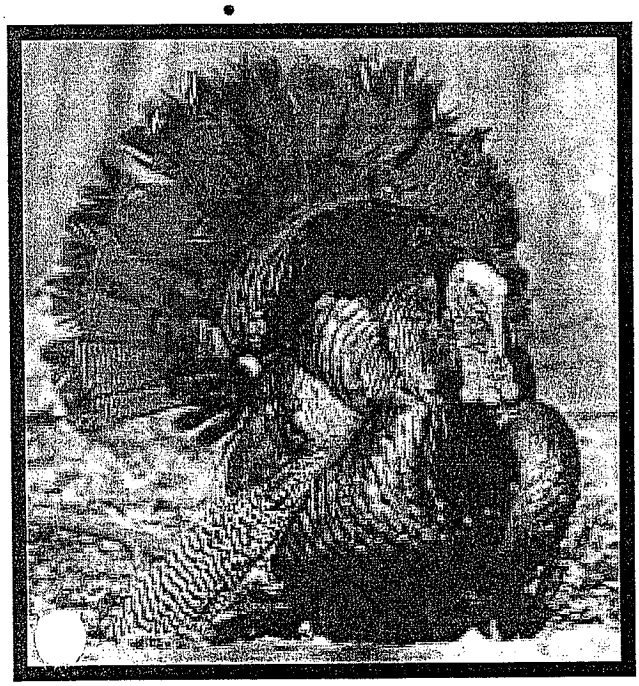
FUNDING

The Commission and the Department need adequate funding to meet their missions and statutory mandates.

Goal 3: Establish an independent budget for the Commission based on current resource requirements but also be supportive of adequate funding for Department programs.

Strategies:

- Work with the Administration, Legislature and constituents to provide for a separate Commission budget.
- Establish a level of funding sufficient to support the operations of the Commission, its staff, and programs.
- Begin a formal planning, budgeting and review process.
- Seek additional revenue through grants from private organizations, foundations and governmental agencies.
- Seek a broader funding base to include General Fund dollars.
- Determine appropriate compensation for Commissioners and introduce legislation to implement the findings.
- Work with the Department of Personnel Administration to evaluate Commission staff salaries.



Wild Turkey
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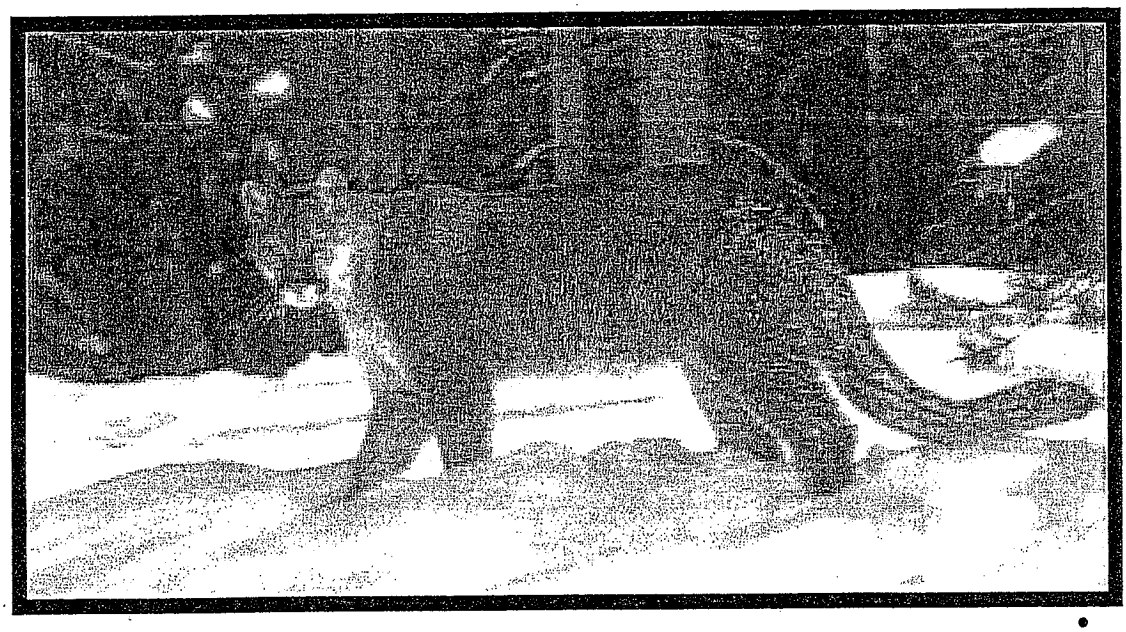


