

# *Direction*



FY 2025-2028  
Annual Strategic Plan

# The Director's Message



Healthy and abundant fish and wildlife populations, along with the outdoor recreation they provide, are highly valued by Idahoans. Idaho Fish and Game proudly presents our FY 2025-2028 strategic plan update, which outlines how we will preserve, protect, perpetuate and manage the state's wildlife.

The active participation by the citizens we serve is one of our greatest assets. I also believe Idaho has one of the finest fish and wildlife management agencies in the country. Without question, we have some of the best fish and wildlife professionals in North America.

However, there's nothing simple about current fish and wildlife management. As identified in the following pages, we face many challenges, ranging from increasing demand for outdoor recreation, loss of fish and wildlife habitat, fish and wildlife disease, wildlife depredations of crops and livestock, and human population growth of our state - just to name a few. Despite that, I have confidence that the Department, and the people we serve, can and will effectively meet future challenges.

The basis for this document was established in 2015, when the Idaho Fish and Game Commission adopted the Department's internal strategic plan, known as The Compass. The Compass identifies the following broad, overarching goals:

- Sustain Idaho's fish and wildlife and the habitats upon which they depend.
- Meet the demand for hunting, fishing, trapping and other wildlife recreation.
- Improve public understanding of, and involvement in, fish and wildlife management.
- Enhance the capability of Fish and Game to manage fish and wildlife and serve the public.

This update describes more specific goals and objectives for the FY 2025-2028 period.

Although challenges evolve, they aren't new, and in some cases, we've managed them for decades. Despite past challenges, we have robust and widely distributed populations of fish and wildlife, and we continue to enjoy unparalleled wildlife-based recreation, whether it be fishing, hunting, trapping, or simply viewing wild animals and fish.

As we approach the 10-year mark of The Compass, and prepare to develop the next long-term strategic plan, we look forward to working closely with hunters, anglers, trappers, and other Idahoans to help chart our future course.

  
**Jim Fredericks**  
Director

# Our Mission

## Idaho State Department of Fish and Game

(Idaho Code Section 36-103)

All wildlife, including all wild animals, wild birds, and fish, within the state of Idaho, is hereby declared to be the property of the state of Idaho. It shall be preserved, protected, perpetuated, and managed. It shall only be captured or taken at such times or places, under such conditions, or by such means, or in such manner, as will preserve, protect, and perpetuate such wildlife, and provide for the citizens of this state and, as by law permitted to others, continued supplies of such wildlife for hunting, fishing and trapping.



# Idaho Fish and Game Commission

The Idaho Legislature created the Idaho Department of Fish and Game in 1899. In 1938, the Fish and Game Commission was established by voter initiative making it responsible for administering fish and game policy, approving the Department budget prior to Legislative action, and guiding the Department's management practices. Commissioners are appointed from seven administrative regions by the Governor and serve staggered, four-year terms.

The current commissioners are as follows: Dave Bobbitt (Panhandle), Don Ebert (Clearwater), Tim Murphy (Southwest), Greg Cameron (Magic Valley), Jordan Cheirrett (Southeast), Brody Harshbarger (Upper Snake), and Ron Davies (Salmon). A new Upper Snake Region commissioner is soon to be appointed. The Commission holds most of the regulatory authority for fish and wildlife management and set its broad expectations to Idaho Fish and Game in the 2015 Strategic Plan.



**Dave Bobbitt**  
Vice-Chairman



**Don Ebert**



**Tim Murphy**

## OUR VISION

*The Idaho Department of Fish and Game shall work with hunters, anglers, trappers and other Idahoans to provide abundant fish and wildlife that enables their right to hunt, fish and trap, and provides the foundation for the rich wildlife heritage they value, which is enshrined in the Fish and Game mission.*



**Greg Cameron**



**Jordan Cheirrett**



**Brody Harshbarger**



**Ron Davies**  
Chairman

# GOAL

## Fish, Wildlife & Habitat

*Sustain Idaho's fish and wildlife and the habitats upon which they depend.*

### OBJECTIVES

*Maintain or improve game populations to meet the demand for hunting, fishing and trapping.*

*Ensure the long-term survival of native fish, wildlife and plants.*

*Increase the capacity of habitat to support fish and wildlife.*

*Eliminate the impacts of fish and wildlife diseases on fish and wildlife populations, livestock and humans.*

### STRATEGIES

- ▶ Develop and implement fish and wildlife management plans.
- ▶ Improve the scientific basis and public involvement process used to set harvest rules and regulations to achieve long-term sustainability of populations and habitat.
- ▶ Manage predation to ensure continued supplies of fish and wildlife for hunting, fishing and trapping.
  
- ▶ Identify and monitor native species with high priority conservation needs.
- ▶ Develop and implement management plans for conservation of high priority species to ensure survival and avoid new Endangered Species Act listings.
- ▶ Collaborate with interested and affected parties to recover threatened and endangered species.
  
- ▶ Provide incentives and assistance to landowners to improve habitat on private land.
- ▶ Work with sportsman's groups and other conservation partners to improve important habitats.
- ▶ Work with public land managers to achieve large-scale habitat improvements.
- ▶ Fully obtain and implement mitigation for habitat affected by infrastructure and development projects.
  
- ▶ Reduce or eliminate the risk of transmission of disease between captive and free-ranging fish and wildlife.
- ▶ Collaborate with other agencies and education institutions on disease control, prevention and research, including between wildlife and livestock.

