

Kimberly A. Nicol, 1956–2015

Long time Department family member and Regional Manager, Kim Nicol passed away on 20 January 2015 following an extended and courageous battle with cancer. Kim worked in Region 6 for more than 25 years, and became the manager of the Inland Deserts Region in July 2010. In that capacity, Kim employed a firm leadership style that quickly earned her the respect and admiration of many Regional Staff and Department Administrators.



Kim was born and raised in Richmond, California and graduated from Richmond High School. Following graduation from California State University, Sacramento, she began her life-long career with the California Department of Fish and Game (later to become the California Department of Fish and Wildlife) as a fishery biologist. She also had special interests and expertise in the biology and conservation of amphibians and reptiles; she put that interest to good use, and became a respected authority and advocate for reptiles, placing a strong emphasis on the conservation of desert tortoise. As a biologist, she also contributed in many meaningful ways to the conservation of desert fishes, especially the desert pupfish and Mojave chub.

As her career progressed, Kim worked upward through the biologist and environmental scientist series, gaining insight and experience that provided her the background to effectively handle the many aspects of regional management. Kim also served as Acting Branch Chief for the Habitat Conservation Planning Branch for an interim period, further demonstrating her commitment to the Department and its critically important mission. As Regional Manager, Kim's demonstrated leadership and her commitment to, and understanding of, the biological resources in the mountains and deserts of southeastern California were valuable contributions to the conservation and management of California's fish and wildlife, albeit in a politically challenging and ecologically diverse part of the state. Kim was also fun to be around, and evenings filled with good food and wine will be remembered by those of us fortunate enough to have worked closely with her for many years.

Kim actively participated in an effort to re-structure the Department's employee recognition program to better reflect the core values of the Department. She worked closely with numerous others to create the current Employee Excellence Awards Program, which embodies the commitments and values exemplified by Kim and many other Department employees. In recognition of her dedication, actions, and commitment, the California Department of Fish and Wildlife Employee Excellence in Leadership Award will be re-named in her honor.—*Friends and Colleagues of Kimberly A. Nicol*