

## STAFF SUMMARY FOR JUNE 24-25, 2020

**5. 150TH ANNIVERSARY****Today's Item****Information** ☒**Action** ☐

Discuss the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the California Fish and Game Commission.

**Summary of Previous/Future Actions (N/A)****Background**

FGC and DFW turned 150 years old this year! Legislation establishing the Board of Fish Commissioners—the precursor to both FGC and DFW— was signed into law on Apr 2, 1870, just twenty years after California entered statehood. As the first wildlife conservation agency in the United States, predating even the U.S. Commission of Fish and Fisheries, the Board of Fish Commissioners was tasked with restoring and preserving the fish in California waters.

The first board was composed of three fish commissioners who received no compensation, but were responsible for the expenditure of up to \$5,000 appropriated by the legislature for an operating budget. One of the early decisions made by the board was to appoint two full-time wardens, one for Lake Tahoe and another for San Francisco Bay, who worked without pay but were compensated for their expenses.

Fast forward to 1909 when the board was renamed the California Fish and Game Commission and was responsible for four offices (San Francisco, Sacramento, Fresno and Los Angeles), seven hatcheries, and about 120 staff. A 1915 educational booklet (Exhibit 2) states that the commission was entirely self-supporting, with the cost of the hatcheries borne entirely by market and leisure fishermen (now known as commercial and recreational fishermen, respectively). The commission took pride in the fact that "...not one cent is contributed by the taxpayer through legislative appropriation."

In 1926, FGC reorganized itself to focus more broadly on general policy issues and transferred numerous administrative responsibilities to a new division called "Fish and Game." Activities like enforcement, fish culturing and managing commercial fisheries were part of the transfer. By 1951, the division had become the California Department of Fish and Game. In the meantime, FGC had expanded to five members in 1937, received greater autonomy for individual commissioners as appointees through a 1940 constitutional amendment, and was delegated authority by the legislature in 1945 to promulgate regulations for sport fishing and hunting.

Many more details about the 150-year history of FGC and DFW are featured in the Mar-Apr 2020 issue of *Outdoor California* (a print copy was sent by mail to commissioners; the cover is presented in Exhibit 1). During the next several FGC meetings, staff will highlight some of the history and share tidbits of reports and stories from over the years.

While a number of activities were to be scheduled throughout the year beginning in Apr 2020, the COVID-19 epidemic quickly changed our plans. Much of the initial preparations begun last fall to commemorate FGC's sesquicentennial, have had to be set aside; with a reduced workforce and additional COVID-related responsibilities, the sesquicentennial is a bit more muted and reflective.

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Some of the things we are still planning for the recognition is a new logo that was designed on our behalf by DFW's outreach and media team (see the cover of this meeting binder), a slightly revised tagline for use with the logo (*Celebrating 150 years of wildlife heritage and conservation!*), various features and special columns in *Outdoor California*, and a video that was prepared by DFW's outreach and media team that includes a collection of historical public photos (Exhibit 3). We may even enjoy a storyteller or two at an upcoming meeting!

**Significant Public Comments (N/A)****Recommendation (N/A)****Exhibits**

1. [Mar-Apr 2020 cover for Outdoor California](#)
2. [Conservation Through Education](#), undated booklet published by the California Fish and Game Commission c. 1915
3. <https://youtu.be/Gcrp-9fTvH4>

**Motion/Direction (N/A)**



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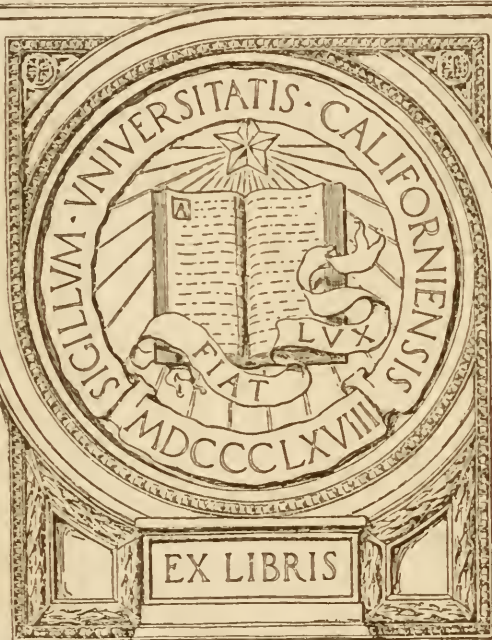
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OF THE  
UNIVERSITY  
OF CALIFORNIA  
**Conservation**  
THROUGH  
**Education**

Stamps  
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## To the Reader-

If this little booklet will but inspire one citizen of our State to use his or her efforts toward promoting the conservation of our wild life its purpose will be accomplished.

California Fish and  
Game Commission

JIT

TO THE  
MEMBERS OF THE  
CALIFORNIA FISH AND GAME COMMISSION



## Lest We Forget

That fifty years ago there were hundreds of thousands of Bison roaming our hills and plains, while today there are less than 500 in the entire country.

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PASSENGER PIGEON

Not many years ago the market hunters of the Middle States killed millions of these beautiful birds each year.

Today one may travel from the Gulf to the Great Lakes without so much as seeing one.

The last known Passenger Pigeon died in the Cincinnati Zoo on January twenty-first, Nineteen hundred and fifteen.

SHALL OUR UPLAND BIRDS AND WATER-  
FOWL SUFFER THE SAME  
UNTIMELY FATE?



Could there be a more pitiful sight than this helpless little fawn which has been robbed of its only protection through the thoughtlessness or greed of some hunter?