# FY 2025-2028 MANAGEMENT DIRECTION

FY 2024-2027 Management Direction	Brief statement of FY 2024 status/progress/accomplishment	FY 2025-2028 Management Direction	Tasks/Actions planned in FY 2025
<p><b>Emphasize improvements to deer and elk populations and hunting opportunity.</b></p>	<p>Provided technical comments and input on USFS Forest Plan, land-use plans, BLM Solar EIS, and wind energy projects.</p> <p>Monitored 547 mule deer in 30 game management units (GMUs) and 386 elk in 38 GMUs.</p> <p>Used cameras to estimate deer and elk abundance in several areas around the state.</p> <p>Monitored for chronic wasting disease statewide including in detection area. Reduced deer density in the CWD concentration area through hunter harvest and agency removal to reduce prevalence of the disease. Expanded monitoring areas with additional detections.</p> <p>Continued to collect and analyze hunter attitudes and opinions on hunter congestion in collaboration with the University of Idaho.</p>	<p><b>Emphasize improvements to deer and elk populations and hunting opportunity.</b></p>	<p>Provide technical assistance to NGOs and federal land management agencies to support sustaining and improving deer and elk habitat in Idaho.</p> <p>Continue survival monitoring of prioritized deer and elk populations.</p> <p>Continue to evaluate results from camera deployments for application in deer and elk population monitoring.</p> <p>Continue to monitor for chronic wasting disease statewide and actively manage chronic wasting disease where present to reduce the risk of disease spread.</p> <p>Assess Idaho deer and elk hunter preferences regarding hunter congestion and annual hunting opportunity.</p>
<p><b>Continue to align predation management efforts with ungulate management needs.</b></p>	<p>Revision of predation management plans is ongoing.</p> <p>Staff deployed 533 cameras across the state to estimate wolf abundance. Approximately 10 million photos were taken during July and August.</p> <p>Implemented additional wolf management efforts (reimbursement programs, control actions) in areas where ungulate populations were not meeting objectives as identified in the Wolf Management Plan.</p> <p>Staff radio-marked deer and elk to monitor survival and evaluate causes of mortality. Analyzed camera-based data across game management units 1, 6, and 10A to examine interactions between multiple predator and prey species.</p> <p>Staff initiated the development of a wolf abundance model utilizing age-at-harvest and genetic data. Staff initiated the development of Integrated Population Models for wolves and Statistical Population Reconstruction models for mountain lions and black bears.</p>	<p><b>Continue to align predation management efforts with ungulate management needs.</b></p>	<p>Complete revisions to five elk zone predation management plans in FY2025.</p> <p>Implement and monitor predation management efforts where elk are below objectives and predation is identified as a limiting factor.</p> <p>Continue long-term monitoring of prey and predator interactions.</p> <p>Continue the development of population monitoring tools for large carnivores, utilizing efficient data sources (age at harvest, genetics) as much as possible.</p>
<p><b>Manage sage-grouse populations and habitat to maintain or increase sage grouse populations and hunting opportunity.</b></p>	<p>1,336 sage-grouse were harvested by 1,380 hunters across 12 harvest zones with an estimated 63% hunter success rate. A total of 2,958 tags were offered and 45% of offered tags were filled. Tag levels were set to provide harvest of no more than 5-8% of the fall population in each zone.</p> <p>Partnered on five Sage-Grouse Actions Team habitat projects in southern Idaho (wet meadow restoration, conifer removal, invasive annual grass treatments, sagebrush restoration plantings). Partnered with state and federal agencies and private organizations on two ongoing landscape scale juniper removal projects.</p>	<p><b>Manage sage-grouse populations and habitat to maintain or increase sage-grouse populations and hunting opportunity.</b></p>	<p>Continue to utilize a dynamic harvest strategy to allocate hunting opportunity commensurate with fluctuating sage-grouse populations.</p> <p>Work with state and federal agency partners in an adaptive management framework to effectively identify and guide habitat restoration projects to benefit sage-grouse across southern Idaho.</p>

FY 2024-2027 Management Direction	Brief statement of FY 2024 status/progress/accomplishment	FY 2025-2028 Management Direction	Tasks/Actions planned in FY 2025
<p><b>Ensure an efficient and effective fish hatchery program and maintain full operating capacity.</b></p>	<p>Replacement water pumps have been obtained. American Falls Fish Hatchery office has been upgraded and a new roof was built on the incubation building. Management of the effluent water from the Nampa Fish Hatchery has been improved by replacing an aging and flow-restricting culvert and outflow structure.</p>	<p><b>Ensure an efficient and effective fish hatchery program and maintain full operating capacity.</b></p>	<p>Replace aging fish transport equipment. Begin the rebuild of the Nampa Fish Hatchery large raceways. Complete the design process for pipeline replacement at Hagerman State Fish Hatchery, an improved effluent pond at Hayspur Fish Hatchery, and an improved spring source collection basin at Mackay Fish Hatchery. Continue updating hatchery offices and dormitories.</p>
<p><b>Manage avian predation where it affects native fish conservation and/or sport fish management objectives.</b></p>	<p>IDFG staff conducted non-lethal and lethal hazing activities at the Blackfoot pelican colony in the Southeast Region.</p> <p>IDFG staff conducted non-lethal pelican hazing at the Island Park colony, and contracted with Wildlife Services to conduct non-lethal hazing at Silver Creek.</p> <p>Drone surveys and/or ground counts were conducted at Blackfoot, Minidoka, and Island Park colonies during the nesting and fledgling phase of production.</p> <p>IDFG staff continued to tag Yellowstone Cutthroat Trout in the Blackfoot River system to monitor pelican predation rates, population dynamics, and abundance.</p>	<p><b>Manage avian predation where it affects native fish conservation and/or sport fish management objectives.</b></p>	<p>Use a combination of lethal and non-lethal techniques to reduce bird/fish conflicts at Blackfoot Reservoir in the Southeast Region.</p> <p>Conduct pelican hazing activities at priority waters (e.g., Island Park Reservoir, Silver Creek).</p> <p>Conduct breeding population and productivity surveys at all active pelican colonies.</p> <p>Monitor population dynamics, abundance, and predation rates for the Upper Blackfoot River Yellowstone Cutthroat Trout population to measure the effectiveness of pelican management strategies.</p>
<p><b>Plan, design, permit and implement restoration activities in the Pack River Delta and pursue other wildlife restoration opportunities throughout Lake Pend Oreille impacted by operations of Albeni Falls dam.</b></p>	<p>Pack River Delta Phase 2 Restoration construction initiated in November 2023 and was completed by April 2024. Six new islands were created and three existing islands were enhanced. Ten borrow areas supplied island base materials, leaving behind 25 acres of additional deep water habitat. A total of 31,000 willows were embedded into the banks for protection during construction. Additionally, a new 0.4-acre recreational site was created along Hwy 200 to provide safe public access to the new restoration area. A total of 231 delta acres were enhanced and protected. Preliminary design and planning for an additional Phase 3 restoration project on the Pack River delta for FY26 occurred concurrently.</p>	<p><b>Plan, design, permit and implement restoration activities in the Pack River Delta and pursue other wildlife restoration opportunities throughout Lake Pend Oreille impacted by operations of Albeni Falls dam.</b></p>	<p>Finalize planting of an additional 25,000 wetland vegetation plugs on Pack River Phase 2 components. Continue coordinating with federal partners and design teams to finalize project design plans, and complete permitting and environmental compliance for Pack River Delta Phase 3 habitat restoration with construction in FY26.</p>



