



Oregon Fish and Wildlife Commission Minutes

Tour:
Thursday March 19, 2026 – 8:00 AM
Hampton Inn Medford
1122 Morrow Rd
Medford, OR 97504

Meeting:
Friday, March 20, 2026 - 8:00 AM
Roxy Ann Grange
1850 Spring St,
Medford, OR 97504

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Commission minutes are considered draft until approved by the Commission.

Notice of these meetings had been made by press release of statewide media circulation. Those attending part or all of the meeting included:

Mary Wahl, Chair	Debbie Colbert, Director
Becky Hatfield-Hyde, Vice Chair	Ken Loffink, Chief Operating Officer
Bob Spelbrink, Commissioner	Mike Gauvin, West Region Manager
Mark Labhart, Commissioner	Bernadette Graham Hudson, Wildlife Division Administrator
Dallas Hall Defrees, Commissioner	Tom Stahl, Fish Division Deputy Administrator
Hugh Morrison, Commissioner	Michelle Tate, Executive Assistant
Dave Moldal, Commissioner	Doug Shugart, Captain Oregon State Police
	Anika Marriott, Assistant Attorney General

MEETING

On Friday, **March 20, 2026, at 8:00 AM, Chair Wahl called the Oregon Fish and Wildlife Commission** (the Commission) meeting to order.

DIRECTOR’S REPORT

Field Reports – in written form only; *this report is available in the meeting materials and at https://myodfw.com/sites/default/files/2026-03/March_Field%20Report%20MRP.pdf*

Expenditure Report

Ken Loffink, Chief Operating Officer

Ken provided the Commission with a presentation for the period ending January 31, 2026, with a \$160.1 million cash balance, including \$51.3 million in net unrestricted funds. Revenues and expenditures for the 2025–27 biennium are on track, supported by strong license sales. HB 5204 made minor adjustments, including a small General Fund reduction, added COLA expenditure authority, \$1.5 million in spending limitation for Klamath Hatchery rebuilding, and a \$3.1 million transfer of OSP Anti-Poaching funds to state police. Development of the 2027–29 Agency Request Budget is underway, with POPs due to the Governor’s office in April and a public meeting set for April 7.

1 This report is available in the meeting materials and at
2 [https://myodfw.com/sites/default/files/2026-](https://myodfw.com/sites/default/files/2026-03/Commission%20Financial%20Report%20March%202026.pdf)
3 [03/Commission%20Financial%20Report%20March%202026.pdf](https://myodfw.com/sites/default/files/2026-03/Commission%20Financial%20Report%20March%202026.pdf)

4
5 **CLIMATE & OCEAN CHANGE POLICY REPORT**

6 *Building Resilient Landscapes: Oregon’s Native Seed Strategy at Work*
7 Troy Abercrombie, Oregon Department of Agriculture

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9 This report is available in the meeting materials and at
10 [https://myodfw.com/sites/default/files/2026-](https://myodfw.com/sites/default/files/2026-03/Climate%20and%20Ocean%20Change%20Policy%20Report.pdf)
11 [03/Climate%20and%20Ocean%20Change%20Policy%20Report.pdf](https://myodfw.com/sites/default/files/2026-03/Climate%20and%20Ocean%20Change%20Policy%20Report.pdf)

12
13 **Adopt Temporary Rules**

14 The Commission ratified the following temporary rules. The six (6) temporary rules were
15 previously adopted by the director under her emergency action authority.

16
17 **1.) 635-041-0063**

18 **Allow Sales of Sturgeon Caught in Columbia River Treaty Setline Fisheries**

19 Adopted: 2/25/2026 Effective Dates: 2/26/2026 through 2/28/2026

20 This amended rule provides state authorization of sales of white sturgeons caught in the winter
21 Treaty setline fisheries in The Dalles Pool and John Day Pool to reflect recent tribal action to
22 adopt these fisheries.

23
24 **2.) 635-023-0101**

25 **Set Recreational Retention Fishery for Sturgeon in The Dalles Pool and Adjacent Tributaries**

26 Adopted: 2/26/2026 Effective Dates: 3/3/2026 through 4/30/2026

27 This amended rule establishes a retention day for the recreational white sturgeon fishery on the
28 mainstem Columbia River in The Dalles Pool (The Dalles Dam upstream to the John Day Dam) and
29 all adjacent tributaries. Retention will be allowed on Tuesday, March 3, 2026. Modifications are
30 consistent with actions taken by the Departments of Fish & Wildlife for the States of Oregon and
31 Washington at a Columbia River Joint State hearing on February 25, 2026.

