



## **Composition of Wildlife Commissions in Western States**

April 2024

### **ARIZONA**

Name: Arizona Game and Fish Commission

Number of voting members: 5

How selected: Appointed by Governor with assistance from Game and Fish Commission  
Appointment Recommendation Board

Senate confirmation required: Yes

Selection criteria:

*Not more than three members shall be members of 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.*

*The board shall assist the governor by interviewing, evaluating and recommending candidates to fill vacancies on the Arizona game and fish commission as follows...The board shall recommend at least two, but no more than five, candidates from the governor's final list of candidates... The governor must select and appoint a commissioner from the list submitted by the board.*

Term length: 5 years

Meetings: The commission has its principal office at the state capitol but meetings may be held at any time or place within the state. The commission must meet at least once quarterly. Meetings may be held at the call of the chairman or majority of the commission. A majority of the members of the commission constitutes a quorum.

Citation: Ariz. Rev. Stat. §§17-201 to 202

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

### **CALIFORNIA**

Name: California Fish and Game Commission

Number of voting members: 5

How selected: Appointed by Governor

Senate confirmation required: Yes

Selection criteria:

*It is therefore the intent of the Legislature to encourage the Governor and the Senate Committee on Rules to consider the following minimum qualifications in selecting, appointing, and confirming commissioners to serve on the commission:*

- (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.*

Term length: 6 years

Meetings: The commission must hold no fewer than eight regular meetings per calendar year, if the commission has adequate funding for related travel, including funding for department travel. The commission may also hold special meetings or hearings to receive additional input from the department and the public.

Citation: Cal. Const. Art. 4, §20; Cal. Fish and Game Code §§101 to 110

Web page: <https://fgc.ca.gov/>

## **COLORADO**

Name: Colorado Parks and Wildlife Commission

Number of voting members: 11

How selected: Appointed by Governor

Senate confirmation required: Yes

Selection criteria:

*The eleven voting members of the commission are as follows:*

- (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 issued under this title 33 for at least each of the three years prior to their appointments. One of the members appointed pursuant to this subsection (3)(a)(I) must be an outfitter registered pursuant to article 145 of title 12.*
- (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 (III) shall represent a nonprofit organization that supports and promotes the conservation and enhancement of Colorado's wildlife and habitat; recognizes and promotes primarily nonconsumptive wildlife use; and has expertise in wildlife issues, wildlife habitat, or wildlife management; and*

*(IV) Two members appointed from the public at-large.*

*(b)(I) In appointing members to the commission under paragraph (a) of this subsection (3), 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. In order to satisfy the requirements of this paragraph (b), the governor shall give preference to persons with experience or expertise in multiple areas of knowledge.*

*(II) Regardless of the particular interests or qualifications possessed by each member appointed to the commission pursuant to paragraph (a) of this subsection (3), each commissioner represents diverse parks, wildlife, and outdoor recreation throughout Colorado and is committed to the long-term financial stability and sustainability of the department.*

*(c) 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.*

*(d) To the extent possible, 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.*

Term length: 4 years; no member may serve more than two consecutive terms

Meetings: The commission may meet as often as necessary. At least two meetings per calendar year must be held at locations west of the continental divide.

Citation: Colo. Rev. Stat. §§33-9-101 to 102

Web page: <https://cpw.state.co.us/aboutus/pages/commission.aspx>

## **IDAHO**

Name: Idaho Fish and Game Commission

Number of voting members: 7

How selected: Appointed by Governor

Senate confirmation required: Yes

Selection criteria:

*The selection and appointment of said members shall be 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. No member shall hold any other elective or appointive office, state, county or municipal, or any office in any political party organization. Not more than four (4) of the members of said commission shall at any time belong to the same political party. Each of the members of said commission shall be a citizen of the United States, and of the state of Idaho, and a bona fide resident of the region from which he is appointed as hereinafter set forth.*

*Each of the [following] regions shall, at all times, be represented by one (1) member of the commission, appointed from said region by the governor – Panhandle; Clearwater; Southwestern; Magic Valley; Southeastern; Upper Snake River; and Salmon regions.*

Term length: 4 years; no member may serve more than 2 terms

Meetings: In addition to a regular annual meeting, to be held in January, the commission must hold other regular quarterly meetings each year at such places within the state as the commission selects. Special meetings may be called at any time and place by the chairman or a majority of the members of the commission. Notice of the time, place, and purpose of any special meeting must be given to each member prior to said meeting. A majority of the commissioners constitutes a quorum.

