

Staff Summary for April 15-16, 2026

8. Initial Private Lands Wildlife Habitat Enhancement and Management Area (PLM) Plans and Licenses (consent)

Today's Item

Information

Action

Consider approving initial PLM plans and 2026-2031 licenses.

Summary of Previous/Future Actions (N/A)

Background

California Fish and Game Code subdivision 3402 subdivision (a) states that an application for a Private Lands Wildlife Habitat Enhancement and Management Plan license may be issued by the Department upon approval by the Commission. Licenses for such areas may be granted by the Commission for a period of five years following department review and approval of the management plan (Title 14, California Code of Regulations Subsection 601(a)).

The PLM program 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 the initial management plan for two new properties in two counties consisting of approximately 18,733 acres.

Habitat improvements accomplished under these management plans will enhance and maintain wildlife resources on and around the PLM area. The goals and objectives stated in the management plan are compatible with Department management plans for appropriate species in this area and the Department finds they comply with Commission regulations and policies for PLM licenses and plans.

Significant Public Comments (N/A)

Recommendation

Commission staff: Approve the initial PLM plans and licenses for 2026-2027 seasons under a motion to adopt the consent calendar.

Department: Approve the initial PLM licenses, management plans, and proposed season harvests and habitat improvements under the conditions specified in Exhibit 2.

Exhibits

1. [Department memo, received March 24, 2026](#)
2. [PLM Area License Initial Management Plans, 2026-2027, received March 24, 2026](#)

Motion

Moved by _____ and seconded by _____ that the Commission adopts the staff recommendations for items 8-14 on the consent calendar.

MEMORANDUM

Signed original on file,

Received March 24, 2026

Date: March 20, 2026

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

From: Meghan Hertel, Director

**Subject: Agenda Item for the April 15-16, 2026 Fish and Game Commission Meeting
Private Lands Wildlife Habitat Enhancement and Management (PLM) Area
Licenses**

California Fish and Game Code Section 3406(c) requires that the activities conducted pursuant to each Private Lands Wildlife Habitat Enhancement and Management Plan (PLM) shall be reviewed annually by the Department of Fish and Wildlife (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 plan for 2 new properties in 2 counties consisting of approximately 18,733 acres and the 5-year renewals for 11 properties in 7 counties consisting of approximately 111,182 acres. Additionally, the Department has reviewed the annual reports for 53 properties in 15 counties consisting of approximately 843,262 acres.

The Department recommends that the Commission approve the wildlife management plans, applications, and each 2026/27 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 remaining PLM areas will be submitted to the Commission for approval at the June 17-18 meeting.

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



Melissa Miller-Henson, Executive Director
Fish and Game Commission
March 20, 2026
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Attachment

ec: Chad Dibble, Deputy Director
Wildlife and Fisheries Division

Scott Gardner, Branch Chief
Wildlife Branch

Mario Klip, Environmental Program Manager
Wildlife Branch

Victoria Barr, Environmental Scientist
Wildlife Branch

**PLM AREA LICENSE
 INITIAL MANAGEMENT PLANS, 2026 - 2031
 PROPOSED SEASONS, HARVESTS, AND HABITAT IMPROVEMENTS
 CENTRAL REGION**

PLM Area	Proposed Season and Harvest	Habitat Improvement Program
<p>Gabilan Cattle Co. Ranch</p> <p>Deer Zone A</p> <p>Monterey and San Benito</p> <p>11,500 Acres</p>	<p>Authorized Harvest: 2 antlerless elk, 5 forked horn or better buck deer and 2 antlerless deer</p> <p>Issue 2 antlerless elk tag for the period of September 15, 2026 through December 31, 2026.</p> <p>Issue 5 buck deer tags for the period of July 2, 2026 through November 30, 2026.</p> <p>Issue 2 antlerless deer tags for the period of September 15, 2026 through December 31, 2026.</p> <p>Three-year rotation with 2 antlerless elk tags for two years and 1 bull elk tag every third year.</p>	<p>Partner with UC Berkeley to study grazing, vegetation, and soil carbon.</p> <p>Implement regenerative grazing with NRCS to improve soil and biodiversity.</p> <p>Collaborate with The Nature Conservancy to refine adaptive grazing and evaluate virtual fencing.</p> <p>Monitor soil carbon, vegetation, and birds with Point Blue.</p> <p>Implement Audubon bird friendly ranching practices to support grassland birds.</p> <p>Propagate native milkweed with USFWS to support monarch butterflies.</p> <p>Promote California condor habitat with Pinnacles and Ventana recovery teams.</p> <p>Fence McCray Pond and Wood Duck Pond to exclude livestock.</p> <p>Install wildlife troughs and escape ramps at Wood Duck Spring, Dowdy Peak, Sheep Hill.</p> <p>Remove standing dead pines and conduct prescribed burns with Cal Fire.</p> <p>Conduct prescribed burns and fuels reduction along Bird Creek Canyon and ranch boundaries.</p> <p>Monitor vegetation, soil, and wildlife responses and adapt management practices.</p>

**PLM AREA LICENSE
INITIAL MANAGEMENT PLANS, 2026 - 2031
PROPOSED SEASONS, HARVESTS, AND HABITAT IMPROVEMENTS**

PLM Area	Proposed Season and Harvest	Habitat Improvement Program
<p>Porter Estate Co. Bradley Ranch Inc.</p> <p>Deer Zone A</p> <p>Monterey</p> <p>7,233 Acres</p>	<p>Authorized Harvest: 3 bull elk and 1 antlerless elk</p> <p>Issue 3 bull elk tags for the period of July 2, 2026, through December 31, 2026.</p> <p>Issue 1 antlerless elk tag for the period of September 15, 2026, through December 31, 2026.</p> <p>Tag allocations will increase if CDFW allocates more PLM tags.</p>	<p>Plant 25 acres of wildlife forage plots on alternating years for elk and deer.</p> <p>Create 10' x 10' brush and downed-wood piles for small mammals and ground-nesting birds.</p> <p>Install and modify 5 troughs, escape ramps, and seasonal wildlife catch ponds.</p> <p>Maintain and modify wildlife-friendly fencing to guide elk and deer movement.</p> <p>Install 10 elk crossings during the 5-year Management Plan at key travel corridors to reduce fence damage.</p> <p>Monitor elk and deer populations to guide harvest and habitat decisions.</p> <p>Update management strategies using monitoring results and adaptive management principles.</p> <p>Control yellow star thistle and other invasives using mechanical treatments.</p> <p>Implement rotational grazing to improve native vegetation and soil productivity.</p> <p>Provide 1 mentored youth hunt annually to promote conservation stewardship.</p> <p>Install 2 bat roosts, owl boxes, or raptor perches annually.</p> <p>Provide Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD) samples from Porter Ranch hunter harvest as a part of CDFW disease surveillance.</p>