



COUNTY OF SANTA CRUZ

FISH AND WILDLIFE ADVISORY COMMISSION

701 OCEAN STREET, ROOM 312, SANTA CRUZ, CA 95060
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FISH AND WILDLIFE ADVISORY COMMISSION Report for Calendar Years 2019 and 2020

Roles of the Commission

The Fish and Wildlife Advisory Commission (Commission) advises the Santa Cruz County Board of Supervisors (Board) on issues relating to fish and wildlife, and also recommends projects for funding with the County's portion of Fish and Game Code fine monies and judgments.

Meeting Dates, Time and Location

The Commission meets generally seven times a year in February, March, May, June, September, November and December at 7:00 pm in the Fifth Floor Redwood Conference Room, Room 520, at 701 Ocean Street, Santa Cruz. Since May 2020, the commission has been meeting remotely either as a phone or video conference.

Commission Structure

As of December 31, 2020, the Commission consists of Chairperson Chris Berry, representing the 1st District, and Vice Chair David Somerton, representing the 2nd District. Other commissioners include Aggie Morrow, 1st District; Sandra Baron, 2nd District; Liz Alter, 3rd District; Mathew Wise and Grant Buchwald, 4th District; Jenni Gómez and Jen Michelsen, 5th District.

Commission Staff

Kristen Kittleson, Resource Planner with Environmental Health, is the administrative staff to the Commission.

Annual Goals and Accomplishments – 2019 and 2020

Over 2019 and 2020, the Commission considered and made recommendations regarding a wide range of topics including; regulation of rodenticides, expansion of the County's Significant Tree Ordinance outside the Coastal Zone, PG & E Community Wildlife Safety Program, County's Strategic Plan, Pajaro River, special forests protection, invasive species, coho salmon and steelhead conservation, Cotani-Coast Dairies National Monument, CZU Lightning Complex Fire and development of a Regional Conservation Investment Strategy (RCIS). The Commission supported legislation to ban second generation anti-coagulate rodenticides and the state approved AB1778, California Ecosystems Protection Act of 2019 in August 2020. The Commission also wrote to the Board about PG & E's extensive tree cutting after the 2020 CZU Lightning Complex Fire.

The Commission continues to follow steelhead and coho salmon recovery efforts. Over the past two years, the Commission has supported state funding for coho recovery and has recommended grant allocations to improve hydrologic data for Scotts Creek and to the Monterey Bay Salmon and Trout Project, who are integral to coho salmon conservation in Santa Cruz County.

One of the primary tasks of the Fish and Wildlife Advisory Commission is the Public Grants Program, an important funding source that supports local conservation organizations with small projects and outreach programs. This program relies on a portion of the revenue generated from the enforcement of the Fish and Game Code, through actions of local California Department of Fish and Wildlife wardens and the County's District Attorney. Fines and settlements declined over several years and the Commission suspended the grants program in 2018-19. By taking a break, expenditures can be linked to actual revenue over the previous year, instead of anticipated revenue. During the same year, the State audited the fund and found that court fines were correctly getting deposited, but that criminal instead civil penalties, warden position vacancies and non-payment of fines were responsible for the reduction in revenue. With Covid-19 restrictions affecting the courts, revenue is expected to decrease again but should recover over time.

In 2019, the Commission recommended \$15,000 in funding for eight (8) projects that contributed to: population monitoring for San Lorenzo River steelhead, a breeding bird atlas for Santa Cruz County, brochure on wildlife and video about blue-green algae, transportation for students attending O'Neill Sea Odyssey program, wildlife rehabilitation, Scotts Creek hydrology study, and a pilot project to recruit predatory birds on the Pajaro River.

In 2020, the Commission recommended \$5,000 in emergency funding to the Monterey Bay Salmon and Trout Project to help purchase an ATV vehicle that was destroyed in the CZU Lightning Complex Fire.

Additional Activities

The Commission provides a forum for members of the public to voice concerns or share information about fish and wildlife related issues. In the past two years, the Commission heard public comments on: the Significant Tree Ordinance, riparian conservation, non-lead ammunition education, fish rescues, stream flow data computation, low-flow fishing regulations, and the Highway 1 bridge at Scotts Creek.

Future Goals

The Commission scheduled 7 meetings for 2021 and plans to address a range of topics including low-flow fishing closure regulations, the Regional Conservation Investment Strategy (RCIS), land and open space conservation and management, invasive plants, climate change and wildlife conservation. The Commission will continue to follow coho salmon and steelhead recovery planning, especially following the CZU Lightning Complex Fire, and riparian corridor enhancement. The Commission will continue to provide a forum for public input regarding fish and wildlife issues.

Fish and Wildlife Advisory Commission Attendance 2019 and 2020

Commissioner	District	Feb '19	Mar '19	May '19	June '19	Sept '19	Nov '19	Dec '19
Berry	I	P	P	P	P	P	P	P
Robin	I	P	P	P	P	Ex	P	P
Johnson	II	Ex	---	---	---	---	---	---
Baron	II	P	P	P	P	P	P	P
Somerton	II	---	---	---	---	P	P	P
Frediani	III	P	Ex	---	---	---	---	---
Hoffman	III	---	---	P	P	P	P	P
Lee	III	P	P	Ab	P	P	P	P
Wise	IV	P	P	P	Ex	Ex	Ex	Ex
Buchwald	IV	---	---	---	---	---	P	P
Cooley	IV	Ex	Ex	---	---	---	---	---
Gómez	V	---	---	P	P	P	P	P
Freeman	V	P	P	P	P	Ex	---	---
Michelsen	V	---	---	---	---	---	P	P

KEY: P = Present Ex= Excused Ab = Absent --- = not on the commission

Commissioner	District	Feb '20	Mar '20	May '20	June '20	Sept '20	Nov '20	Dec '20
Berry	I	P	P	P	P	P	P	P
Morrow	I	---	---	P	P	P	P	P
Baron	II	P	Ex	P	P	P	P	P
Somerton	II	Ex	P	P	P	P	P	P
Hoffman	III	P	P	P	Ex	---	---	---
Lee	III	P	P	P	P	Ex	---	---
Alter	III	---	---	---	---	---	P	P
Buchwald	IV	P	P	P	P	P	P	P
Wise	IV	P	P	P	Ex	P	P	P
Michelsen	V	P	P	P	P	P	P	P
Gómez	V	P	P	P	P	P	P	P

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