



***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.



San Francisco Garter Snake
(state-listed "endangered")
File 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.

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.



Adobe lily
File photo

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.

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.



Ring-necked Pheasant
File photo

- 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
File photo



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.