Mountain Lion
File photo

Goal 4: Develop procedures for the Commission's Budget Subcommittee to work closely with the Department in formulating its annual budget.

Strategies:

- Develop a schedule of meetings to provide for early and maximum input from the Commission into the Department's budget.
- Establish procedures to review the budget to help assure adequate funding for both the Commission and the Department.

COMMISSION STRUCTURE

The Commission must establish an effective organizational structure.

Goal 5: Determine whether the Commission's organizational structure is the most efficient and productive in carrying out its Mission.

Strategies:

- Establish a subcommittee to review the appropriateness of the current Commission structure and make recommendations to the full Commission.
- Review the makeup of the Commission to assure adequate representation of the various interest groups.
- If necessary, develop a constitutional amendment to change the number of Commissioners, establish requirements for appointments, etc.

Goal 6: Determine if the Commission's organizational structure provides the adequate exercise of its authority over the Department of Fish and Game.

Strategic Challenge Number Four:

To Improve Commission Outreach.

The Commission must assure adequate public participation and representation in its decision-making processes and operations. This is critical to building understanding and support with the public and to better understand its needs.

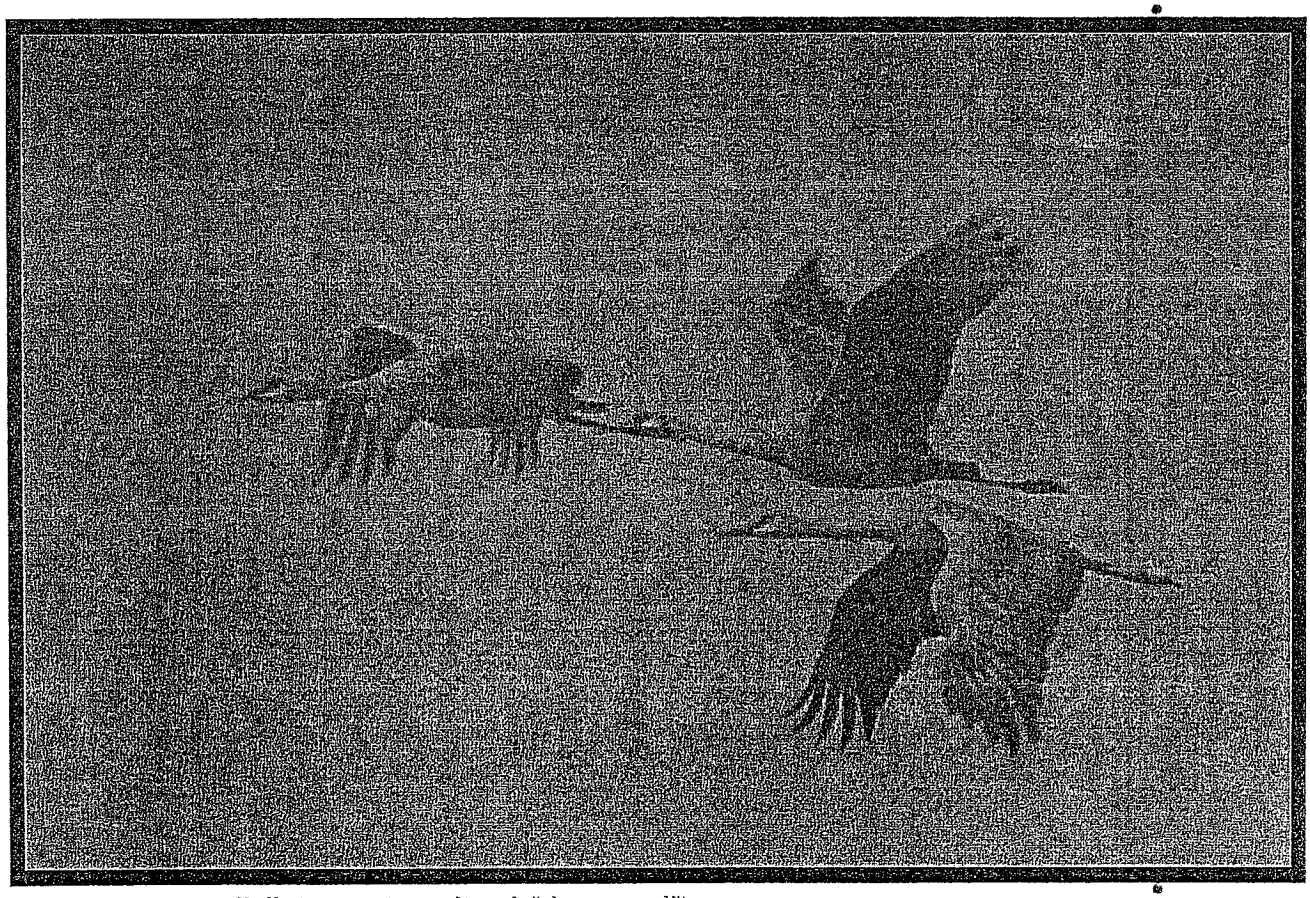
Goal 1: Increase public participation and representation in Commission decision-making processes and operations.