Let us take only what the law allows, that the next generation may enjoy the same pleasures that the fields and streams of our glorious State now afford us.

# Why Save the Fish and Game?

The courts have held that wild game is the property of the people, and can be hunted, killed, possessed and disposed of only as the people direct. It is believed that this State has some of the most effective and most just laws for the purpose of protecting wild game ever enacted by a commonwealth. These laws seem to insure the perpetuation of the supply. But these laws would not serve their full purpose if they did not guarantee our people and posterity the opportunity of recreation, hunting and fishing.

The Fish and Game Commission and the Legislature of the State, ever mindful of the fact that the boy and the young man are full of the instinct for sport, have wisely framed the laws in such manner as to save to the people their inherent right to hunting. The boy that lives a natural, outdoor life, hunting, fishing and playing strenuous games is not the chap who loafes around corners shooting craps and smoking cigarettes. Furthermore, the boy who learns how to care for himself in the woods and to shoot straight makes the finest soldier in the world in the time of national peril.

Is it not better to train our soldiers this way, than to destroy the game and the incentive to hunting—and then raise an army by conscription—and at that an army that cannot shoot straight!

Game conservation is more than a masculine problem; it is a national question, in which every girl and every woman is vitally concerned.





INTERIOR OF ONE OF THE HATCHING BUILDINGS AT STATE HATCHERY, SISSON, CAL.



BIRDSEYE VIEW OF ONE SECTION OF HATCHERY AND  
FINEST IN THE WORLD. MO

# CALIFORNIA



HOUSES AT SISSON, CAL. ONE OF THE LARGEST AND  
SHASTA IN BACKGROUND.





### RAINBOW TROUT

California's native trout, abounding in every mountain stream in the State. It is through the tireless efforts of the authorities in charge of fish propagation that the sportsman of today enjoys finer sport than he of a generation past.



### LOCH LEVEN TROUT

Until a few years ago a stranger in our waters, these gamey fish have been generously planted and carefully protected until today they are found in nearly all of our larger lakes and streams.

A SPLENDID EXAMPLE OF ACCLIMATIZATION



### EASTERN BROOK TROUT

There are hundreds of streams and lakes in the State where the fisherman may daily enjoy the thrills of a struggle with this Easterner. He has been introduced into suitable waters all over the State.



# Fish Facts.

Do you know that California is one of the greatest fishing regions of the world?

When white men first came here they found fish only in the oceans, bays and in streams up to the first waterfalls and of comparatively few species. Since then the Federal and State authorities have introduced many valuable and interesting varieties, have artificially propagated hundreds of millions at the hatcheries and have "planted" and "transplanted" almost every species, so that today fishing is enjoyed in practically every bit of living water in the State.

In 1914 the State Fish and Game Commission propagated at its seven hatcheries and distributed in public waters 30,000,000 salmon and 18,000,000 trout. These fish if placed end to end would reach from San Francisco to a point 150 miles east of Denver. They would fill four standard freight trains of 43 cars each, weighing over 4000 tons. The total would provide each man, woman and child in the State with 16 fish.

There is no locality in the civilized world that offers a greater variety of sport than the mountains, valleys and waters of the State of California.

For instance, the business man of centrally located San Francisco can board an evening train and at dawn of the following morning cast his fly upon the snow-fed waters of a Sierra stream, returning in the evening with a limit basket.

Intense propagation and conscientious protection is the one thing that make such ideal conditions possible.

The entire cost of rearing, distributing and protecting fish in this State is borne by the market and pleasure fishermen. Not one cent is contributed by the taxpayer through legislative appropriation.

Four thousand people are engaged in catching fish for the market. Their "catch" sells to the consumer for around \$10,000,000 each year.

# Just A Few Facts and Figures.

The "Closed Season" laws are the most important of all. They protect birds, animals and fishes during and after the breeding periods. The killing of the female during such times means the loss of an entire family. Besides, all breeding animals and certainly their young are practically defenseless and need all the protection man can give them.

The "Limit Laws" curb the thoughtless and selfish and guarantee the decent hunter and fisherman his share in the sport and its product. Certainly such laws are most American in spirit.

America is one of the few populous countries in which the "common people" enjoy the hunting privilege. Furthermore this country has few big preserves and consequently little game is raised by wealthy people for their own enjoyment. Here everyone hunts and fishes, with few exceptions on an equal basis and a great deal of fish and game is killed. The private preserve system would give us more game, but the wealthy classes would get all the benefits.

Probably 20,000 deer are killed in this state each year.

The annual kill of wild ducks is around 1,000,000 and of wild geese about 200,000. The stock need not be exterminated however as the wild-fowl that winter here have most of the northern regions for their nesting grounds.

The California valley quail is said to be the finest "upland" game bird in the world. This bird is found everywhere in the state but has been over-hunted badly. Unless the killing is greatly reduced this bird will disappear.

The only game bird ever successfully reared extensively in captivity is the English, known also as the Chinese and ring-necked pheasant. Thousands of these birds have been raised at the State Game Farm and liberated in the moist coast region.

The State Fish and Game Commission is entirely self-supporting, receiving its annual revenue of about \$300,000 from the sale of hunting and fishing licenses and from fines collected from violators of the laws. The Commission has four business offices and about 120 employees. Realizing the necessity of giving important duties into the care of competent assistants, the Commission employs only highly trained, energetic and conscientious wardens. Every department of the Commission is under the strictest of civil service control.

For further information relative to fish and game in California or to the work of the Fish and Game Commission inquire of any of its officers or at the offices at San Francisco, Los Angeles, Sacramento or Fresno.



THIS BOOKLET IS ISSUED BY  
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