

Staff Summary for June 19-20, 2024

4. Five-Year Private Lands Wildlife Habitat Enhancement and Management Area (PLM) Plans (consent)

Today's Item

Information

Action

Consider approving five-year PLM plans and 2024-2028 licenses.

Summary of Previous/Future Actions (N/A)

Background

California Fish and Game Code sections 3400-3408 and Title 14 Section 601 prescribe conditions for a PLM program that provides incentives for landholders to manage their property for the benefit of fish and wildlife in exchange for access to increased recreational opportunities, such as hunting tags or extended seasons ("harvest program"). In return for a harvest program, the landholder must prepare a biologically-sound wildlife management plan and complete specific wildlife habitat improvements on the PLM property.

The Department has reviewed five-year renewals for 10 properties in 7 counties consisting of approximately 355,360 acres. PLM properties are conducting a variety of habitat work, including maintaining nesting and water sources for wildlife, treating invasive weeds, and contributing to the Department's surveillance of chronic wasting disease.

The Department recommends that the Commission approve the wildlife management plans, license applications, and 2024-2028 harvest programs under conditions specified in Exhibit 2. Habitat improvements accomplished under this plan will enhance and maintain wildlife resources on and around the PLM area. The goals and objectives stated in the management plans are compatible with Department management plans for appropriate species in this area and the Department finds they are in compliance with Commission regulations and policies for PLM licenses and plans.

Significant Public Comments (N/A)

Recommendation

Commission staff: Approve five-year PLM license renewals for 2024-2028, and proposed seasons, harvests and habitat improvements for 2024-2028 as recommended by the Department for ten properties, under a motion to adopt the consent calendar.

Department: Approve 5-year PLM license renewals for ten properties, under the conditions specified in Exhibit 2.

Exhibits

1. [Department memo, received June 13, 2024](#)
2. [PLM Area License 5-Year Renewals, 2024-2028, Proposed Seasons, Harvests, and Habitat Improvements, received June 6, 2024](#)

Staff Summary for June 19-20, 2024

Motion

Moved by _____ and seconded by _____ that the Commission adopts the staff recommendations for items 3-9 on the consent calendar.

Memorandum

Date: May 31, 2024

To: Melissa Miller- Henson
Executive Director
Fish and Game Commission

From: Charlton H. Bonham
Director

Subject: **Agenda Item for the June 19-20, 2024 Fish and Game Commission Meeting
Private Lands Wildlife Habitat Enhancement and Management (PLM) Area
Licenses**

Private lands are a key component of wildlife habitats throughout California that support key populations of game and non-game species alike. Pursuant to Fish and Game Code Section 3400, it is state policy to actively ensure improvement of wildlife habitats on private land in cooperation with landowners. Through the Private Lands Wildlife Habitat Enhancement and Management (PLM) Program, the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (Department) advances this policy by collaborating with private landowners to develop management plans that improve wildlife habitat on their properties. As part of this program, tags are issued annually to PLM participants' allowing limited hunting on these properties.

California Fish and Game Code Section 3406(c) requires that the activities conducted pursuant to each PLM Management Plan shall be reviewed annually by the Department and by the Fish and Game Commission (Commission) at a public hearing. Licenses for such areas may be granted by the Commission for a period of five (5) years following department review and approval of the management plan (Title 14, California Code of Regulations Section 601(a)).

The Department has reviewed the initial management plans for 3 new properties in 3 counties consisting of approximately 21,893 acres. These new properties cover a variety of habitats including chaparral and riparian areas which benefit both game and non-game species. Proposed habitat improvements include promoting early successional growth, installing numerous water catchments in an arid area, and improving the quality of riparian areas by removing non-native species.

The Department has also reviewed 5-year renewals for 10 properties in 7 counties consisting of approximately 355,360 acres and annual reports for 40 properties in 9 counties consisting of approximately 254,885 acres. PLM properties are doing a variety of habitat work.

Work ranges from but is not limited to wildlife brush piles, cover crop and food plot plantings, mastication of decadent brush, non-native vegetation removal, installing/repairing water features (such as guzzlers and springs), wildlife friendly fencing, and wildlife nesting boxes and platforms.

Melissa Miller-Henson, Executive Director
Fish and Game Commission
May 31, 2024
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The Department recommends that the Commission approves the wildlife management plans, applications, and each 2024/25 harvest program under conditions specified in the attached tables. Habitat improvements accomplished under these plans will enhance and maintain wildlife resources on and around the PLM areas. The goals and objectives stated in the management plans are compatible with Department management plans for appropriate species in these areas.