Strategies:

- Keep the public informed about and involved in Commission activities and processes by:
  - *a)* Using effective two-way communications systems, latest technology, and web-page, etc.;
  - *b)* Holding local and regional meetings;
  - *c)* Developing key issue forums to obtain input and recommendations on key resource issues;
  - *d)* Determining how to obtain additional under-represented participation (Minorities, Women, Special Interest Groups, Consumptive and non-consumptive users of wildlife, etc.) in Commission activities and on the Commission; and
  - *e)* Establishing a public affairs position to the Commission that will establish media contacts and all media activities of the Commission.
- Foster accountable partnerships with the public, business, tribes, interest groups and other resource management organizations on common issues.
- Proactively develop education programs and materials to inform and educate the public about resource and Commission issues and activities.
- Work proactively to develop support for the resource management goals and objectives of the Commission and the Department.

Strategic Plan: A Living Process

This strategic plan, and its agenda, is a beginning. It constitutes a first step taken by the Commission and its public partners toward ensuring the future of California's fish and wildlife resources. The implementation of this strategic plan does not signal its finality. It only signals movement toward its identified challenges, goals and implementation strategies. The strategic plan is an ever-evolving document that will be revisited at least annually to determine if it still serves the resources and the Commission in the ways intended.



Greater Sandhill Cranes (state-listed "threatened")
Photo by Bob Corey

Appendix:
Fish & Game Commission Focus Group Attendees

April 29, 1998, Redding

Ms. Mary Belkin, concerned citizen
Ms. Virginia Bostwick, Klamath River Basin Task Force
Mr. Delbert Craig, Modoc Fish & Game Recreation Commission
Mr. Judd Hanna, Mill Creek Conservancy
Mr. William Hoy, Siskiyou County Board of Supervisors and North Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board
Ms. Lois Kliebe, Northern Sportsmen Association
Mr. John Reginato, concerned citizen
Mr. James Smith, Humboldt Fisherman's Marketing Association, Inc., and Humboldt Bay-Harbor Recreation Commission

