

# WDFW

## 2009 LEGISLATIVE PROPOSALS

### FOR FISH & WILDLIFE COMMISSION CONSIDERATION

#### **Amending Existing Approaches to Managing Wildlife Conflicts**

- Problem Statements:

Interactions between humans and wildlife can have significant financial impacts on the affected landowner. Actions of landowners can also have significant impacts on the habitat wildlife need to survive. A more balanced approach is needed that equitably shares the responsibility between the state and landowners in addressing wildlife conflict issues where compensation of damages is used as the tool of last resort. But the current remedy allowed under state law only addresses a portion of those affected and places primary financial responsibility on the State Wildlife Account for the payment of damages.
- Desired Outcome:

Develop a balanced approach that requires landowners to first use practicable self-help preventative measures, including materials and services provided by the Department, to prevent wildlife damage prior to seeking monetary compensation. When compensation is justified, allow property owners to have the potential to seek mitigation for damages caused by wildlife, and commit General Fund dollars to the payment of all damages.
- Proposal:

Amend existing law to:

  - Create a three-tier approach to damage claim mitigation if the damage satisfies criteria established by the Commission:
    - Commercial crop damage caused by deer or elk, or death or injury to commercial livestock (cattle, sheep and horses) by bears, wolves or cougars. (mandatory)
    - Property damage caused by mammalian or avian species (discretionary)
    - Authorizes the Department to offer materials, services or cash to property owners to help reduce negative wildlife interactions
  - Allow appeals of all claim decisions
  - Restrict compensation to only individuals who have first utilized measures to try to prevent damage.
  - Limit payment of claims to the lesser of:
    - The value of the property damaged by wildlife, or
    - \$10,000
  - Authorize expenditure of up to \$200,000 GF-S per year for damage claim payments
- Stakeholders:

More than a dozen representatives representing timber, agriculture, sportsman, tribal, county commissioner, trapper, legislative, humane society interests have participated in the multiple stakeholder committee meetings that helped develop the current draft bill.

## **Making Technical Changes to Title 77**

- Problem Statement:  
Several technical housekeeping or technical changes are needed to RCW 77.
- Desired Outcome:  
Passage of bill to address and correct the minor technical issues.
- Proposal:  
An example of the changes made include amending existing law to address issues related to bail forfeitures, remove outdated references, and clarify language pertaining to the opening date of the lowland lake opener.

## **Establish A Sardine Purse Seine Fishery**

- Problem Statement:  
The Department has managed the state's sardine harvest as an emerging commercial fishery since 2000. Staff recommends that the fishery is ready to transition to an established fishery.
- Desired Outcome:  
Establishment of a transferable sardine purse seine fishery license for the harvest and delivery of Pacific sardines into the state.
- Proposal:
  - Establish a transferable sardine purse seine fishery license
  - Issue license only to holders of a 2008 coastal sardine experimental fishery permit with an exception provided to those who became ineligible for 2008 permit due to loss of vessel at sea. Staff estimates 19 licenses will be issued.
  - Create a new purse seine temporary annual fishery permit that could be issued by the Director provided that the total number of licenses does not exceed 25
  - Limit license holders to vessels owners or operators and ensure that no person could hold more than two licenses

## **Equipment Revolving Fund**

- Problem Statement:  
The structure to purchase and maintain the Department's 1,150 licensed vehicles, 141 ORVs and 355 vessels is spread across five programs. The primary cause for this current structure is the lack of statutory authority to establish an equipment revolving fund. Such funds are used by the Department of Natural Resources, Department of Transportation and the State Patrol.
- Desired Outcome:  
Establish an equipment revolving fund to help the Department begin reversing the aging of its fleet, decrease overall operating costs, improve gas efficiency and the safety of our employees, and reduce the number of fleet vehicles.
- Proposal:
  - Create the Fish & Wildlife Revolving Fund for the purchase, maintenance and repair of vehicles, water vessels and heavy equipment
  - Authorize the Department to charge rates (prorated over the useful life) for the use of its equipment that will be deposited into the revolving fund and declare the revolving fund to be of a proprietary nature and money deposited can only be used for the purposes provided by law