FY 2024-2027 Management Direction	Brief statement of FY 2024 status/progress/accomplishment	FY 2025-2028 Management Direction	Tasks/Actions planned in FY 2025
<p><b>Continue to integrate State Wildlife Action Plan (SWAP) implementation across Fish and Game programs, facilitate SWAP use, and initiate efforts to develop an accomplishments reporting tool.</b></p>	<p>Focus in FY 2024 was working with all eight IDFG Regional Wildlife Diversity Program (WDP) biologists to incorporate recently identified WDP programmatic priorities, based on the newly revised SWAP, into the collective FY 2024 SWAP Implementation Grant.</p> <p>Began work on SWAP 2023 department-wide prioritization process, intended to drive priorities for SWAP implementation over the next five years and increases cross-bureau and cross-program collaboration and integration of SWAP implementation.</p> <p>A reporting tool to track SWAP accomplishments across IDFG programs is underway.</p> <p>Most of FY 2024 was devoted to coordinating with the US Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) Regional Review Team (RRT) during the review process. At conclusion of the review, staff made recommended revisions and submitted final SWAP to RRT, which was subsequently approved by FWS Director on January 17, 2024. Upon notification of approval, began work to develop user support tools.</p>	<p><b>Continue to integrate State Wildlife Action Plan (SWAP) implementation across IDFG programs, facilitate SWAP use, and develop an accomplishments reporting tool.</b></p>	<p>Coordinate department-wide implementation of the 2023 Idaho SWAP with an emphasis on improved cross-bureau/cross-program coordination, including: (1) meetings with Bureau of Wildlife program managers on their FY25 programmatic priorities and how they might intersect with SWAP; (2) meetings with other bureau program leads (Fisheries, Technical Services, Communications, Enforcement) on their FY25 priorities and how they might intersect with SWAP; and (3) encouraging regional diversity biologists to engage with regional managers and biologists from all bureaus on ways they can broaden their SWAP implementation impact by collaborating across programs.</p> <p>Develop a spatially-explicit online accomplishments reporting tool to track SWAP implementation across all IDFG programs that incorporates TRACS Performance Matrix standardized strategies, objectives, and activities.</p> <p>In consideration of interim guidance for digital SWAPs presented in the April 1, 2024 joint memorandum between the FWS and Association of Fish &amp; Wildlife Agencies, develop an online version of a user interface for a web-enabled SWAP that is more accessible, shareable, and interactive.</p>
<p><b>Improve populations and resiliency of native fish by partnering with governmental agencies, landowners, and private entities to improve aquatic habitats and develop and maintain screening facilities to minimize entrainment into irrigation systems.</b></p>	<p>Staff worked with partners in the Coeur d' Alene drainage to design a project that will eliminate a passage barrier, while also initiating a passage barrier assessment that includes 500 road/stream crossings. IDFG and Avista partnered with the Kalispell Tribe to acquire a key parcel that will benefit Bull Trout in Lake Pend Oreille. Staff are redesigning an exclusionary weir in the South Fork of the Snake River drainage that will reduce introgression between Yellowstone Cutthroat Trout and Rainbow Trout. Staff also completed a diversion rebuild project that reconnected habitat for Bonneville Cutthroat Trout in the Bear River.</p>	<p><b>Increase resiliency of native fish populations by partnering with governmental agencies, landowners, and private entities to improve aquatic habitats, increase connectivity, and address factors that limit the growth, recruitment, survival, and distribution of focal species.</b></p>	<p>Identify and remove passage barriers, increasing stream complexity, and reconnecting streams and rivers to their floodplains for priority areas and species including designated critical habitat for Bull Trout, Cutthroat species, and Redband Rainbow Trout.</p>
<p><b>Increase officer presence and patrol efforts statewide.</b></p>	<p>MDT Project evaluation completed April 2024. MDT will be fielded according to need, funds and as ITS support allows.</p> <p>SCO Performance guidelines were updated to reflect the strategic priorities of public contacts and violation detections.</p> <p>Worked with ITS to improve remote access using VPN to reduce patrol officer burden of uploading body camera footage. Access and download times and process improved.</p>	<p><b>Sustain officer presence and patrol efforts.</b></p>	<p>Prioritize conservation law enforcement efforts and maintain Department support role in wildlife and fish management.</p>



