

COMMITTEE STAFF SUMMARY FOR JANUARY 11-12, 2023 WRC

6. BULLFROGS AND NON-NATIVE TURTLES**Today's Item****Information** ☒**Action** ☐

Receive the draft staff report and discuss potential strategies from the American Bullfrog and Non-native Turtles Stakeholder Engagement Project.

Summary of Previous/Future Actions

- | | |
|---|---|
| • Project referred to WRC | Dec 12-13, 2018; Oceanside |
| • Discussed preliminary project results | Jan 13, 2022; WRC, Webinar/Teleconference |
| • Discussed draft staff analysis | May 19, 2022; WRC, Redding |
| • Discussed staff recommendations | Sep 15, 2022; WRC, Arcadia |
| • Today's discussion of draft report | Jan 11-12, 2023; WRC, Sacramento |

Background

In Dec 2018, the Commission referred to the Wildlife Resources Committee a stakeholder engagement plan to track progress in addressing issues around non-native American bullfrog (commonly referred to simply as bullfrog) and turtles that are imported into California for food and the pet trade. The plan involves three independent groups developing situation analyses and strategies for addressing the threats, challenges, and opportunities posed by bullfrog and non-native turtles and their impacts on native wildlife. The fourth group identified in the plan is the California State Legislature, which will be engaged in the process now that the work of the three groups is essentially complete. The Wildlife Resources Committee has received regular progress updates.

For the situation analyses and strategies work, the independent groups were formed and composed of representatives from three different spheres of California society that have a vested interest in bullfrog and non-native turtle concerns. The first group was composed of representatives from local, state, and federal government agencies, the second from environmental and animal welfare groups, and the third from various commercial sector and industry groups.

The groups met separately and worked on the same task (in parallel) to analyze: (1) threats to California's environment posed by bullfrog and non-native turtles, (2) benefits and cultural values of bullfrog and turtles in California's communities and other intersections with human well-being values, (3) knowledge gaps in our understanding of the relevant systems and operative biological processes, and (4) opportunities for progress in addressing the issues posed by invasive bullfrog and non-native turtles in California's environment. The three groups used a flexible, comprehensive process called the *Open Standards for the Practice of Conservation* to guide their analyses (see <https://conservationstandards.org/about/> for more information). Commission staff sincerely thanks the many participants for their diligence and sharing their expertise.

Previously, staff presented three documents to support Wildlife Resources Committee discussion: (1) an account of the stakeholder process results, (2) various analyses of that information, and (3) draft options and recommendations. Today, staff will present a draft report

COMMITTEE STAFF SUMMARY FOR JANUARY 11-12, 2023 WRC

that consolidates the three earlier documents and represents the final draft deliverable from the stakeholder engagement process. The draft recommendations contained within the report are based on stakeholder work to date and public input; additional modifications are anticipated after engaging key staff and members of the California State Legislature. The Wildlife Resources Committee will discuss information in the report, various bullfrog and non-native turtle issues and solutions, and a potential future recommendation from the committee to the Commission.

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

1. Draft *Staff Report on the American Bullfrog and Non-Native Turtle Stakeholder Engagement Process* [Will be posted separately]

Committee Direction/Recommendation (N/A)