

Staff Summary for June 19-20, 2024

19. California Grizzly Bear**Today's Item**Information Action

Consider a revised resolution to recognize the 100-year anniversary of the extirpation of California's state animal, grizzly bear (*Ursus arctos californicus*).

Summary of Previous/Future Actions

- Commission adopted grizzly bear resolution April 17-18, 2024
- **Today potentially adopt a revised resolution June 19-20, 2024**

Background

Despite having been extirpated (made extinct) from the state 100 years ago, the California grizzly bear, also commonly called the brown bear, remains one of California's most iconic species. Notably, the grizzly bear remains a socially, culturally, and spiritually important animal to many California Native American tribes and tribal communities. Recently, the California State Senate declared 2024 to be the Year of the California Grizzly Bear through [a resolution](#) that, in part, acknowledges for thousands of years grizzly bears coexisted with the ancestors of contemporary California Native American tribes.

At the Commission's April 2024 meeting, the Commission received a presentation on the ecology, history, and significance of grizzly bear in California and heard from tribal voices on the importance of grizzly bear to Native Americans. Following the presentation and testimony, the Commission passed a resolution to recognize the 100-year anniversary of the extirpation of California's state animal. Also at that meeting, the Commission agreed to consider a revised resolution, provided as Exhibit 1, which the Commission will consider adopting today.

The new resolution expands on the version adopted in April, with the addition of encouraging the State to focus on lessons learned from the loss of California grizzly bear and requesting that the Department report back to the Commission at a future meeting with a brief summary on the restoration of grizzly bears in other states.

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

Commission staff: Adopt the revised resolution in Exhibit 1 recognizing the 100-year anniversary of the extirpation of grizzly bear in California.

Exhibits

1. [Revised resolution, dated June 13, 2024](#)

Motion

Moved by _____ and seconded by _____ that the Commission adopts the revised resolution in Exhibit 1, recognizing the 100-year anniversary of the extirpation of grizzly bear in California.

California Fish and Game Commission

[Revised] Resolution Recognizing the 100-year Anniversary of the Extirpation of Grizzly Bear in California

June 17, 2024 Draft

WHEREAS, the grizzly bear, a species of brown bear also known as California golden bear, was once a principal inhabitant of California; and

WHEREAS, in California the grizzly bear was a keystone species with profound ecological and cultural value and significance that once roamed freely and thrived throughout the state, filling a vital role in shaping California's ecosystems; and

WHEREAS, for millennia, Native American tribes of the area that is now known as California coexisted with grizzly bears, developing a deep spiritual, cultural, social, and natural relationship with these magnificent animals, which in many ways persists today; and

WHEREAS, the grizzly bear remains an iconic and beloved symbol of California, adorning its flag and great seal, designated as the state animal, and featured prominently as mascot of many California universities, reflecting its enduring legacy; and

WHEREAS, due to human actions, including a campaign of eradication and government-sanctioned bounties, grizzly bear was tragically extirpated in California, with the last confirmed sighting in Sequoia National Park in April 1924; and

WHEREAS, the California Fish and Game Commission, committed to "abundant, healthy, and diverse fish and wildlife that thrive within dynamic ecosystems," is entrusted together with the California Department of Fish and Wildlife with protecting and conserving California's diverse fish, wildlife, plants, and the habitats upon which they depend;

WHEREAS, recognizing 2024 as *Year of the California Grizzly Bear* as proclaimed by the California State Senate, the Commission acknowledges the importance of observing this year with public education and engagement in promoting responsible wildlife interactions and ensuring a healthy future for California's invaluable wildlife;

WHEREAS, efforts are underway elsewhere in the United States to restore and recover grizzly bears from areas in which they were previously extirpated, including in the Bitterroot ecosystem in Montana and Idaho, and in the North Cascades ecosystem in Washington State;

WHEREAS, on April 23, 2024, the National Park Service and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, following a thorough environmental review, signed a Record of Decision authorizing a grizzly bear reintroduction program into the North Cascades region of Washington state; and

WHEREAS, while California has no current plan to restore grizzly bears to the state, scientists affiliated with the Grizzly Bear Research Network have carried out research and published studies that could inform a feasibility study on reintroducing grizzly bears to California in the future.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the California Fish and Game Commission commemorates the 100th anniversary of the grizzly bear's extirpation in California; and

FURTHER, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Commission encourages the State to focus on the lessons learned from the loss of California the grizzly bear and those learned as Washington State reintroduces the grizzly bear in the North Cascades Region, the potential reintroduction program in the Bitterroot ecosystem, and from California-specific research; that those lessons may guide us in ensuring a thriving future for all of California's wildlife and any consideration of the future of the grizzly bear in California.

FINALLY, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Commission requests the Department to review best available information on the restoration of grizzly bears in other states, and report back to the Commission with a brief summary of such information at a Commission meeting in the near future.

Proposed for adoption on June 19, 2024