FY 2024-2027 Management Direction	Brief statement of FY 2024 status/progress/accomplishment	FY 2025-2028 Management Direction	Tasks/Actions planned in FY 2025
<p><b>Prevent wildlife damage to private lands and compensate private landowners for wildlife damage to crops and forage.</b></p>	<p>Established two new FTEs as depredation technicians for Regions 5 &amp; 6. Positions were approved by the 2024 Legislature</p> <p>Held Teams meetings every other month, held an in-person training meeting, and responded to all calls from Landowner Sportsman Coordinators (LSCs) and Regional Wildlife Mangers, to provide training and recommendations to staff based on depredation research; investigated additional, potential depredation techniques; provided training and standard procedures for evaluating big game crop damage with the use of drones and an application for synthesizing drone data to assist with big game crop damage evaluations; and completed a big game depredations operating manual.</p>	<p><b>Prevent wildlife damage to private lands and compensate private landowners for wildlife damage to crops and forage.</b></p>	<p>Hire two new depredation technicians for Regions 5 &amp; 6.</p> <p>Provide training and recommendations to staff based on depredation research; investigate additional, potential depredation techniques; complete development of an operations manual for evaluating big game crop damage with the use of drones and an application for synthesizing drone data to assist with big game crop damage evaluations.</p>
<p><b>Update wildlife species management plans on a six-year interval.</b></p>	<p>The draft Elk Management Plan was completed and released for public comment in FY2024. The final plan will be presented for Fish and Game Commission review and approval in early FY2025.</p> <p>Revision of the Black Bear Management Plan was initiated in FY2024.</p> <p>The Mountain Lion Management Plan 2024-2029 was approved by the Fish and Game Commission in FY2024.</p>	<p><b>Update wildlife management plans on a six-year interval.</b></p>	<p>Initiate revision of the White-tailed Deer Management Plan in FY2025.</p> <p>Initiate revision of the Upland Game Management Plan in FY2025.</p> <p>Initiate revision of the Moose Management Plan in FY2025.</p> <p>Provide the Black Bear Management Plan for Fish and Game Commission review and approval in FY2025.</p> <p>Provide the Mountain Goat Management Plan for Fish and Game Commission review and approval in FY2025.</p> <p>Revise the Strategy for Chronic Wasting Disease in FY2025.</p>



FY 2024-2027 Management Direction	Brief statement of FY 2024 status/progress/accomplishment	FY 2025-2028 Management Direction	Tasks/Actions planned in FY 2025
<p><b>Restore and/or reconnect habitat in the Potlatch and Upper Salmon River basins to increase habitat for anadromous and resident salmonids.</b></p>	<p>Design processes continued for projects to be implemented in FY2025 and FY2026. Several large scale implementation projects were completed in the Pahsimeroi River and the Lemhi River that focused on reconnecting floodplain habitat, channel re-meandering, revegetation, and side channel construction/ reactivations. In the Potlatch River, an in-stream project in the West Fork of Little Bear Creek was completed, and design work for a similar project on an adjacent parcel started. Staff in the Potlatch are continuing to develop and design the Spring Valley Reservoir Flow Augmentation project.</p>	<p><b>Restore and/or reconnect aquatic habitat in the Potlatch and Upper Salmon River basins to enhance productivity and survival of anadromous and resident salmonids. Continue screening irrigation diversions to reduce entrainment of anadromous salmonids and migratory resident species.</b></p>	<p>Three planned projects in key areas of the Lemhi River will increase floodplain inundation to benefit juvenile Chinook Salmon and steelhead. IDFG is working with ITD and a contracted engineering firm to complete two culvert-to-bridge projects on state highways that cross tributaries to the upper Salmon River. These projects will be constructed in FY2025 and FY2026. Staff will also develop restoration projects on two large ranches in priority reaches of the Pahsimeroi River. Several fish screens are slated for replacement/retrofitting, and several new screens will be installed. Staff in the Potlatch will work with partners to move towards final design of the Spring Valley Reservoir Flow Augmentation project.</p>
		<p><b>Help sister agencies and members of large tract agreements with motorized vehicle management.</b></p>	<p>Develop ways to document effort of motorized vehicle management on sister agency and large tracts.</p>

## FY 2023-2028 PERFORMANCE MEASURES

Performance Measure	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028	Benchmark
<p>1: Compliance with regulations (# of violations / # of licenses checked)</p>	<p>4,486/51,271 (8.7%/9.1%)</p>						<p>Less than 10% of licenses checked result in violation/ check 8% of total licenses sold</p>
<p>2: Opportunity to harvest game fish (# of Department-operated hatchery-raised resident and anadromous fish stocked in ponds, lakes, and streams)</p>	<p>28,304,113</p>						<p>30,000,000</p>

**Performance Measure Explanatory Notes:**

1. The benchmark is based on past performance by Department officers.
2. The benchmark is based on meeting 92% of fisheries managers' requests for trout and kokanee and 92% of steelhead and salmon hatchery capacity.



# GOAL

## Fish and Wildlife Recreation

*Meet the demand for hunting, fishing, trapping and other wildlife recreation.*

### OBJECTIVES

*Maintain a diversity of fishing, hunting and trapping opportunities.*

*Sustain fish and wildlife recreation on public lands.*

*Increase the variety and distribution of access to private land for fish and wildlife recreation.*

*Increase opportunities for wildlife viewing and appreciation.*

### STRATEGIES

- ▶ Provide opportunities specific to the needs of beginners, youth, people with disabilities and families.
  - ▶ Assess participation, demand and satisfaction with hunting, fishing and trapping opportunities. Adjust management to achieve objectives.
  - ▶ Provide diverse hunting, fishing and trapping opportunities to meet the desires for a wide variety of user groups.
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- ▶ Protect the public's right to use public lands and waters for hunting, fishing, trapping and wildlife viewing.
  - ▶ Work with landowners to obtain public access across private lands to public lands.
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- ▶ Provide incentives and services to landowners who allow public access for hunting, fishing and trapping.
  - ▶ Improve landowner/sportsmen cooperation through communication and enforcement of hunting, fishing and trapping rules.
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- ▶ Promote and publicize wildlife appreciation opportunities.
  - ▶ Partner with other agencies, local communities and others to develop wildlife appreciation facilities, opportunities and materials on other land ownerships.

