

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