32
33 **3.) 635-042-0130**

34 **Modify Non-Treaty Columbia River Mainstem Commercial Smelt Fishery**

35 Adopted: 2/26/2026 Effective Dates: 3/2/2026 through 3/19/2026

36 This amended rule will modify the previously-adopted 2026 non-treaty commercial smelt fishery
37 in Zones 1-3 of the lower Columbia River by adding Wednesdays from 5 a.m. to 5 p.m. to the
38 existing weekly schedule from March 2 through March 19. Modifications are consistent with
39 actions taken by the Departments of Fish and Wildlife for the States of Oregon and Washington at
40 the Columbia River Compact/Joint State hearing held on February 25, 2026.

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42 **4.) 635-041-0063**

43 **Allow Sales of Sturgeon Caught in Columbia River Treaty Setline Fisheries**

44 Adopted: 2/25/2026 Effective Dates: 3/2/2026 through 8/28/2026

1 This amended rule provides state authorization of sales of white sturgeons caught in the winter
2 Treaty setline fisheries in The Dalles Pool and John Day Pool to reflect recent tribal action to
3 adopt these fisheries.

4
5 **5.) 635-017-0090**

6 **Set 2026 Recreational Eulachon Smelt Season for the Sandy River**

7 Adopted: 3/9/2026 Effective Dates: 3/11/2026 through 3/12/2026

8 This amended rule will set a 2026 recreational fishing season for smelt in the Sandy River.

9
10 **6.) 635-041-0063**

11 **Allow Sales of Sturgeon Caught in Columbia River Treaty Setline Fishery**

12 Adopted: 3/10/2026 Effective Dates: 3/11/2026 through 8/28/2026

13 This amended rule provides state authorization of sales of white sturgeons caught in the winter
14 Treaty setline fishery in The Dalles Pool to reflect recent tribal action to adopt this fishery.

15
16 Action:

17 Commissioner Morrison moved to ratify the six (6) temporary rules set forth on the March 20,
18 2026, agenda. Commissioner Spelbrink seconded the motion, and the motion carried
19 unanimously, seven (7) in favor. Wahl, Hatfield-Hyde; Labhart, Spelbrink, Hall Defrees, Morrison,
20 Moldal

21
22 **COMMISSION UPDATES**

23 *No Commission Action: Informational Only*

24 Commissioner Labhart shared information that the Confederated Tribes of the Warm Springs
25 were recently honored with a federal Statesman Award for their leadership in conserving
26 California bighorn sheep through sustainable use, innovative funding, and youth stewardship
27 efforts. Presented at the 2026 Wild Sheep Foundation's Wild Sheep Show in Reno, the award
28 highlighted the tribe's success in auctioning an annual hunting tag, most recently for \$250,000
29 with all proceeds reinvested into conservation on tribal lands. Since 2024, these efforts have
30 generated \$760,000 to support habitat restoration and invasive species removal. A herd of 20
31 bighorn sheep introduced in 2002 has now grown to approximately 320 animals, reflecting more
32 than a 150 percent increase. The update recognized Warm Springs for its impressive, ongoing
33 contributions to wildlife conservation alongside the work of state partners.

34
35 **OTHER BUSINESS**

36
37 **PUBLIC FORUM**

38 This part of the agenda was for comments on topics not scheduled on the agenda. The
39 Commission will be unable to take action on items brought to their attention in this forum.

40
41 *Bringing Salmon Back to Oregon Watersheds Through Ocean Fishery Reform*
42 *Adrian Tuohy, Wild Fish Conservancy*

43
44 *Passage of HB 4134 (1.25% for wildlife)*

1 *Sristi Kamal, Western Environmental Law Center*

2
3 *Observations of improved resilience in Bear Creek despite challenging times*
4 *Dan Van Dyke*

5
6 *Winchester Dam Fish Passage Order*
7 *Charles Gehr, Native Fish Society*
8 *Jim McCarthy, WaterWatch of Oregon*

9
10 **Exhibit A: COMMISSION MINUTES**

11 Action: Approval

12 Commissioner Labhart moved to approve the February 20, 2026 meeting minutes with
13 continued authority to correct grammar and punctuation. Commissioner Moldal seconded the
14 motion, and the motion was carried seven in favor. Wahl, Hatfield-Hyde; Labhart, Spelbrink, Hall
15 Defrees, Morrison, Moldal

16
17 **EXHIBIT B: MINAM WILDLIFE AREA MANAGEMENT PLAN**

18 The Commission adopted rules for the Minam Management Plan.

19 Dan Marvin, Elkhorn Wildlife Area Manager

20
21 Presentation: Dan provided the Commission with a presentation on the Minam River
22 Wildlife Area Management Plan. The plan outlines how ODFW will manage and restore the now
23 17,000-acre wildlife area to protect habitat connectivity, improve forest, grassland, and riparian
24 conditions, support wildlife migration, and provide compatible public access. The plan
25 emphasizes ecosystem-based management, habitat restoration, infrastructure improvements,
26 and ongoing monitoring, supported by partner organizations and public engagement.

