

Commissioners

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STATE OF CALIFORNIA
Edmund G. Brown Jr., Governor

Valerie Termini, Executive Director
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Fish and Game Commission



Wildlife Heritage and Conservation

Since 1870

2018 California Sea Grant State Fellowship Program: Host Description

Host Location/Contact: California Fish and Game Commission
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Names of Supervisor: Valerie Termini, Executive Director

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Position Description

The California Fish and Game Commission (Commission) was the first wildlife conservation agency in the United States, pre-dating even the U.S. Commission of Fish and Fisheries. The Commission has hundreds of authorities, some general in nature and some very specific through statutes of the Fish and Game Code, Public Resources Code, and Government Code.

In general, the Commission has jurisdiction over nearly every living thing in California except people, agriculture, and domestic animals. Specifically, the Commission is formally vested with authority to regulate the take, possession and conservation of birds, mammals, fish, amphibians and reptiles from the Oregon border to the Mexican border, and from the Nevada border to three miles out into the Pacific Ocean. The Commission also addresses fish, wildlife and conservation issues on a broad scale, through such subjects as climate change, marine plastics pollution, sustainable fishing communities, predator management, tribal nation engagement, fisheries bycatch and marine protected areas.

The California State Legislature has deemed that the scope and responsibilities of the Commission have significantly expanded over the years as the size and diversity of California's population has increased, and as the scientific knowledge of the habitat conservation and ecosystem-based management needs of fish and wildlife has expanded. The Governor-appointed Commissioners are expected to make complex public policy and biological decisions on behalf of the people of California, with a small staff that works to ensure the Commissioners have the necessary information for making those decisions. Examples of the Commission's statutory authorities include:

- formulating general policies for the conduct of the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (Department);

- determining when, where and by what methods hunters and fisherman may take animals and fish;
- addressing non-native species importation, possession and sale;
- listing and delisting threatened and endangered species under the California Endangered Species Act;
- establishing and regulating uses of protected lands and waters such as wildlife areas, ecological reserves and marine protected areas;
- regulating the possession and care of restricted species, such as eagles, owls, bobcats, bears and freshwater sharks; and
- leasing state water bottoms and kelp beds for the purposes of aquaculture and commercial kelp harvest.

The Commission conducts its business at six meetings per year, which are strategically located throughout the State to encourage public outreach and participation. In addition, the Commission currently has three committees that each meets three times per year: The Marine Resources Committee, Wildlife Resources Committee, and Tribal Committee. Each committee is chaired or co-chaired by no more than two Commissioners. The goal of these committees is to allow for greater in-depth presentations and discussions on fish and wildlife issues and regulatory proposals. The committee meetings are less formal in nature than Commission meetings and provide for additional access to the Commissioners.

There is sometimes confusion about the distinction between the Commission and the Department. In the most basic terms, the Commission establishes policies and regulations while the Department is guided by the Commission's policies, is charged with implementing and enforcing regulations set by the Commission, and provides biological data and expertise to inform the Commission's decision-making process.

The California Sea Grant fellow will have the opportunity to serve as staff on a wide variety of issues before the Commission, including many of those listed above, depending on the fellow's areas of interest, educational goals, initiative, communication and analytical skills, and professional goals. The types of functions the fellow might support include:

- assisting the executive director in developing policies and/or strategic approaches to items that may be controversial in nature;
- working on committee agendas and topics directly with the marine and wildlife advisors;
- organizing and/or leading related meetings and workshops;
- enhancing transparency by outreach and communication with stakeholders and partners, and working to maintain broad project or program support;
- drafting and reviewing staff summaries for Commission and committee meetings; and
- helping improve the Commission website and develop social media outreach.

Placement with the Commission will help the fellow better understand how fish and wildlife statutes, regulations and policies are established and implemented in California, and will also provide a front seat to political, administrative, and stakeholder participation processes.