## OBJECTIVES

*Maintain broad public support for hunting, fishing, trapping and viewing.*

## STRATEGIES

- ▶ Emphasize ethics, safety and fair chase in hunting, fishing and trapping through Fish and Game education and enforcement programs.
- ▶ Publicize the economic and social benefits of hunting, fishing, trapping and wildlife viewing.
- ▶ Expand opportunities to take hunter and trapper education classes.
- ▶ Promote hunting, fishing and trapping as important tools for conserving and managing Idaho’s fish and wildlife.
- ▶ Emphasize the role of the sportsman conservationist in funding wildlife conservation and management in Idaho.
- ▶ Use research and marketing to maintain and increase participation in hunting, fishing and trapping.

## FY 2025-2028 MANAGEMENT DIRECTION

FY 2024-2027 Management Direction	Brief statement of FY 2024 status/progress/accomplishment	FY 2025-2028 Management Direction	Tasks/Actions planned in FY 2025
<p><b>Make it easier to go hunting and fishing, including streamlining purchasing, improving licensing options for special populations, and other customer service improvements.</b></p>	<p>Allowances for electronic validation were adjusted in administrative rule and allowed for the public roll out of electronic harvest reporting beginning with 2024 spring/summer Chinook Salmon seasons.</p> <p>IDFG staff have created a draft option to allow for trappers to report their annual trapping history electronically. This is still being developed, but intended to be available to trappers prior to 2026.</p> <p>The licensing system was updated in various ways to enhance the user experience, such as creating a more efficient residency validation for military customers, removing a confusing date from our Mandatory Hunter Report online reporting option, and allowing nonresident hound hunters to submit their limited permit applications online rather than by mail.</p> <p>Email subscribers have grown to over 370,000 subscribers to 21 newsletters. News and information was sent in nearly 200 emails to almost 5.5 million recipients in FY2024. Brandt no longer offers texting but other options are being explored in addition to gauging interest with the public.</p> <p>The digital team monitored social media channels and addressed customer questions, and adjusted social media strategy to align with changes to trends and available tools including adding NextDoor and enhanced use of Reels. The digital team also worked with licensing staff to ensure website content was up-to-date and provided support during sales events.</p>	<p><b>Make it easier to go hunting and fishing, including streamlining purchasing, improving licensing options for special populations, and other customer service improvements.</b></p>	<p>Staff will work to broaden angler participation in electronic validation, identify and fix application bugs, and refine harvest estimates in an effort to more efficiently and more precisely estimate harvest of anadromous fishes and manage these important fisheries.</p> <p>Determine additional species that could be incorporated into the electronic reporting options through the licensing system and mobile app.</p> <p>Evaluate the licensing system customer interface to find opportunities to enhance the user experience while using the licensing system and mobile app.</p> <p>Grow email subscribers and continue to utilize email to keep customers informed on important news and information. Explore use of texting option to provide additional communication option for customers.</p> <p>Continue monitoring and maintaining the social media and digital customer service channels in a space that is seeing constant change and increasing demand.</p>

FY 2024-2027 Management Direction	Brief statement of FY 2024 status/progress/accomplishment	FY 2025-2028 Management Direction	Tasks/Actions planned in FY 2025
<p><b>Improve hunting, fishing and trapping opportunities on private and public lands, including Wildlife Management Areas, and ensure adequate access to a diverse array of lands and waters.</b></p>	<p>Fully obligated and spent remainder of NRCS VPA funds (\$78,947) on Access Yes sites throughout the state.</p> <p>Provided routine technical assistance to state and federal land managers during land management planning and decision processes, which included the conservation of fish and wildlife habitats and recommendations to maintain or improve access to public lands and waters for hunting, fishing, and trapping.</p> <p>New viewing blind at Payette River WMA was constructed. Continued to analyze WMA birder visitation on a quarterly basis. Over 4,000 copies of regional Idaho Birding Trail maps were sent across the state to various partners.</p> <p>Work was completed and finalized on the SEP project construction. Design build plans were approved and implemented on the NAWCA project this spring. Both SEP and NAWCA project constructions are completed and finalized. Two minor revegetation projects will be finalized by the end of FY2024.</p> <p>Provided funding to maintain and improve important backcountry trails: including Blackmare Creek, Big Creek, Buckhorn Creek, Ditch Creek, Little Pistol, and several trails in the Frank Church Wilderness Area.</p> <p>Fishing and boating access projects were completed at Winchester Reservoir (R2); Wilson Springs Pond and Weiser Bass Pond (R3), American Falls Fish Hatchery (R5), Gem State Dam (R6), and Johnson Pond, North Fork, Bobcat Gulch, 4th of July, Colston Creek, Deer Gulch, and South Butte (R7).The fishing and boating access program was also able to purchase much needed equipment and materials for operating and maintaining sites.</p> <p>28,772 pheasants were stocked at 23 sites during the fall 2023 seasons.</p> <p>Updated and signed a new MOA in November of 2023.</p>	<p><b>Improve hunting, fishing, trapping and wildlife viewing opportunities on private and public lands, including Wildlife Management Areas, and ensure adequate access to a diverse array of lands and waters.</b></p>	<p>Explore and apply for USDA NRCS Voluntary Public Access and Habitat Incentive Program (VPA-HIP) access agreement if program is available.</p> <p>Provide technical assistance statewide to state and federal land managers during land management planning and decision processes that include recommendations to conserve fish and wildlife habitats and ensure access to public lands for hunting, fishing, and trapping.</p> <p>Increase opportunities for viewers to experience wildlife at destinations across the state by building wildlife viewing blinds, analyzing viewer visitation on WMAs, promoting the Idaho birding trail, and creating and distributing wildlife viewing guides.</p> <p>Support U.S. Forest Service and trail association activities to improve backcountry trail access in Frank Church and Selway Bitterroot Wilderness areas.</p> <p>Identify and secure new fishing and boating access sites at key locations and subsequently develop amenities (ramps, dock, restrooms). For existing sites, maintain and upgrade amenities as needed.</p> <p>Stock approximately 29,000 pheasants at 23 sites during fall 2024 seasons. Add any new stocking locations to the Department website.</p>