The attached tables represent the second, and final, list of PLM properties recommended for approval by the Commission in 2024. We previously recommended a first list of PLM properties for approval at the April 18, 2024, Commission meeting.

If you have any questions, please contact Ms. Victoria Barr at (916) 203-0567 or by email at Victoria.barr@wildlife.ca.gov.

Attachment

ec: Chad Dibble, Deputy Director
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Scott Gardner, Branch Chief
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**PLM AREA LICENSE
5-YEAR RENEWALS, 2024-2028
PROPOSED SEASONS, HARVESTS, AND HABITAT IMPROVEMENTS**

NORTHERN REGION

PLM Area	2024 Proposed Season and Harvest	Habitat Improvement Program
<p>Clarks Valley RanchDeer</p> <p>Zone X3B</p> <p>Lassen</p> <p>2,793 Acres</p>	<p>Authorized Harvest: 3 forked horn or better buck deer</p> <p>Issue 3 buck deer tags for the period of August 1, 2024, through November 30, 2024.</p> <p>No person shall take more than 1 buck deer annually in the X zones.</p>	<p>Remove at least 0.25 miles of field fencing to reduce wildlife entanglements.</p> <p>Install at least 0.25 miles of wildlife-friendly fencing.</p> <p>Install at least 500 ft of temporary fencing at Clarks Creek to protect the riparian restoration project.</p> <p>Install at least 1 beaver dam analog in Clarks Creek to assist in better hydrologic function and riparian habitat restoration.</p>
<p>Duncan Creek Ranch</p> <p>Deer Zone B5</p> <p>Shasta</p> <p>1,366 Acres</p>	<p>Authorized Harvest: 6 forked horn or better buck deer</p> <p>Issue 8 buck deer tags for the period September 1, 2024, through November 30, 2024.</p> <p>In no case shall the number of tags issued be used to exceed the authorized harvest.</p> <p>The number of tag holders actively hunting shall not exceed the number of deer available to harvest.</p>	<p>Burn at least 10 acres annually of decadent chamise to improve forage quality and travel corridors.</p> <p>Maintain at least 3 miles of established travel corridors throughout the property.</p> <p>Overseed areas that have been burned annually.</p>
<p>Five Dot Ranch - Avila</p> <p>Deer Zone X3A</p> <p>Lassen</p> <p>11,000 Acres</p>	<p>Authorized Harvest: 6 forked horn or better buck deer and 1 buck pronghorn antelope</p> <p>Issue 12 buck deer tags for the period of September 12, 2024, through November 30, 2024.</p> <p>No person shall take more than 1 buck deer annually in the X zones.</p>	<p>Continue reduced livestock use at 300 head (previously 450 head).</p> <p>Cut at least 300 juniper trees.</p> <p>Continue to exclude livestock from 7 aspen and wetland habitat enclosures by inspecting fencing and making any necessary repairs. These areas provide important deer fawning habitat.</p>

**PLM AREA LICENSE
5-YEAR RENEWALS, 2024-2028
PROPOSED SEASONS, HARVESTS, AND HABITAT IMPROVEMENTS**

PLM Area	2024 Proposed Season and Harvest	Habitat Improvement Program
Five Dot Ranch – Avila Cont.	<p>In no case shall the number of tags issued be used to exceed the authorized harvest.</p> <p>The number of tag holders actively hunting shall not exceed the number of deer available to harvest.</p> <p>Issue 1 buck pronghorn antelope tags for the period of August 12, 2024, through September 24, 2024.</p>	<p>Maintain 6 nesting platforms for Canada geese at four reservoirs by checking use and replacing nesting material as necessary.</p> <p>Cut and disperse 100 mountain mahogany branches with ripe seeds in order to recruit young plants.</p> <p>Maintain 6 existing springs by checking for broken pipes and repairing as necessary.</p> <p>Maintain 4 existing reservoirs by inspecting spillways and dams for damage and making any necessary repairs.</p>
Red Rock Ranch Deer Zone X3B Lassen 6,887 Acres	<p>Authorized Harvest: 7 forked horn or better buck deer, 2 buck pronghorn antelope and 1 bull elk</p> <p>Issue 7 buck deer tags for the period of August 1, 2024, through November 30, 2024.</p> <p>No person shall take more than 1 buck deer annually in the X zones.</p> <p>Issue 2 buck pronghorn antelope tags for the period of August 1, 2024, through November 30, 2024.</p> <p>Issue 1 bull elk tag for the period of August 1, 2024, through November 30, 2024.</p>	<p>Remove at least 0.25 miles of field fencing to reduce wildlife entanglements.</p> <p>Install at least 0.25 miles of wildlife-friendly fencing.</p> <p>Cut at least 50 acres of junipers to promote native beneficial forage and vegetation types.</p> <p>Maintain previously restored springs.</p> <p>Maintain Little Boot Lake and springs including yearly maintenance of the dam, spillway and spring.</p>