27
28 *This presentation is located in the commission material and can be viewed at*
29 [https://myodfw.com/sites/default/files/2026-03/Ex%20B Presentation.pdf](https://myodfw.com/sites/default/files/2026-03/Ex%20B%20Presentation.pdf)

30
31 Public Testimony

Todd Adkins; Oregon Hunters Association

32
33 Action: Rulemaking

34 Commissioner Moldal moved to adopt the Goals and Objectives of the 2025 Minam River Wildlife
35 Area Management Plan and amend OAR Chapter 635-008-0126 as proposed by staff in
36 Attachment 3. Commissioner Labhart seconded the motion, and the motion was carried seven in
37 favor. Wahl, Hatfield-Hyde; Labhart, Spelbrink, Hall Defrees, Morrison, Moldal

1 **Exhibit C: OPRD GRASS CARP PERMIT EXCEPTION**

2 The Commission approved an exception to land ownership requirements as permitted in ODFW
3 grass carp rules to allow stocking by Oregon Parks and Recreation Department in a wastewater
4 treatment pond at Beverly Beach State Park.

5
6 Chris Kern, Fish Propagation Program Manager

7
8 Presentation: Chris provided the Commission with a presentation on OPRD’s request for
9 an exception to OAR 635-056-0075’s land-ownership requirement to stock sterile triploid grass
10 carp in a 1.15-acre wastewater pond at Beverly Beach State Park, where severe duckweed growth
11 is disrupting treatment processes. The site meets all other rule criteria, including screening, lack
12 of surface inflow/outflow, isolation from public access, and placement outside the 100-year
13 floodplain. Staff note that mechanical removal has been ineffective and that OPRD prefers
14 biological control over herbicides.

15
16
17 *This presentation is located in the commission material and can be viewed at*
18 https://myodfw.com/sites/default/files/2026-03/Exhibit%20C_Presentation.pdf

19
20 Action: Approval

21 Commissioner Spelbrink moved to approve the Oregon Parks and Recreation Department’s
22 request for an exception to the land ownership provisions in the controlled fish species rule, as
23 outlined in Attachment 2 related to its permit request to stock sterile grass carp in an isolated
24 wastewater treatment pond at Beverly Beach State Park. Commissioner Morrison seconded the
25 motion, and the motion was carried seven in favor. Wahl, Hatfield-Hyde; Labhart, Spelbrink, Hall
26 Defrees, Morrison, Moldal

27
28 **EXHIBIT D: DENMAN WILDLIFE AREA ACQUISITION**

29 The Commission approved the acquisition of land within the current Denman Wildlife Area
30 boundary.

31
32 Tawny Slaven – Denman Wildlife Area Manger (Acting)

33
34 Presentation: Tawny provided the Commission with a presentation outlining a proposal by the
35 Oregon Department of Fish & Wildlife (ODFW) to purchase a 5.67-acre former railroad
36 right-of-way that bisects the Denman Wildlife Area in Jackson County for \$111,150. The
37 acquisition aims to secure permanent public access, protect unique habitat, and support the
38 area’s long-term management objectives by incorporating the parcel into the Denman Wildlife
39 Area Management Plan. ODFW recommends approval of the acquisition to enhance visitor
40 access, enforce conservation efforts, and integrate this critical land into the wildlife area.

