

Wildlife Boards in Western States: Mission, Duties, Appointment Criteria, and Membership

Overview: This resource provides a summary of the mission, duties, appointment criteria, and membership for state wildlife agencies in the Western United States. Some of these provisions have been copied verbatim as they appear in statute, while some were summarized or abridged for clarity and brevity. Follow the links provided to review the exact wording of statutes.

Arizona

Board Title: Arizona Game and Fish Commission

Statutes: [ARS 17-201](#) and [ARS 17-202](#) (Appointment), [ARS 17-231](#) (Duties)

Mission / Duties:

- Duties include adoption of rules, establishing programs for game management, providing public information on wildlife, overseeing fund expenditures, holding hearings, and participating in Arizona-Mexico border issues related to wildlife.

Appointment:

- The Governor selects commissioners from a list of candidates prepared by the Arizona Game and Fish Commission Recommendation Board (CRB). The CRB consists of two people from sportsman organizations, one person from an organization focused on a single game species, one organization focused on cattle and ranching, and one organization focused on nongame species.
- The AZ Game and Fish Commission must not consist of more than three members from the same political party, and no two members may be residents of the same county. Members shall be well informed on the subject of wildlife and requirements for its conservation.

Membership:

<https://www.azgfd.com/about-arizona-game-fish/commission-public-information/about-the-commission/meet-the-commission/>

California

Board Title: California Game and Fish Commission

Statute: [FGC 101-500](#)

Mission / Duties:

- Duties: Regulate taking of wildlife (not for commercial purposes) with consideration for populations, habitat, food supplies, the welfare of individual animals, and other pertinent facts and testimony.

Appointment:

- Legislative intent (no appointment criteria): The members of the commission are expected to make complex public policy and biological decisions on behalf of the people of California, with due consideration for: (1) The degree to which the appointee will enhance the diversity of background and geographic representation of the commission. (2) The appointee's demonstrated interest and background in, and familiarity with, wildlife and natural resources management programs at the state or federal level. (3) The appointee's previous experience in public policy decisionmaking, including government processes involving public participation. (4) The

appointee's commitment to prepare for and attend meetings and subcommittee meetings of the commission and to comply with all applicable state conflict-of-interest laws. (5) The extent of the appointee's exposure to and experience with the basic science underpinning the management of living natural resources. (6) The appointee's diversity of knowledge of natural resource issues and related scientific disciplines, including, but not limited to, outdoor recreation.

Membership: <https://fgc.ca.gov/About/Members>

Colorado

Board Title: Colorado Parks and Wildlife Commission

Statute: [33-9-101](#)

Mission / Duties:

- Mission: To perpetuate the wildlife resources of the state, to provide a quality state parks system, and to provide enjoyable and sustainable outdoor recreation opportunities that educate and inspire current and future generations to serve as active stewards of Colorado's natural resources.
- Duties: Adopt or revise any rules, designate a commission member with wildlife knowledge to serve as a representative to the state board of the great outdoors Colorado trust fund, designate a commission member with parks and outdoor recreation knowledge to serve as a representative to the state board of the great outdoors Colorado trust fund, promulgate rules to increase or decrease a park fee or charge

Membership: <https://cpw.state.co.us/aboutus/Pages/CommissionMembers.aspx>

Appointment:

- The commission consists of thirteen members, as follows: (a) Two members who are ex officio non voting members, as follows: (I) The executive director; and (II) The commissioner of the department of agriculture; (b) Eleven voting members who are appointed by the governor with the consent of the senate: (I) Three members who are sports persons who can demonstrate a reasonable knowledge of wildlife issues and who have obtained a hunting or fishing license for at least each of the three years prior to their appointments. One must be an outfitter. (II) Three members who are actively involved in production agriculture as owners or lessees of the agricultural property and owners or partial owners of the commodities produced on the land and who can demonstrate a reasonable knowledge of wildlife issues; (III) Three members who can demonstrate that they regularly engage in outdoor recreation and utilize parks resources. One member appointed under this subparagraph shall represent a nonprofit organization that supports and promotes the conservation and enhancement of Colorado's wildlife and habitat; recognizes and promotes primarily non consumptive wildlife use; and has expertise in wildlife issues, wildlife habitat, or wildlife management; and (IV) Two members appointed from the public at-large.
- The governor shall make appointments that ensure that a reasonable balance of the following areas of knowledge and experience, as they relate to parks and wildlife, are represented: Outdoor business, service as a current or former local elected official, youth outdoor education, wildlife biology or science, energy, conservation, beneficial uses of water, land conservation and conservation easements, and diversified trails interests and activities.
- Of the voting members appointed to the commission, there shall not be a difference of more than one person between those members affiliated with any major political party and voting members shall be appointed to the commission in a manner that ensures balanced geographical representation of diverse areas of the state. At least four voting members shall be appointed from west of the continental divide.