May 29, 1998, Sacramento

Mr. Allen Barnes, California Native Plant Society
Mr. Dave Bischel, California Forestry Association
Mr. Charles Bucaria, Federation of Flyfishers Northern California Council
Mr. Emmett Burroughs, California Mule Deer Foundation
Mr. Merlin Fagan, California Farm Bureau
Mr. Bob Fox, George Steffes Inc.
Mr. Bill Gaines, California Waterfowl Association
Mr. Bill Geyer, Geyer Associates
Mr. George Gough, California Cattlemen's Association
Mr. Bob Herkert, California Rice Industry Association
Mr. Tom Martens, Mountain Lion Foundation
Mr. Jack Parriott, Sacramento District Supervisor - U.S. Department of Agriculture and Wildlife Services
Mr. Gerald Upholdt, California Rifle & Pistol Association
Mr. Bill Yeates, California Legislative Advocates for Wildlife

June 25, 1998, Fresno

Mr. John Buada, Sand & Aggregate Producers Association
Mr. Ed Channing, Yosemite Deer Herd Advisory Council
Mr. Hank Doddridge, concerned citizen

June 25, 1998, Fresno continuted

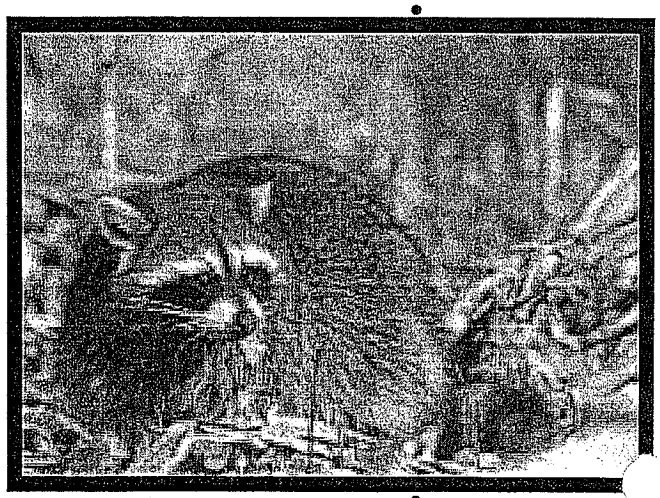
Mr. Doug Federighi, Grasslands Water District
Mr. Bruce Farris, Fresno Bee
Ms. Cathy Garner, Fresno Wildlife Rescue & Rehabilitation
Mr. Steve Geddes, ARCO Western Energy
Ms. Coke Hallowell, San Joaquin River Parkway & Conservation Trust
Mr. Harry Huey, concerned citizen
Mr. Dennis Keller, Kaweah Delta Water District
Mr. Ted James, Director, Kern County Planning Department
Mr. Ken Jensen, Merced Fly Fishing Club
Mr. Justin Malan, Executive Director, California Aquaculture Association
Mr. Brett Matzke, Sierra Nevada Manager, CalTrout Inc.
Mr. Ted Ruffner, California Mule Deer
Mr. Gary Sawyers, Friant Water Users
Mr. Hank Urbach, Fly Fishers for Conservation

July 10, 1998, Monterey

Mr. Alan Baldridge, Elkhorn Slough Foundation
Mr. Jim Curland, Science Director - Friends of the Sea Otter
Ms. Virginia Handley, The Fund for Animals
Mr. Burr Heneman, concerned citizen
Mr. Marc Holmes, Save San Francisco Bay Association
Mr. Dave Hope, Senior Resource Planner - Santa Cruz County
Mr. Eric Mills, Coordinator - Action for Animals
Mr. Steve Rebuck, concerned citizen
Mr. Roger Thomas, President - Golden Gate Fishermen's Association
Mr. Sal Tringali, Monterey Fish Company
Mr. George Work, Work Ranch

July 16, 1998, Riverside

Mr. Steve Benavides, concerned citizen
Mr. Jim Brown, City of San Diego
Mr. Jim Conrad, Wild Turkey Federation
Mr. Jim Edmondson, CalTrout
Mr. John Guth, Commercial Lobster & Trap Association
Mr. Jack Hagan, California Hawking Club
Mr. Dick Haldeman, Quail Unlimited
Mr. Tom Raftican, United Anglers of Southern California
Mr. Fred Trueblood, Mule Deer Foundation



Raccoon
File photo