Citation: Idaho Code §§36-102 to 104

Web page: <https://idfg.idaho.gov/about/commission>

## **MONTANA**

Name: Montana Fish and Wildlife Commission

Number of voting members: 7

How selected: Appointed by Governor

Senate confirmation required: Yes, based on designation by law as quasi-judicial board

Selection criteria:

*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 administrative regions of the department of fish, wildlife, and parks, which are headquartered in the following locations: Kalispell; Missoula; Bozeman; Great Falls; Billings; Glasgow; and Miles City. To be eligible to serve on the commission, the member must reside in the administrative region the member will represent or within 10 air miles of the region's boundary as it exists on the date the member is appointed.*

*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.*

Term length: 4 years

Meetings: N/A

Citation: Mont. Code §2-15-3402

Web page: <https://fwp.mt.gov/aboutfwp/commission>

## NEVADA

Name: Nevada Board of Wildlife Commissioners

Number of voting members: 9

How selected: Appointed by Governor

Senate confirmation required: No

Selection criteria:

*A county advisory board to manage wildlife shall submit written nominations for appointments to the Commission upon the request of the Governor and may submit nominations at any other time.*

*After consideration of the written nominations submitted by a county advisory board to manage wildlife and any additional candidates for appointment to the Commission, 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.*

*The Governor shall not appoint to the Commission any person who has been convicted of: (a) A felony or gross misdemeanor for a violation of NRS 501.376; (b) A gross misdemeanor for a violation of NRS 502.060; (c) A felony or gross misdemeanor for a violation of NRS 504.395; or (d) Two or more violations of the provisions of chapters 501 to 504, inclusive, of NRS, during the previous 10 years.*

*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.*

Term length: 3 years

Meetings: The commission may hold up to nine meetings per year based on need and the requests submitted by the county advisory boards to manage wildlife. Special meetings may be held at such times and places as the commission deems proper. Five members of the commission constitute a quorum.

Citation: Nev. Rev. Stat. §§501.167 to 501.181

Web page: <https://www.ndow.org/about/>

## NEW MEXICO

Name: New Mexico State Game Commission

Number of voting members: 7

How selected: Appointed by Governor

Senate confirmation required: Yes

Selection criteria:

*There is created a state game commission of seven members, not more than four of whom shall be of the same political party at the time of their appointment.*

In making appointments to the state game commission, one member shall be appointed from each of the [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 requiring licensing prior to legal pursuit under the provisions of Section 17-3-2 NMSA 1978. 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.

Term length: 4 years

Meetings: At least one meeting annually, and others at the call of the governor or a majority of the commission

Citation: N.M. Stat. §§17-1-1 to 17-1-4

Web page: <https://www.wildlife.state.nm.us/commission/>

## **OREGON**

Name: Oregon Fish and Wildlife Commission

Number of voting members: 7

How selected: Appointed by Governor

Senate confirmation required: Yes

Selection criteria:

*The Governor shall appoint: (a) two members from the upper northwest region; (b) one member from the southwest region; (c) two members from the west central region; (d) one member from the north central region; and (e) one member from the eastern region. Members appointed to the commission shall be residents of the state.*

*All members of the commission shall have a general knowledge of fish and wildlife issues, an understanding of the roles of federally recognized Indian tribes in Oregon and of the relationships federally recognized Indian tribes in Oregon have with lands, water and the natural resources that the commission governs, and an understanding of the operation and functions of public policy boards and commissions. In making appointments to the commission, the Governor shall: (a) consider appointing members who possess knowledge or experience relevant to implementing the wildlife policy set forth in ORS 496.012. (b) Take into consideration racial, ethnic, gender and geographic diversity.*

Term length: 4 years

Meetings: The commission must meet at least once every two months at a time and place determined by the commission. The commission must also meet at other times and places as are specified by the call of the chairperson or of a majority of the members. The commission may also meet jointly with authorities of other states or of the United States to consider problems of mutual

interest. The commission must hold at least one meeting per year in each of the congressional districts in the state. A majority of the members of the commission constitutes a quorum.