Idaho

Board Title: Idaho Fish and Game Commission

Statute: [36-102](#) (Mission and appointment criteria) [36-103](#) (Duties)

Mission / Duties:

- Mission: The supervision, management and control of the Idaho Department of Fish and Game.
- Duties (summarized): (a) Preserve, protect, perpetuate, and manage wildlife of the state and allowing for capture or taking of wildlife only in a manner that will preserve, protect, and perpetuate such wildlife, and provide for the citizens of this state through continued supplies of such wildlife for hunting, fishing and trapping.(b) It shall be the authority, power and duty of the fish and game commission to administer and carry out the policy of the state in accordance with the provisions of the Idaho fish and game code. The commission is not authorized to change such policy but only to administer it.

Appointment:

- The commission shall consist of seven members, to be appointed by the governor made solely upon consideration of the welfare and best interests of fish and game in the state of Idaho, and no person shall be appointed a member of said commission unless he shall be well informed upon, and interested in, the subject of wildlife conservation and restoration. The state of Idaho is divided into seven regions and each of the enumerated regions shall, at all times, be represented by one member of the commission, appointed from said region by the governor.

Membership: <https://idfg.idaho.gov/d7/about/commission/members>

Montana

Board Title: Montana Fish and Wildlife Commission

Statute: [87-1-301](#)

Mission / Duties: (summarized)

- Duties: The commission: (1) shall set the policies for the protection, preservation, management, and propagation of wildlife (2) may adopt rules regarding the use and type of archery equipment that may be employed for hunting and fishing purposes, taking into account applicable standards as technical innovations in archery equipment change. (3) may adopt rules regarding the establishment of special licenses or permits, seasons, conditions, programs, or other provisions that the commission considers appropriate to promote or enhance hunting by Montana's youth and persons with disabilities. (4) may adopt rules regarding nonresident big game combination licenses to (5) may adopt rules related to nonresident mountain lion harvest and use of hounds (6) may not regulate the use or possession of firearms, firearm accessories, or ammunition, including the chemical elements of ammunition used for hunting. (7) the commission does not oversee department activities related to the administration of state parks, primitive parks, state recreational areas, public camping grounds, state historic sites, state monuments, and other heritage and recreational resources, land, and water

Appointment:

- The commission consists of seven members. At least one member must be experienced in the breeding and management of domestic livestock. The governor shall appoint one member for each of the seven administrative regions of the department of fish, wildlife, and parks. Appointments must be made without regard to political affiliation and must be made solely for the wise management of fish, wildlife, and related recreational resources of this state. A person may not be appointed to the commission unless the person is informed or interested and experienced in the subject of fish, wildlife, and recreation and the requirements for the conservation and protection of fish, wildlife, and recreational resources.

Membership: <https://fwp.mt.gov/aboutfwp/commission/members>

New Mexico

Board Title: New Mexico State Game Commission

Statute: [17-1-1](#)

Mission / Duties:

- Mission: It is the purpose of this act and the policy of the state of New Mexico to provide an adequate and flexible system for the protection of the game and fish of New Mexico and for their use and development for public recreation and food supply, and to provide for their propagation, planting, protection, regulation and conservation to the extent necessary to provide and maintain an adequate supply of game and fish within the state of New Mexico.

Appointment:

- Seven members, not more than four of whom shall be of the same political party at the time of their appointment. The members of the commission shall be appointed by the governor with the advice and consent of the senate. The term of office for each member of the commission shall be four years. At the time of making the first appointments, the governor shall designate the commissioners' terms as being one, two, three or four years so that the term of no more than two commissioners shall expire each year. In making appointments to the state game commission, one member shall be appointed from each of five districts. The remaining two members shall be appointed at-large. At least one member of the commission shall manage and operate a farm or ranch that contains at least two species of wildlife on that part which is deeded land. At least one member shall have a demonstrated history of involvement in wildlife and habitat protection issues and whose activities or occupation are not in conflict with wildlife and habitat advocacy.