FY 2024-2027 Management Direction	Brief statement of FY 2024 status/progress/accomplishment	FY 2025-2028 Management Direction	Tasks/Actions planned in FY 2025
<p><b>Maintain or grow hunter, bowhunter and trapper education student numbers into the future. Spend efforts on recruiting and retaining quality instructors. Adapt technology to meet the public where they are as far as expectations for learning opportunities such as online or hybrid options.</b></p>	<p>Completed update to Hunter Ed webpages to increase clarity and allow customers easier access to class offerings. Met with VSCs to begin development of unified strategic direction for Hunter Ed across the state. Annual meeting set for August 2024. Revised online course ready for possible implementation following 2024 survey results.</p>	<p><b>Maintain or grow hunter, bowhunter and trapper education student numbers into the future. Adapt technology to make program offerings more accessible to customers.</b></p>	<p>Conduct customer feedback survey to gauge effectiveness of in-person and online courses. Develop strategies based on survey data.</p>
<p><b>Improve accessibility of information on the variety of recreational access opportunities the Department provides for the public across the state.</b></p>	<p>Produced 9,000 copies of the Access Yes brochure. Updated the Access Yes! website, added Wildlife Habitat Areas to the list of accessible IDFG properties to the website. Updated the Large Tracts, Idaho Endowment Lands Access, and Forest Legacy Properties on the website.</p>	<p><b>Improve accessibility of information on the variety of recreational access opportunities the Department provides for the public across the state.</b></p>	<p>Continue to implement Access Campaign to provide information on the variety of access opportunities the Department provides, including: IDFG-owned land, Access Yes! Properties, Wildlife Management Areas, Idaho Department of Land leases, Large Tract leases, and Forest Legacy properties.</p>
<p><b>Continue management-based fishery research projects to enhance the ability to conserve native fish populations and meet sport fish management objectives.</b></p>	<p>All statewide sampling of black bass is complete; lab and statistical analyses are ongoing.</p> <p>Density model developed; negotiations with Kootenai Tribe of Idaho on management approaches are ongoing.</p> <p>A diet and predation study paper is out for peer review. Assessments of movement and relationship to suppression and angler incentive programs for walleye in Lake Pend Oreille are ongoing.</p>	<p><b>Continue management-based fishery research projects to enhance the ability to conserve native fish populations and meet sport fish management objectives.</b></p>	<p>Prioritize discretionary research for next five years.</p> <p>Continue to develop science-based management strategies for Kootenai River White Sturgeon.</p>
<p><b>Train and outfit Idaho trappers with the information they need to trap safely and ethically.</b></p>	<p>Maintained course equipment and supplies in all IDFG regions. Trained and certified 24 new trapper education instructors. Fur School was held in May 2024 with 23 attendees.</p> <p>Conducted 55 trapper and 27 wolf trapper education classes for 1,846 students throughout Idaho. Capacity was 2,389 students, resulting in 23% of seats going unfilled. Trapper and wolf trapper classes were often paired to allow students to complete both classes in tandem.</p>	<p><b>Train and outfit Idaho trappers with the information they need to trap safely and ethically.</b></p>	<p>Maintain trapper and wolf trapper course equipment and supplies, train and certify new instructors, and conduct annual Fur School for IDFG employees.</p> <p>Teach trapper education courses to meet demands of the public. Update curricula and exams as necessary.</p>



# FY 2023-2028 PERFORMANCE MEASURES

Performance Measure	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028	Benchmark
3: Landowners allow access for fish & wildlife recreation (# of properties enrolled / # private acres in Access Yes! Program)	100 / 330,725						90 / 350,000
4: Landowners with 50,000+ acre parcels allow access for fish & wildlife recreation (# private acres in Large Tract Program)	896,563						941,000
5: Idahoans can access endowment lands for fish and wildlife recreation, while maintaining the integrity of IDL's constitutional responsibility (# acres in Idaho Endowment Lands Partnership Program)	2.35 million						2.35 Million
6: Idaho citizens hunt, trap, and uphold the North American Model of Wildlife Conservation (# of resident hunting and combination license holders / # resident trapping license holders)	251,621 / 2,261						245,000 / 2,300
7: Idaho citizens fish and uphold the North American Model of Wildlife Conservation (# of resident fishing license holders)	184,610						166,000

**Performance Measure Explanatory Notes:**

- 3. The benchmark is based on past success of the Access Yes! program, and the cost per acre.
- 4. The benchmark is based on maintaining the FY 2020 level of acreage, past success of the Large Tract program, available budget and cost per acre.
- 5. The benchmark is based on maintaining the FY 2020 level of acreage, past success of the Endowment Land Agreement, available budget and cost per acre.
- 6. The benchmark is based on maintaining the calendar year 2019 level of resident hunting and combo license holders and FY 2020 trapping license holder.
- 7. The benchmark is based on maintaining the calendar year 2019 level of resident fishing license holders.



# GOAL

## Working with Others

*Improve public understanding of and involvement in fish and wildlife management.*

### OBJECTIVES

*Improve citizen involvement in the decision-making process.*

*Increase public knowledge and understanding of Idaho's fish and wildlife.*

### STRATEGIES

- ▶ Ensure that interested and affected stakeholders are notified of opportunities to participate in decisions and that all voices are heard.
  - ▶ Improve variety and convenience of opportunities for citizens to be involved in Fish and Game decisions.
  - ▶ Utilize new information technologies, such as social media and other web-based platforms to broaden participation in proposal development and agency decision-making.
  - ▶ Utilize opinion surveys to sample a cross-section of sportsmen and sportswomen.
- 
- ▶ Provide biological information on Idaho's fish and wildlife to convey the status of populations and the basis for management decisions.
  - ▶ Expand utilization of new information technologies to improve public outreach.
  - ▶ Provide timely and accurate information on recreational opportunities, management actions and important news related to fish and wildlife an hunting, fishing, trapping and viewing opportunities.





