

Staff Summary for June 19-20, 2024

29A. Wildlife Resources Committee (WRC)**Today's Item**Information Action

Receive summary and consider approving recommendations from the May 16, 2024 WRC meeting. Discuss referred topics and consider revisions to topics and timing.

Summary of Previous/Future Actions

- Previous WRC meeting May 16, 2024; WRC
- **Today consider approving recommendations June 19-20, 2024**
- Next WRC meeting September 12, 2024; WRC

Background

WRC works under Commission direction to set and accomplish its work plan (Exhibit 1).

Previous Committee Meeting

WRC met on May 16 in Sacramento, with webinar and phone options for participation, and discussed annual rulemakings, periodic rulemakings, plastic pollution from shotgun wads, waterfowl hunting in Southampton Bay, and the take of nongame mammals.

Annual Regulation Changes

For regulation changes that occur on an annual basis, discussions centered on:

- Optimizing the timing for California Waterfowl Association meetings to better align with Commission regulation cycles for reviewing waterfowl hunting regulations, and
- increasing date flexibility for sport fishing regulations within the Central Valley system.

Periodic Regulation Changes

WRC also discussed potential regulation changes that are considered on a periodic, though irregular, basis:

- Upland game bird hunting: The Department indicated that it is contemplating recommending changes for pheasants and turkeys, but does not have firm plans to bring a proposal to WRC yet.
- Mammal hunting: Requests were made for an increase in archery elk tags, including in conflict zones. A discussion of the Department's Shared Habitat Alliance for Recreational Enhancement (SHARE) Program versus Private Lands Management (PLM) Program tags addressed the differences between the two tag types, how to balance between them, and strategies to boost participation.
- Chronic wasting disease (CWD): WRC received a presentation on CWD in deer and other cervids and the recent detection of CWD in California at two locations, followed by a lengthy discussion about potential regulatory changes that could be proposed as emergency regulations in June. Concerns highlighted ensuring adequate surveillance,

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communication, and mitigating the risks posed by CWD. Discussions centered on potential regulatory amendments for mandatory testing within the CWD area, restrictions on the movement of cervid parts, and a restriction or prohibition on fawn rehabilitation.

Take of Nongame Mammals

While there was minimal discussion during the meeting, WRC agreed as part of the ongoing discussion about take of nongame mammals to explore a potential regulation change aiming to interpret California Fish and Game Code Section 4152 in a way that aligns more closely with WRC's interpretation of the law's original intent. Co-chair Zavaleta stated that a proposed change would be consistent with the Commission's mission to protect and conserve predator populations.

Commission staff agreed to collaborate with the Department to provide the committee with additional background on the legislative intent behind Section 4152 and the potential implications of any regulation change.

Waterfowl Hunting in Southampton Bay

The petitioner for the regulation change regarding hunting in Southampton Bay clarified the intent behind previous proposals, followed by a discussion of their feasibility. There was general agreement that additional meetings with stakeholders outside WRC meetings were unlikely to be productive. Discussion will continue at the September 2024 WRC meeting, with the goal of developing a recommendation to the Commission on the subject.

Plastic Pollution from Shotgun Wads

Co-chairs Zavaleta and Anderson acknowledged that plastic pollution from shotgun wads is not a critical threat to wildlife, public health, or beaches at this time, relative to other, more significant sources of plastic pollution. However, they recognized the desire for, and encouraged, the hunting community to work with ammunition manufacturers to take steps to address the pollution source.

Minutes of the WRC meeting may be found on the [Commission's YouTube channel](#).

Committee Recommendations

There are no recommendations for consideration today.

Committee Work Plan

Topics that have been referred from the Commission to WRC are displayed in a work plan for scheduling and tracking (Exhibit 1). WRC and staff recommend that the topic of plastic shotgun wads be removed from the work plan.

Significant Public Comments (N/A)

Recommendation

Commission staff: Approve the updated work plan.

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Exhibits

1. [WRC work plan, updated June 13, 2024](#)

Motion

Moved by _____ and seconded by _____ that the Commission approves the updated work plan, as discussed today.

California Fish and Game Commission
Wildlife Resources Committee (WRC) Work Plan
Scheduled Topics and Timeline for Items Referred to WRC
Updated June 13, 2024

Note: Proposed changes to topics/timing are shown in blue underscore or strike-out font

TOPICS	CATEGORY	Jan 2024	May 2024	Sep 2024
Periodic and Annual Regulations				
Upland (Resident) Game Birds	Regulatory		X	X/R
Mammal Hunting	Regulatory		X	X/R
Waterfowl Hunting	Annual Regulatory		X	X/R
Central Valley Sport Fishing	Annual Regulatory		X	X/R
Klamath River Basin Sport Fishing	Annual Regulatory		X	X/R
Inland Sport Fishing	Regulatory	X/R		X
Regulations & Legislative Mandates				
Falconry	Referral for Review			
Restricted Species	Regulatory			
Discussions and Updates				
Take of Nongame Mammals	Referral for Review	X	X	X
<u>Shotgun Wads (plastic pollution)</u>	<u>Referral for Review</u>	<u>X</u>	<u>X/R</u>	
Waterfowl Hunting in Southampton Bay	Referral for Review	X	X	X/R

KEY: X Discussion scheduled X/R Recommendation potentially developed and moved to FGC