**PLM AREA LICENSE
5-YEAR RENEWALS, 2024-2028
PROPOSED SEASONS, HARVESTS, AND HABITAT IMPROVEMENTS
NORTH CENTRAL REGION**

PLM Area	2024 Proposed Season and Harvest	Habitat Improvement Program
<p>Anderson Ranch Deer Zone C4 Glenn 400 Acres</p>	<p>Authorized Harvest: 4 forked horn or better buck deer and 4 antlerless deer</p> <p>Issue 4 deer tags for the period of August 17, 2024 through November 30, 2024.</p> <p>Issue 4 tags to take antlerless deer for the period of August 17, 2024 through November 30, 2024.</p>	<p>Establish 2 brush piles (10 feet x10 feet x 6 feet) at the edges of the walnut orchard.</p> <p>Plant 25 acres of cover crop.</p> <p>Plant 1 acre of grain (wheat, safflower, sunflower, or corn).</p> <p>Maintain 5 blue bird nesting boxes, two turtle basking logs, 20 oak tree plantings and 15 coyote brush plantings.</p>
<p>Bird Haven Ranch Deer Zone D3 Glenn 2,500 Acres</p>	<p>Authorized Harvest: 6 forked horn or better buck deer and 2 either-sex deer</p> <p>Issue 6 buck deer tags with 1-2 of these tags donated to a non-profit or sold to generate revenue for any such non-profit. The harvest period will be from August 17, 2024 through November 30, 2024.</p> <p>Issue 2 either-sex deer tags for junior hunters. The harvest period will be from August 17, 2024 through November 30, 2024.</p>	<p>Maintain current conditions by irrigating approximately 1,320 acres of wetland habitat. This includes mowing, burning, grinding, and contouring units to promote early successional pants, improve water flow and reduce unwanted decadent vegetation.</p> <p>Maintain and monitor a minimum of 100 wildlife nesting boxes.</p> <p>Spray, cut/remove 1-2 acres of Himalayan Blackberry & other invasive species within Riparian & Meadow Habitats.</p> <p>Plant at least 10 separate (≥ 25 acres) foraging/nesting habitat food plots (corn, safflower, oats, milo etc.)</p> <p>Spot Spray, mow/disc 150 acres of noxious weeds to promote early succession forage plants.</p> <p>Conduct 2 deer surveys.</p>

**PLM AREA LICENSE
5-YEAR RENEWALS, 2024-2028
PROPOSED SEASONS, HARVESTS, AND HABITAT IMPROVEMENTS**

PLM Area	2024 Proposed Season and Harvest	Habitat Improvement Program
<p>Ordway Ranch Deer Zone D5 Calaveras 850 Acres</p>	<p>Authorized Harvest: 6 forked horn or better buck deer</p> <p>Issue 6 buck deer tags for the period of September 28, 2024 through November 30, 2024.</p>	<p>Maintain 3 water sources for wildlife (including 3 solar-powered wells).</p> <p>Maintain 850 acres of fencing.</p> <p>Maintain 4 brush piles 10 feet wide x 6 feet tall.</p> <p>No cattle grazing in Pasture A. Maintain 53 acres of cattle exclusion fencing along riparian areas.</p> <p>Control invasive weeds through physical removal or spraying on 5-10 acres</p> <p>Masticate 3 acres of decadent brush.</p> <p>Conduct 1 deer survey.</p> <p>Annual inspection and repair of 47,250 feet of perimeter fencing.</p>

CENTRAL REGION

PLM Area	2024 Proposed Season and Harvest	Habitat Improvement Program
<p>Tejon Ranch Deer Zone D10 Kern & Los Angeles 270,000 Acres</p>	<p>Authorized Harvest: 40 forked horn or better buck deer, 5 antlerless deer, 12 bull elk, 3 cow elk, and 15 bearded turkeys</p> <p>Issue 20 buck deer tags for the period of September 20, 2024 through November 3, 2024 (early season).</p> <p>Issue 20 buck deer tags for the period of November 4, 2024 through December 31, 2024 (late season).</p>	<p>Treat roadside invasive weeds in Comanche, Alamo, Haul Road, and Antelope Valley.</p> <p>Treat invasive weeds at pond sites.</p> <p>Maintain 200+ wildlife water systems and wildlife escape ramps.</p> <p>Repair and maintain guzzler system, including water truck servicing.</p> <p>Complete 200 Residual Dry Matter (RDM) surveys to inform cattle grazing and compatibility with wildlife management.</p>