# FY 2025-2028 MANAGEMENT DIRECTION

FY 2024-2027 Management Direction	Brief statement of FY 2024 status/progress/accomplishment	FY 2025-2028 Management Direction	Tasks/Actions planned in FY 2025
<p><b>Continue to build citizen engagement in wildlife conservation and management and use existing programs like Master Naturalist and volunteers to involve citizens and keep them engaged.</b></p>	<p>Conducted survey of volunteer staff to assess return on investment of potential volunteer software platform. Investigated platform options and worked with ITS to ensure new system would meet security requirements and maintenance needs would not exceed available resources.</p> <p>Two new chapters, Teton Valley and Palouse, were established. The program gained 151 new members across the state in FY2024.</p>	<p><b>Continue to build citizen engagement in wildlife conservation and management and use existing programs like Master Naturalist and volunteers to involve citizens and keep them engaged.</b></p>	<p>Finalize decision on implementation of new volunteer software platform. If approved, purchase and bring new platform online and commence training for volunteer staff.</p> <p>Continue to provide support and coordination to Master Naturalists chapters statewide.</p>
<p><b>Build capacity and utilize website and social media in a strategic manner.</b></p>	<p>Priority website upgrades to the current software version and content migration were principally completed. Content was routinely updated with the application of best practices for usability.</p> <p>Staff training was included as part of the website upgrade process to ensure end users had necessary knowledge and capabilities.</p> <p>No webinar educational activities were identified during the last year. Webinars will continue to be considered as an option for niche audiences on specific topics.</p> <p>Supplemental budget enhancement was approved by the Legislature, and project managers have been interviewing staff to audit current and future needs of the website. A statement of work is currently underway to initiate the Request for Proposal process with the Department of Purchasing.</p>	<p><b>Build capacity and utilize website and social media in a strategic manner.</b></p>	<p>Perform routine website maintenance and continue enhancing website usability through application of best practices.</p> <p>Perform routine staff training to ensure website end-users have necessary knowledge and capabilities.</p> <p>Complete RFP and hire contractor(s) for a comprehensive website modernization project, including bureau and end-user research, to meet long-term public communications needs.</p>
<p><b>Continue to increase public knowledge of the importance of sportsmen to fish and wildlife conservation efforts.</b></p>	<p>Statewide survey on public attitudes and awareness of IDFG has been completed and results shared with department staff and commission. Focus groups are underway, and report will be completed by late fall 2024.</p>	<p><b>Continue to increase public knowledge of the importance of sportsmen to fish and wildlife conservation efforts.</b></p>	<p>Complete focus group research to inform communication plan.</p>
<p><b>Increase public knowledge of unlawful fishing and hunting activity; better inform the public about flagrant violations; and promote citizen reporting of wildlife crime.</b></p>	<p>Published "Be a Good Witness" videos to educate and encourage citizens to report violations. Completed IDFG 125 "Pepper's Legacy" video to highlight the importance of the K9 program.</p> <p>Worked throughout year with RCMs and HQ staff to seek the public's help to identify poachers. Worked with Communications and Fisheries staff to determine if record fish catches were obtained legally and communicated properly.</p>	<p><b>Increase public knowledge of unlawful fishing and hunting activity; better inform the public about flagrant violations; and promote citizen reporting of wildlife crime.</b></p>	<p>Scope Enforcement communications priorities for FY2025.</p> <p>Continue successful collaboration between RCMs and regional enforcement staff to communicate enforcement issues as they arise.</p>
<p><b>Adopt standardized approaches for all regions that concentrate efforts on fewer programs, but increase the quality and desired outcomes.</b></p>	<p>Worked with regions to restructure fishing trailer objectives when possible, establishing new educational opportunities for local schoolchildren.</p>	<p><b>Develop long-term strategy for angler and aquatic education.</b></p>	<p>Integrate Aquatic Education Specialist, inventory statewide angling and aquatic education efforts.</p>
<p><b>Continue Controlled Hunt management efforts to minimize the time frame between close of the application period and posting of results.</b></p>	<p>Controlled Hunt procedural documentation has been significantly expanded, allowing for additional employees to assist in the process and has led to IDFG publishing results quicker than in any prior years.</p>		

FY 2024-2027 Management Direction	Brief statement of FY 2024 status/progress/accomplishment	FY 2025-2028 Management Direction	Tasks/Actions planned in FY 2025
<b>Expand understanding and acceptance of IDFG's mission.</b>	Public opinion survey completed and results communicated to IDFG Commission and all staff. Focus group research scheduled for early FY2025. Launched IDFG 125th Anniversary campaign to enhance understanding of IDFG mission and celebrate the conservation efforts that have been accomplished on behalf of the public.		
<b>Employ marketing best practices to produce the results most desired by our commission and department leadership; strengthen the department's relationship with license holders and the public; and strengthen our fiscal resilience by growing the department's user base at a reasonable level.</b>	<p>Insights from survey data incorporated into department communications. Forthcoming focus group data will provide additional insight for strategic communication.</p> <p>A number of meetings were held to review results and strategize on efforts that could address the issues of crowding. Due to the scope and complexity of perceptions of crowding, staff determined that this effort should not be a stand-alone marketing campaign. Instead, the department will address areas of influence as it relates to crowding and incorporate those efforts into other wildlife communications, when appropriate.</p> <p>Fishing and hunting campaigns developed to complement IDFG 125 campaign, with a focus on the conservation work the department does to benefit the public and wildlife, deemphasizing direct pitches to purchase licenses.</p> <p>Launched IDFG 125th Anniversary campaign to celebrate the conservation efforts that have been accomplished on behalf of the public while focusing on the challenges of the future.</p>	<b>Expand understanding of IDFG's mission by employing marketing best practices; strengthen the department's relationship with license holders and the public; and strengthen fiscal resilience by growing the department's user base.</b>	<p>Information and Marketing sections of the Communication Bureau will analyze survey data and create messaging for integration into all department communications.</p> <p>Achieve annual rate of growth of 2.5% for all license sales and 3% for resident license holders over the next three years.</p> <p>Assess success of FY2024 campaigns and revise FY2025 campaigns to improve effectiveness and broaden reach.</p>
		<b>Create a conservation education (CE) plan to define CE within the agency; standardize how IDFG's role is presented in CE programs; create CE tools to enhance staff CE efforts.</b>	Evaluate FY2024 CE inventory to inform next steps in plan development