Membership: <https://www.wildlife.state.nm.us/commission/meet-the-commissioners/>

Nevada

Board Title: Board of Wildlife Commissioners

Statute: [NRS 501.171](#) (appointment) and [NRS 501.181](#) (duties)

Mission / Duties: (summarized)

- Duties: (1) Establish broad policies for the protection, propagation, restoration, transplanting, introduction and management of wildlife in this State; promotion of safety; uniformity of laws; (2) Guide the Department in its administration and enforcement of the provisions of this title and of [chapter 488](#); (3) Establish policies for areas of interest including: game management, predatory wildlife management, acquisitions, access issues, nonresident hunters, wildlife translocation, inter-agency coordination, license

revocations; (4) Establish regulations necessary to carry out hunting limits and seasons, tags, game management unit creation, and license numbers; (5) Establish public comment periods for decisions impacting public land; (6) Adopt regulations governing water permits and payments; (7) Designate areas where big game mammals are of special concern for alternative livestock; (8) Adopt regulations governing the trapping of fur-bearing mammals in a residential area of a county whose population is 100,000 or more; (9) Adopt regulations prescribing the circumstances under which a person may retrieve a wounded big game mammal; (10) Consider the recommendations of the Department, the county advisory boards to manage wildlife and other persons who present their views at an open meeting of the Commission.

Appointment:

- (1) County advisory boards submit written nominations for appointments to the Commission upon the request of the Governor and may submit nominations at any other time. (2) After consideration of the written nominations, the Governor shall appoint to the Commission: (a) One member who is actively engaged in and possesses experience and expertise in advocating issues relating to conservation; (b) One member who is actively engaged in farming; (c) One member who is actively engaged in ranching; (d) One member who represents the interests of the general public; and (e) Five members who during at least 3 of the 4 years immediately preceding their appointment held a resident license to fish or hunt, or both, in Nevada. (3) No member may have been convicted of certain felonies or misdemeanors (see statute for details. (4) Not more than three members may be from the same county whose population is 700,000 or more, not more than two members may be from the same county whose population is 100,000 or more but less than 700,000, and not more than one member may be from the same county whose population is less than 100,000. (5) The Commission shall annually select a Chair and a Vice Chair from among its members. A person shall not serve more than two consecutive terms as Chair.

Membership:

<https://www.ndow.org/contacts/?search=&team=commission&division=commission>

Oregon

Wildlife:

Board Title: Oregon Fish and Wildlife Commission

Statute: [ORS 496.090](#) [ORS 496.138](#) [ORS 496.012](#)

Mission / Duties:

- **Mission:** All members of the commission shall represent the public interest of the state and make decisions affecting the wildlife resources of the state for the benefit of those resources. Consistent with the requirements of this subsection, the commission shall provide for the productive and sustainable utilization of wildlife resources for all groups of users.
- **Duties:** (1) The Commission shall implement the policies and programs of this state for the management of wildlife. These policies and programs shall consider the uses of public and private lands and utilize voluntary partnerships with private and public landowners to protect and enhance wildlife habitat and effectively manage wildlife. (2) The Commission shall adopt such rules and standards as it considers necessary and proper to implement the policy and objectives of the wildlife policy (3) The Commission shall cause a public hearing to be held on any proposed

rule or standard prior to its adoption. The hearing may be before the commission, any designated member thereof or any person designated by and acting for the commission. (4) Before submitting an agency request budget or information to the Governor, the commission shall hold a public hearing on proposals for planned expenditures and enhancement packages that the commission intends to recommend to the Governor for inclusion in the Governor's budget.

- It is the policy of the State of Oregon that wildlife shall be managed to prevent serious depletion of any indigenous species and to provide the optimum recreational and aesthetic benefits for present and future generations of the citizens of this state. In furtherance of this policy, the State Fish and Wildlife Commission shall represent the public interest of the State of Oregon and implement the following coequal goals of wildlife management: (1) To maintain all species of wildlife at optimum levels. (2) To develop and manage the lands and waters of this state in a manner that will enhance the production and public enjoyment of wildlife. (3) To permit an orderly and equitable utilization of available wildlife. (4) To develop and maintain public access to the lands and waters of the state and the wildlife resources thereon. (5) To regulate wildlife populations and the public enjoyment of wildlife in a manner that is compatible with primary uses of the lands and waters of the state. (6) To provide optimum recreational benefits. (7) To make decisions that affect wildlife resources of the state for the benefit of the wildlife resources and to make decisions that allow for the best social, economic and recreational utilization of wildlife resources by all user groups.

