

## Regulations

The Fish and Game Commission (FGC) is the state entity that reviews and sets fish and wildlife management policies, rules and regulations. Its regulatory actions amend Title 14 regarding natural resources in the California Code of Regulations, which guide use, enforcement, conservation and education activities related to California's fish and wildlife, and their habitats. FGC is an independent body of five commissioners appointed by the governor, and typically reflects a broad spectrum of experience and expertise in the areas of fish and wildlife conservation. Commissioners serve voluntarily and meet at least eight times per year. While in some cases the Department of Fish and Game (DFG) has authority for rulemaking and establishing regulations independent of FGC, the majority of regulations affecting California's fish and wildlife are created through the FGC process.

Petitions presented to FGC for regulatory action are usually submitted by stakeholder groups. Through an open and public process, a petition's merits and weaknesses are discussed, and FGC considers all input when making its decisions. As the state's managers, conservers and protectors of its resources, DFG implements and enforces the regulations promulgated by FGC, and serves as consultant to the commissioners by providing the best available science and data to inform their decisions through a structured regulatory process. For a variety of reasons, including the inherent controversial nature of some regulations, the process has become cumbersome, confusing and at times contentious.

Constituents support a more understandable and inclusive regulatory process that allows them to more effectively participate in the rulemaking of wildlife laws. They look to DFG to refine and implement a more efficient regulations method, and FGC also supports DFG's involvement in streamlining and enhancing the regulatory process, which will, in turn, help the commissioners to have a comprehensive understanding of the issues and the ramifications of their actions. Constituents and DFG also recognize the need for a more functional regulatory process that can address conflicting, duplicative and outdated regulations, as well as provide for a more efficient creation of new regulations.

To this end, DFG is evaluating the creation of a dedicated regulation unit. The unit will provide a centralized, consistent and compliant operation that focuses on the regulatory process and ways to improve it. This would be achieved through the consolidation of existing staff, positions and funding, and through internal and external coordination with DFG's statewide, multi-disciplinary operations, FGC and constituent groups. In the meantime, DFG staff continues to research and analyze the issues presented before FGC, and provides its best recommendations to ensure the conservation and protection of California's fish, wildlife and habitat resources.