Citation: Or. Rev. Stat. §§496.090 to 496.108

Web page: <https://www.dfw.state.or.us/agency/commission/>

## UTAH

Name: Utah Wildlife Board

Number of voting members: 7

How selected: Appointed by Governor from list of nominees submitted by Wildlife Board Nominating Committee

Senate confirmation required: Yes

Selection criteria:

*The members of the Wildlife 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. At least one member of the Wildlife Board shall represent each of these areas of expertise.*

*The governor shall select a board member from a list of nominees submitted by the nominating committee pursuant to Section 23A-2-302.*

*No more than two members shall be from a single wildlife region described in Subsection 23A-2-303(1). The governor may request an additional list of at least two nominees from the nominating committee if the initial list of nominees for a given position is unacceptable. If the governor fails to appoint a board member within 60 days after receipt of the initial or additional list, the nominating committee shall make an interim appointment by majority vote. The interim board member shall serve until the matter is resolved by the nominating committee and the governor or until the board member is replaced pursuant to this chapter.*

Term length: 6 years, maximum one term

Meetings: The board must hold a sufficient number of public meetings each year to expeditiously conduct their business. Meetings may be called by the chair with five days' notice, shorter in emergency situations. Meetings may be held at the Salt Lake City office or elsewhere as determined by the board. Four members constitute a quorum.

Other: Members of the board must complete an orientation course; Five regional advisory councils of 12-15 members each make recommendations to the board.

Citation: Utah Code §§23a-2-301 to 23a-2-303

Web page: <https://wildlife.utah.gov/about-us/public-meetings.html>

## **WASHINGTON**

Name: Washington Fish and Wildlife Commission

Number of voting members: 9

How selected: Appointed by the Governor

Senate confirmation required: Yes

Selection criteria:

*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. 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.*

Term length: 6 years

Meetings: The commission must hold at least one regular meeting during the first two months of each calendar quarter, and special meetings when called by the chair and by five members. Five members constitute a quorum.

Citation: Wash. Rev. Code §§77.04.012 to 77.04.060

Web page: <https://wdfw.wa.gov/about/commission>

## **WYOMING**

Name: Wyoming Game and Fish Commission

Number of voting members: 7

How selected: Appointed by Governor

Senate confirmation required: Yes

Selection criteria:

*Not more than 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. A commissioner shall be appointed from each of seven appointment districts pursuant to §9-1-218.*

Term length: 6 years

Meetings: The commission must meet every March for election of officers. Other meetings may be held at such times and places as the commission deems desirable or necessary. Unless waived by



all commissioners, members must be notified of the time and place of meetings by written notice. A majority of the members of the commission constitutes a quorum.

Citation: Wyo. Stat. §§23-1-201 to 23-1-301

Web page: <https://wgfd.wyo.gov/about-us/game-and-fish-commission>

### Examples of State Legislation (West), 2020-2024

State	Bill Number	Status	Summary
Idaho	2020 HB 514	Failed	Removes provision stating that not more than four members of the fish and game commission can belong to the same political party.
Montana	2021 HB 163	Enacted	Revises the number of members of the fish and wildlife commission from five to seven. Changes the areas in which these commissioners must reside from legislative districts to seven administrative regions of the department.
	2021 SB 306	Vetoed	Like above but required three of the seven fish and wildlife commission members to be landowners in agricultural production.
Nevada	2023 SB 224	Failed	Increases the membership of the board of wildlife commissioners by adding one member who is licensed as a master guide and one member who is an elected officer representing a local political subdivision. Increases the number of members who may be from the same county whose population is less than 100,000 from one member to two.
	2021 SB 78	Failed	
New Mexico	2024 HB 23	Failed	Changes the appointment process and selection criteria for the state game commission.
	2024 HB 147	Failed	
	2023 HB 183	Failed	Changes the role of the state game commission from a policy-setting board to one that advises the director of a new division.
	2023 HB 184	Vetoed	Provides for an increase in members of the state game commission if the number of congressional districts in the state changes.
Oregon	2023 HB 3086	Enacted	Requires the governor to appoint a specified number of members to the fish and wildlife commission from each regional river basin management area. Requires that members understand federally recognized Indian tribes in Oregon. Requires the Governor to consider appointing members who have certain knowledge of wildlife policy and will take certain factors into account.
	2023 HB 2967	Failed	Removes requirement that fish and wildlife commission consist of one member from each congressional district, one member from west of

			Cascade Mountains and one member from east of Cascade Mountains. Provides that commission members must reside in and have scientific expertise in distinct ecoregions across the state.
	2023 HB 3358	Failed	Models composition of fish and wildlife commission on that of board of agriculture.
	2021 SB 633	Failed	Revises the number of members of the fish and wildlife commission from seven to nine and provides for new selection criteria.
Washington	2024 HB 2434	Failed	Eliminates the fish and wildlife commission in order to redirect efforts towards fishing and hunting culture for tribal and nontribal persons.
	2023 HB 1699	Failed	Concerns an annual salary for members of the state fish and wildlife commission.
	2023 SB 5675	Failed	Creates a nominating committee to recommend to the governor members of the state fish and wildlife commission.
	2023 SB 5699	Failed	Increases the compensation for members of the fish and wildlife commission.