Membership: <https://www.dfw.state.or.us/agency/commission/members.asp>

Appointment:

- One member of the commission shall be appointed from each of the congressional districts of this state, one member from that portion of the state lying west of the Cascade Mountains and one member from that portion of the state lying east of the Cascade Mountains. All members of the commission shall have a general knowledge of fish and wildlife issues and an understanding of the operation and functions of public policy boards and commissions. In making appointments to the commission, the Governor shall consider appointing members who possess natural resource backgrounds such as backgrounds in commercial fishing, recreational fishing, hunting, agriculture, forestry and conservation.

Texas

Board Title: Texas Parks and Wildlife Commission

Statute: [Parks and Wildlife Code Title 2 Chapter 11 Subchapter A](#)

Mission / Duties: No formal mission.

- **Mission:** It is the statutory responsibility of the Commission and TPWD to protect, conserve, manage, and interpret the state's natural and cultural resources, and to aid in minimizing adverse impacts on these resources.
- **Duties:** The Commission's chief responsibility is the adoption of policies and rules to carry out all programs of Texas Parks and Wildlife Department (TPWD). The Commission approves the annual operating budget and the biennial appropriations request for submission to the Legislature, sets TPWD policy as required by statute, and appoints an Executive Director charged with the implementation of the daily administration and operations of TPWD.

Appointment:

- (a) The commission consists of nine members appointed by the governor with the advice and consent of two thirds of the members of the senate present and voting. (b) If the senate is not in session, the governor shall appoint the members and issue commissions to them as provided by

law, and their appointment shall be submitted to the next session of the senate for its advice and consent in the manner that appointments to fill vacancies under the constitution are submitted to the senate. (c) Commission members must be members of the general public and meet the conflict of interest qualifications provided by Section 11.0121. (d) In making appointments under this section, the governor shall attempt to include persons with expertise in diverse fields, including fields such as historic preservation, conservation, and outdoor recreation.

Membership: <https://tpwd.texas.gov/about/commission>

Utah

Board Title: Utah Wildlife Board

Statute: [UAC 23-14](#)

Mission / Duties:

- (a). The Wildlife Board shall establish the policies best designed to accomplish the purposes and fulfill the intent of all laws pertaining to wildlife and the preservation, protection, conservation, perpetuation, introduction, and management of wildlife.

Appointment:

- 23-14-2. (2) (a) The members of the board shall have expertise or experience in at least one of the following areas: (i) wildlife management or biology; (ii) habitat management, including range or aquatic; (iii) business, including knowledge of private land issues; and (iv) economics, including knowledge of recreational wildlife uses. (b) Each of the areas of expertise shall be represented by at least one member of the Wildlife Board.
- (3) (a) The governor shall select each board member from a list of nominees submitted by the nominating committee (1) There is created a Wildlife Board Nominating Committee which shall consist of 11 members. (2) The governor shall appoint members to the nominating committee as follows: (a) three members shall be appointed from a list of at least two nominees per position submitted by the agriculture industry; (b) three members shall be appointed from a list of at least two nominees per position submitted by sportsmen groups; (c) two members shall be appointed from a list of at least two nominees per position submitted by non consumptive wildlife interests; (d) one member shall be appointed from a list of at least two nominees submitted by federal land management agencies; (e) one local elected official shall be appointed from a list of at least two nominees submitted by the Utah Association of Counties; and (f) one range management specialist shall be appointed from a list of at least two nominees submitted jointly by the Utah Chapter, Society of Range Management and the Utah Chapter, The Wildlife Society.

