## California Department of Fish and Game Climate Change Program Annual Update 2008

In February 2008 the DFG hired a Climate Change Advisor (Amber Pairis, Ph.D.) to act as its lead climate coordinator to guide its work to reduce the impacts on species. The DFG was one of the first state fish and game agency in the country to have a position totally dedicated to climate change. Dr. Pairis came to DFG from the Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies in Washington, D.C. where she coordinated research and policy between the state fish and game and federal natural resource agencies and served as the scientific lead on climate change and wildlife at the national level. With her oversight the DFG will focus on integrating climate change into department policies and programs and positioning the Department to play a leadership role in national, regional, and local climate change adaptation planning initiatives and projects related to fish, wildlife, and habitats.

## Regional Level Activities and Involvement

- Western Governors Association (WGA)
   Staff serve on the WGA Wildlife Corridors Initiative Climate Change Working
   Group and have been involved in the creation of a report focused on climate change and connectivity in the west. The WGA has recently released this draft report to the public with policy recommendations to address connectivity issues for fish and wildlife in a changing climate.
- <u>Climate Change subcommittee for the Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies</u>
  The climate change advisor gave several presentations on behalf of the Department at the North American Wildlife and Natural Resource Conference in Phoenix, AZ. She is also participating on the Association's climate change think tank on behalf of the Department and is working with 12 other states fish and game agencies to create a functional model and conceptual paper for how state fish and game agencies are addressing climate change.

#### Stakeholders

Partners from the NGO community, academia, state and federal agencies met on April 2<sup>nd</sup> as part of our outreach on the climate change front. The objective of the meeting was to gather input from partners on their views of the types of issues we should be addressing while constructing an overall climate change strategy for the Department. The meeting was well attended with more than 30 participants from 26 different agencies and organizations. Stakeholder input was presented to the task force at their meeting on April 25<sup>th</sup>.

In response to April 8, 2008 letter from California Legislature re: climate change and California's wildlife

The statement in the letter referring to facilitating adaptation to climate change as not being in the purview of the Commission or the DFG is in error and has been taken out of context. This statement is not reflective of the Department's efforts on climate change and was intended to narrowly refer to our understanding of the existing regulations of the Commission/Department for which there is no mention of enforcement/regulation on climate change in either Title 14 or the Fish and Game Code. The Department submitted a response/rebuttal to this statement that was not printed but will be available to the public via the web shortly.

## Director's Climate Change Task Force

Note: The Task Force was created to provide the leadership to reduce or mitigate the production of greenhouse gases by the Department, and to prepare for the current and future impacts of climate change on California's natural resources through policy and meaningful action. This group will also tie into and support the Resource Agency's efforts to develop a climate adaptation strategy.

## • April 25<sup>th</sup> Meeting

- The agenda focused on finalizing a climate change position/statement for the Department, achievements and activities to date, setting priorities for the coming months, and beginning to craft an adaptation strategy for fish and wildlife based on the Wildlife Action Plan.
- o Task force members reviewed input from stakeholder meetings and finalized an approach to integrating climate change into policy level discussions.
- The group discussed some of the internal immediate needs related to climate change that highlighted the importance of having internal discussion groups.
   Draft policy considerations document and stakeholder input will provide guidance as internal discussion groups are formed.

# June 17<sup>th</sup> Meeting

- The agenda focused on our efforts to meet the Climate Change Action Registry deadline, DFG vehicle/DGS strategy, DFG's climate change adaptation strategy for fish/wildlife, and a group discussion on carbon sequestration.
- o In addition, there were presentations on the increasingly important role of corridors and connectivity in a changing climate from Mary Orland, Ph.D. and an update from the Resource Agency on climate change activities.

#### Director's Bulletin

A Director's bulletin was released to all DFG staff on April 22, 2008. The document reiterated the Department's commitment to addressing climate change on both the mitigation and adaptation fronts. The document highlighted our accomplishments over the last six months and encouraged staff to contribute to and support DFG's efforts to integrate climate change into our mission.

#### Website Resources

• DFG Climate Change Website (http://dfg.ca.gov/climatechange/)
DFG's climate change website is now available. The web site will serve as a resource to Department employees and others as well as sending a message to the public and partners about the Department's commitment to addressing the challenges of a changing climate in all of its endeavors. Also check out DFG's new Renewable Energy web page at http://dfg.ca.gov/habcon/energy.

#### • DFG Intranet Site

An **intranet site** has been set up for internal materials including summaries of task force meetings, stakeholder, input, and concept letters/proposals for climate change funding.

http://dfgintranet/portal/BusinessOperations/BusinessServices/ClimateChangeResources/tabid/609/Default.aspx

• CEC has created a new-updated website for the **CA Climate Change Portal**. DFG is listed on the new site and there are links that will take people directly to our new DFG climate change web page as well as other materials that talk about our activities under the umbrella of the Resource Agency. Links: <a href="http://www.climatechange.ca.gov/policies/ca\_activities.html">http://www.climatechange.ca.gov/policies/ca\_activities.html</a>

## Seminars and Workshops

- Seminar on climate change and ecological resources in California (June 6)
  A joint climate change seminar was held by DFG and the CA Energy Commission,
  Public Interest Research (PIER) group. The workshop brought together nine different
  researchers to talk about the impacts of climate change specific to California.
  - o The seminar was well attended with more than 95 participants in attendance and 35 participants on the web.
  - The seminar is available via WebEx on the DFG climate change intranet page as well as to the public on the DFG climate change internet page at http://dfg.ca.gov/climatechange/activities.html
- Workshop: Crafting a climate change strategy for fish and wildlife (June 13)
  - o This workshop included more than 60 participants (DFG 35 +).
  - Intended as a way to build on existing efforts to implement California's Wildlife Action Plan while incorporating a climate change context into the process.
  - o Breakout groups were based on bioregions identified in the plan.
  - Asked participants to evaluate recommendations for each bioregion with a climate change lens to identify priorities that have a climate change nexus.
  - o In addition, breakout group questions were formulated to help the Department address the Resource Agency effort to create a CA adaptation strategy this summer.
  - o Next steps: summary of meeting for participant review, draft DFG CC priorities for use in the RA process over the summer as well as a framework

- that can be built on to continue to craft a meaningful adaptation plan for the Department.
- o In the fall there will be a follow up stakeholder meeting and the process will be opened up to include more DFG staff and stakeholders.
- Special thanks to Armand Gonzales, Dale Steele, and Steve Schoenig for helping put the event together. Thanks to the Chiefs and Regional Managers for giving their staff time to attend and participate.

## Climate Change Outreach to the Regions

Armand Gonzales provided a climate change briefing to the Region 1 and 5 all-staff meeting in May and June. The presentation included a short climate change overview and information on the Department's efforts to address climate change.

## Participation and Coordination with the Resource Agency

- <u>Climate Action Team (CAT) sub groups</u>
  Staff actively participates in these meetings and advises the state on factors relating to adaptation and mitigation for climate change effects on natural resources.
- New CAT Team
   DFG is a participant in the new CAT subgroup focused on Research
- <u>State-wide Adaptation Strategy</u> DFG's Climate Change Advisor is working closely with the Deputy Secretary for Climate Change and Energy to coordinate and participate in the Resource Agency's activities.