41
42 *This presentation is located in the commission material and can be viewed at*
43 https://myodfw.com/sites/default/files/2026-03/Ex%20D_Presentation_Denman.pdf

1 No Public Testimony

2 Action: Approval

3 Commissioner moved Spelbrink to approve acquiring the 5.67-acre railroad property and
4 incorporating it into the Denman Wildlife Area for public benefit. Commissioner Hatfield-
5 Hyde seconded the motion, and the motion was carried seven in favor. Wahl, Hatfield-
6 Hyde; Labhart, Spelbrink, Hall Defrees, Morrison, Moldal

7
8 **EXHIBIT E: ACCESS & HABITAT PROJECT FUNDING APPROVAL**

9 The Commission approved the Access and Habitat Board recommendations for project funding.

10
11 Travis Schultz, Access & Habitat Program Coordinator

12
13 Presentation: Travis provided the Commission with a presentation recommending funding for
14 several projects that expand public hunting access and improve wildlife habitat across Oregon,
15 including new or continued access areas in regions like Bear Creek, Iron Mountain, Virtue Flat,
16 Pine Creek, Mackenzie, and Thomas Creek, along with meadow and sage-grouse habitat
17 restoration work. It also outlined administrative needs such as covering insurance and
18 consultation costs to support safe and effective program operations.

19
20 *This presentation is located in the commission material and can be viewed at*

21 https://myodfw.com/sites/default/files/2026-03/Exhibit%20E_Presentation_AH.pdf

22
23 No Public Testimony

24
25 Action: Approval

26 Issue 1:

27 Commissioner Hatfield-Hyde moved to approve the eight projects recommended for
28 funding by the Access & Habitat Board. Commissioner Moldal seconded the motion, and the
29 motion was carried seven in favor. Wahl, Hatfield-Hyde; Labhart, Spelbrink, Hall Defrees,
30 Morrison, Moldal

31
32 Issue 2:

33 Commissioner Hatfield-Hyde moved to approve the Insurance Requirement Payment
34 Administrative Budget as proposed. Commissioner Morrison seconded the motion, and the
35 motion was carried seven in favor. Wahl, Hatfield-Hyde; Labhart, Spelbrink, Hall Defrees,
36 Morrison, Moldal

37
38 **EXHIBIT F: FISH SCREENING TASK FORCE APPOINTMENTS**

39 The Commission appointed two new members to the Fish Screening Task Force.

40
41 Katherine Nordholm, Fish Screens and Passage Coordinator

42
43 Presentation: Katherine provided the Commission with a presentation detailing proposed fish-
44 screening exemptions and fish passage waivers for the Warm Springs and Mason dams. It

1 explains the statutory establishment of the Fish Screening Task Force, a seven-member advisory
2 body serving staggered two-year terms and outlines its role in guiding the department on a range
3 of fish-screening priorities, including development, funding, monitoring, technology, reporting,
4 and project prioritization.

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7 *This presentation is located in the commission material and can be viewed at*
8 https://myodfw.com/sites/default/files/2026-03/Exhibit%20F_Presentation.pdf

9
10 No Public Testimony

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12 Action: Appointment

13 Commissioner Moldal moved to appoint Mr. Harry Bither, as a representative for Agricultural
14 interests and Mr. Alex Hardison as a representative for Fishing or Fish Conservation interests on
15 the Fish Screening Task Force. Commissioner Spelbrink seconded the motion, and the motion
16 was carried seven in favor. Wahl, Hatfield-Hyde; Labhart, Spelbrink, Hall Defrees, Morrison,
17 Moldal

18
19 **EXHIBIT G: LAMPREY CONSERVATION PLANS UPDATE**

20 The Commission was provided with an informational update on implementation of the Miller
21 Lake Conservation Plan (2005) and the Statewide Conservation Plan for Lampreys (2019).

22
23 Ben Clemens, Statewide Lamprey Coordinator

24
25 Presentation: Ben provided the Commission with a presentation outlining progress and future
26 steps in two key lamprey conservation initiatives: the Miller Lake Lamprey Conservation Plan
27 (adopted 2005) and the Coastal, Columbia & Snake Conservation Plan (adopted 2019). The Miller
28 Lake Plan has successfully reintroduced approximately 5,230 lampreys between 2010–2021, with
29 larvae detected far into the lake since 2020 and signs of natural reproduction, prompting
30 continued barrier removal, annual monitoring, and potential further reintroductions. The broader
31 Conservation Plan addresses four species (Pacific, Western Brook, Western River, and Pacific
32 Brook lampreys), emphasizing habitat restoration, improved passage and screening
33 infrastructure, water conservation, species translocations, and regulation changes to bolster
34 native lamprey populations. Complementing these efforts are education and outreach programs,
35 predation management (including pinniped removal), and collaborative partnerships, alongside
36 ongoing research and adaptive monitoring to guide future conservation strategies.

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38
39 *This presentation is located in the commission material and can be viewed at*
40 https://myodfw.com/sites/default/files/2026-03/Exhibit%20G_Presentation.pdf

41
42 No Commission Action: Informational Only

43
44 Chair Wahl adjourned the meeting at 2:15: p.m.