Membership: <https://wildlife.utah.gov/board-members.html>

Washington

Board Title: Fish and Wildlife Commission

Statute: Mission / Duties: [RCW 77.04.012](#) Appointment Process: [RCW 77.04.030](#) Appointment Criteria: [RCW 77.04.040](#)

Mission / Duties:

- **Mission:** The commission, director, and the department shall preserve, protect, perpetuate, and manage the wildlife and food fish, game fish, and shellfish in state waters and offshore waters. **Duties:** The commission may authorize the taking of wildlife, food fish, game fish, and shellfish only at times or places, or in manners or quantities, as in the judgment of the commission does not impair the supply of these resources. The commission shall attempt to maximize the public

recreational game fishing and hunting opportunities of all citizens, including juvenile, disabled, and senior citizens.

- Duties: (1) In establishing policies to preserve, protect, and perpetuate wildlife, fish, and wildlife and fish habitat, the commission shall meet annually with the governor to: (a) Review and prescribe basic goals and objectives related to those policies; and (b) Review the performance of the department in implementing fish and wildlife policies. The commission shall maximize fishing, hunting, and outdoor recreational opportunities compatible with healthy and diverse fish and wildlife populations. (2) The commission shall establish hunting, trapping, and fishing seasons and prescribe the time, place, manner, and methods that may be used to harvest or enjoy game fish and wildlife. (3) The commission shall establish provisions regulating food fish and shellfish (4) The commission shall have final approval authority for tribal, interstate, international, and any other department agreements relating to fish and wildlife. (5) The commission shall adopt rules to implement the state's fish and wildlife laws. (6) The commission shall have final approval authority for the department's budget proposals. (7) The commission shall select its own staff and shall appoint the director of the department. The director and commission staff shall serve at the pleasure of the commission.

Appointment:

- The fish and wildlife commission consists of nine registered voters of the state. Three members shall be residents of that portion of the state lying east of the summit of the Cascade mountains, and three shall be residents of that portion of the state lying west of the summit of the Cascade mountains. Three additional members shall be appointed at large. No two members may be residents of the same county.
- Persons eligible for appointment as members of the commission shall have general knowledge of the habits and distribution of fish and wildlife and shall not hold another state, county, or municipal elective or appointive office. In making these appointments, the governor shall seek to maintain a balance reflecting all aspects of fish and wildlife, including representation recommended by organized groups representing sportfishers, commercial fishers, hunters, private landowners, and environmentalists.

Membership: <https://wdfw.wa.gov/about/commission/members>

Wyoming

Board Title: Wyoming Game and Fish Commission

Statute: [Title 23](#) - 23-1-201 (commission appointment) 23-1-302 (Powers and duties)

Mission / Duties:

- Duties: (a) The commission is directed and empowered: (i) To fix season and bag limits, open, shorten or close seasons including providing for season extensions for hunters with disabilities as established by commission rules and regulation, on any species or sex of wildlife for any type of legal weapon, except predatory animals, predacious birds, protected animals, and protected birds, in any specified locality of Wyoming, and to give notice thereof; (ii) To establish zones and areas in which trophy game animals may be taken as game animals with a license or, with the exception of gray wolves, in the same manner as predatory animals without a license, giving proper regard to the livestock and game industries in those particular areas; (iii) To acquire lands and waters in the name of Wyoming by purchase, lease, agreement, gift or devise, not including powers of eminent domain (iv) To acquire easements and construct suitable access roads
- Note: Wyoming exhaustively lists all of the commissions specific powers and duties. Review 23-1-302. Powers and duties (vi through xxxiii) for more details.

Appointment:

- (a) The Wyoming game and fish commission is continued in existence. (b) The commission shall be composed of eight members including the governor as an ex officio member. Not more than seventy-five percent (75%) of the appointed commissioners shall be of the same political party, and all appointed commissioners shall have a general knowledge of wildlife and wildlife propagation, management, and control. (c) Commencing in 1973, a commissioner shall be appointed from each appointment district pursuant to W.S. 9-1-218. (d) Commissioners shall be appointed by the governor with the advice and consent of the senate for a term of six (6) years to commence March 1, except the first term for two (2) appointees shall be two (2) years and for two (2) appointees shall be four (4) years as designated by the governor prior to submission to the senate. Terms of current appointees are ratified and continued in existence until terms of new appointees under this section become effective. The governor shall fill any vacancy as provided in W.S. 28-12-101. (e) Each commissioner shall execute and file the oath of office as prescribed by the Wyoming constitution with the secretary of state.

Membership: <https://wgfd.wyo.gov/About-Us/Game-and-Fish-Commission/Meet-the-Commissioners>