**PLM AREA LICENSE
5-YEAR RENEWALS, 2024-2028
PROPOSED SEASONS, HARVESTS, AND HABITAT IMPROVEMENTS**

PLM Area	2024 Proposed Season and Harvest	Habitat Improvement Program
Tejon Ranch Cont.	<p>Issue 5 antlerless deer tags for the period of December 1, 2024 through December 31, 2024.</p> <p>Issue 12 bull elk tags and 3 antlerless elk tags for the period of September 1, 2024 through December 31, 2024.</p> <p>No persons shall take more than 1 buck deer, 1 bull elk, and 1 antlerless elk.</p> <p>Issue 15 bearded turkey tags for the period of March 14, 2025 through May 21, 2025.</p>	<p>Maintain netting covering open water tanks and large spring containments to prevent accidental wildlife drowning, particularly of California condors.</p> <p>Maintain fencing to exclude cattle from riparian zones and guzzlers; maintain smooth wire pasture fences modified for pronghorn movement.</p> <p>Construct six 400-gallon water troughs with wildlife escape ramps, two 10,000-gallon water tanks, and appx. 6.5 miles of wildlife friendly cattle fencing to keep cattle out of riparian areas during the dry season (Lookout Pasture Project).</p>
<p>Work Ranch Deer Zone A Monterey 12,242 Acres</p>	<p>Authorized Harvest: 1 bull elk, 2 antlerless elk, 6 forked horn or better buck and 2 antlerless deer</p> <p>Issue 1 bull elk tag for the period of July 1, 2024, through December 31, 2024.</p> <p>Issue 6 buck deer tags and 2 either-sex deer tags to take no more than 6 buck and 2 antlerless deer for the period of July 2, 2024, to November 30, 2024.</p> <p>The Work Ranch is not requesting their antlerless elk tags for the 2024 season.</p>	<p>Maintain and improve existing water points wherever possible.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · New tank at Walker spring. · Solar panels and pump at Leach. · Two replacement wells · Finish water project in Archer Canyon. · Add 1 new ground level trough to Carr Hill Field · Add 2 wildlife water ramps annually (until all installed). <p>Treat noxious weeds annually to enhance and maintain habitats for wildlife.</p> <p>Plant or volunteer grain for wildlife.</p> <p>Opportunistically construct brush piles at wood cutting sites.</p> <p>Implement 2x bat roosts, raptor perches or owl boxes annually</p>

**PLM AREA LICENSE
5-YEAR RENEWALS, 2024-2028
PROPOSED SEASONS, HARVESTS, AND HABITAT IMPROVEMENTS
SOUTH COAST REGION**

PLM Area	2024 Proposed Season and Harvest	Habitat Improvement Program
<p>Santa Catalina Island</p> <p>Deer Zone D-15</p> <p>Los Angeles</p> <p>42,100 Acres</p>	<p>Authorized Harvest: 1,000 deer</p> <p>Issue 500 either sex deer tags for the period of July 12, 2024 to December 26, 2024.</p> <p>Upon written request of the licensee on or before October 1, 2024, issue up to an additional 250 either-sex deer tags to accomplish the authorized harvest. Any tags not requested during this request-period can be rolled over into and allocated during the next request period.</p> <p>Upon written request of the licensee on or before December 1, 2024, issue an additional 250 either-sex deer tags to accomplish the authorized harvest.</p>	<p>Continue annual Catalina Island fox recovery activities including: census, vaccination of 300 individuals against CDV/rabies, and monitoring 50 radio collared individuals.</p> <p>Continued monitoring of island for non-native mammals (e.g., raccoons).</p> <p>Continued bison herd management through contraception (maintain <150).</p> <p>Continue animal and plant baseline monitoring activities</p> <p>Continue to optimize weather data collection and analysis.</p> <p>Continue invasive plant removal through contracts with the California Institute of Environmental Studies.</p> <p>Continue monitoring and maintenance of deer exclosures erected post-fire and for rare species.</p> <p>Continue and expand education and outreach through Naturalist Training, Kids in Nature, Island Scholars, Families in Nature, and Nature Works programs.</p>