## FY 2023-2028 PERFORMANCE MEASURES

Performance Measure	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028	Benchmark
8: Effectively convey and distribute information about wildlife and wildlife-based recreation (# of unique visitors per year to Fish and Game website)	3.50 million						2.00 million

**Performance Measure Explanatory Notes:**

8. The benchmark is based on expected growth in web traffic.

# GOAL

## Management Support

*Enhance the capability of the Department to manage fish and wildlife and serve the public.*

### OBJECTIVES

*Attract and retain a diverse and professional workforce.*

*Provide programs, equipment and facilities for excellent customer service and management effectiveness.*

*Improve information management and business systems.*

### STRATEGIES

- ▶ Seek competitive salaries for Fish and Game employees.
- ▶ Provide training and professional development opportunities.
- ▶ Reward leadership, integrity, competency, professionalism and innovation.
  
- ▶ Use the fleet management program to efficiently acquire and manage Fish and Game vehicles and field equipment.
- ▶ Promote and strengthen volunteer programs to assist with habitat and fish and wildlife management and education.
- ▶ Work closely with license vendors to ensure accurate delivery of licenses and tags.
- ▶ Provide facilities that foster effective customer service and productive work environments.
  
- ▶ Develop data management system to make Fish and Game data more readily usable and available to the public, other agencies and employees.
- ▶ Implement an electronic licensing system that is reliable, adaptable, user friendly and cost effective.



# FY 2025-2028 MANAGEMENT DIRECTION

FY 2024-2027 Management Direction	Brief statement of FY 2024 status/progress/accomplishment	FY 2025-2028 Management Direction	Tasks/Actions planned in FY 2025
<b>Continue efforts to maintain enforcement-related public outreach and community involvement at the local level to keep citizens informed of opportunities to engage and participate.</b>	Regions published information about investigations of interest to local communities.  High profile cases and dispositions published with statewide news release packages.		
<b>Optimize revenue through HB 230 and Price Lock in accordance to the Commission discount order.</b>	Three-year licenses have been advertised and highlighted in additional IDFG email campaigns and social media posts. The Price Lock webpage was reviewed by an IDFG team and updated to be more up-to-date and informative to the public.	<b>Optimize Revenue through HB 230 and Price Lock in accordance to the Commission discount order.</b>	Continue to increase opportunities to highlight three-year licenses and Price Lock, as well as incorporate new Auto-Renew marketing efforts.
<b>Improve technical and administrative infrastructure to increase efficiency and effectiveness of outreach efforts.</b>	IDFG, the hunter education system vendor, and the licensing system vendor have continued discussions to integrate systems.  IDFG successfully updated its privacy policy, which launched in March 2024. Upgraded analytics tracking to the latest option in July 2023, allowing for expansion of tracking abilities for marketing efforts done internally and in collaboration with licensing vendor.	<b>Improve technical and administrative infrastructure to increase efficiency and effectiveness of outreach efforts.</b>	Review opportunities to utilize additional outreach tools, such as targeted ad campaigns or new email campaign content.
		<b>Increase operational efficiency for compliance efforts with modernized enhanced communications capabilities.</b>	Begin providing remote patrol access to Public Safety and Security Information System (ILETS) to increase efficiency of compliance with management strategies.

# FY 2023-2028 PERFORMANCE MEASURES

Performance Measure	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028	Benchmark
9: Attract and retain highly qualified personnel (% successful announcements / % retention of hired FTEs after 2 years employment)	NA / 88						93 / 88

### Performance Measure Explanatory Notes:

9. This performance measure was edited in FY2024 to more accurately assess success metrics. A "successful announcement" is defined as an announcement that closed without altering the closing date and resulted in a hire. This benchmark is based on current labor market conditions.



# The Landscape 2025: Key External Factors

The Idaho Department of Fish and Game strives to achieve the goals and meet or exceed the benchmarks established in this strategic plan. However, there are factors outside of the Department's control that may affect or prevent implementation of parts of the plan.

## Population Increase

- o Growth in population in both urban and rural areas requires new development to sustain demand, leading to diminished and/or reduced wildlife habitat and an increase in human/wildlife conflict.
- Growing number of new residents increase expectations for the Department to assist with wildlife conflicts.
- o Demand for outdoor recreation increases with population growth creating crowding issues at Department-owned or managed properties, such as wildlife management areas and fishing and boating access sites.
- Maintenance and upgrade costs increase as new projects are brought online to meet public demand.
- Sportsmen and sportswomen are frustrated by diminished access to facilities paid for by their hunting/fishing/trapping license dollars that are used more often by people who are not hunting, fishing or trapping.

## Weather and Climate

- o Heat waves, harsh winters, droughts, large wildfires and other adverse weather conditions create challenges to management of sustainable fish and wildlife populations.

## Energy and Mineral Development

- o Proposed development of renewable energy resources, and proposed mineral extraction, requires the Department to evaluate potential effects of on fish and wildlife resources. This is done in collaboration with the Governor's Office of Species Conservation and Energy and Mineral Resources.

## Wildlife Disease

- o Prevention and control of disease continues to be a priority for establishing and maintaining wildlife populations that meet management objectives.

## Invasive species

- o The discovery of quagga mussels in the Snake River in 2023, and the massive efforts to eradicate them, reinforces the challenges of protecting Idaho's waters and landscapes from the threats of invasive species.





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