
ONTARIO FISH AND WILDLIFE HERITAGE COMMISSION ANNUAL REPORT

April 1, 2018 – March 31, 2019

Background and Mandate

The Fish and Wildlife Heritage Commission (the Commission) was established in 2002 under subsection 2(1) of the Heritage Hunting and Fishing Act (HHFA). The Commission is required to consider and make recommendations to the Minister of Natural Resources and Forestry ("the Minister") on the following matters set out in 2(3) of the HHFA:

1. The promotion of practices that will contribute to recreational hunting and fishing being valued by future generations.
2. The promotion of public participation in fish and wildlife conservation programs.
3. The promotion of youth participation in hunting, fishing and other fish and wildlife activities.
4. The promotion of tourism related to hunting, fishing and other fish and wildlife activities.
5. The promotion of new opportunities for hunting, fishing and other fish and wildlife activities.
6. Any other matter referred to the Commission by the Minister.
7. The design and establishment of a mechanism to finance matters referred to in paragraphs 1 to 6.
8. The operation of the separate account referred to in section 85 of the Fish and Wildlife Conservation Act, 1997.

The Commission has also been established as an advisory committee under section 85(4) of the Fish and Wildlife Conservation Act, 1997 (FWCA). The Commission provides advice to the Minister on the operation of the Special Purpose Account (SPA) under the FWCA in relation to the above noted matters. As such, all recommendations provided by the Commission to the Minister are considered 'confidential advice to the Minister'.

Appointments and Remuneration

Commission members, including the Chair of the Commission, are appointed by the Lieutenant Governor in Council (LGIC). There is no legislated number of members that must be appointed to the Commission, however the Commission Terms of Reference provides that the Commission shall consist of up to 10 members and a Chair. Commission members are appointed for terms not exceeding three years, with further re-appointments allowable, each not to exceed three years.

Commission members are recommended by the Minister to the LGIC to represent a cross-section of fish and wildlife resource users from across Ontario. Members are selected for their demonstrated knowledge of fish and wildlife issues as well as their experience in a wide variety of government and non-government related activities.

During the 2018/19 fiscal year, members of the Fish and Wildlife Heritage Commission included:

Name	Location	Role	Appointment Date	Appointment Expiry
Kathleen Reid	Norwood	Chair	Feb. 9, 2011	Nov. 17, 2019
John Williamson	Inverary	Deputy Chair	Aug. 15, 2012	Oct. 20, 2018
Conrad Morin	Hearst	Member	June 23, 2004	Sept. 15, 2018
John McDonald	Sioux Lookout	Member	Nov. 29, 2017	Nov. 28, 2019
Glenn Rivard	Thunder Bay	Member	Mar. 7, 2018	Mar. 6, 2020
Deborah Rivard	Thunder Bay	Member	May 2, 2012	Mar. 21, 2020
Gord Mitchell	Field	Member	Jan. 4, 2011	Mar. 21, 2020
Len Dickinson	Lanark	Member	Oct. 2, 2013	Sept. 13, 2020

There were no new appointments and no re-appointments to the Commission during the 2018/19 fiscal year. Two appointments expired (John Williamson, Conrad Morin), and another was revoked (Kathleen Reid). The Commission began the 2018/19 fiscal year with eight members (three vacancies) and entered the 2019/20 fiscal year with five members (six vacancies, including that of Chair of the Commission).¹

Remuneration rates for Commission members are \$150 per day, with the Chair of the Commission receiving \$175 per day; total remuneration for all commission members combined, including the Chair, for the 2018/19 fiscal year was \$5,956.75.

NOTE: The Director of the Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry's Species Conservation Policy Branch (SCPB) and one additional staff are assigned by the Minister as ex-officio, non-voting members of the Commission. The Director of the SCPB provides administrative support and liaison services to the Commission.

Key Activities

Meetings and Advice

Since its establishment in 2004, the Commission has provided advice and recommendations to the Minister on the matters outlined in section 2(3) of the HHFA (see above). This has included critical recommendations on several wildlife management policies and programs, including moose, white-tailed deer, elk, black bear, and turkey. The Commission has also provided critical advice to the Minister on various fisheries-related policies and programs, including amendments to the federal Fisheries Act and the proposed federal Aquaculture Act, fish stocking, baitfish policies, fisheries management planning, and proposals for multi-line fishing for carp.

The Commission typically meets quarterly throughout the fiscal year to discuss new and ongoing fish and wildlife program and policy issues. While historically Commission meetings have been conducted as in-person meetings, in 2018/19 the Commission moved to meetings via conference calls. As a result, the Commission met four times during the 2018/19 fiscal year as follows:

- June 19-20, 2018 (In-person; Thunder Bay, ON)
- September 12, 2018 (Conference call)
- January 17, 2019 (Conference call)
- April 2, 2019 (Conference call, re-scheduled from March 2019)

The Commission may also hold additional meetings or check-ins at the request of the Minister, as needed and appropriate, to support more timely advice and recommendations on high-profile and fast-moving fish and wildlife policy and program initiatives. During the 2018/19 fiscal year, the Commission held an additional four check-in meetings with ministry staff as follows:

- August 8, 2018 (Conference call)
- October 9, 2018 (Conference call)
- November 9, 2018 (Conference call)
- February 21, 2019 (Conference call)

¹ An advertisement seeking new applications for Chair of the Commission was posted on the Public Appointments Secretariat website from April 10, 2019 to April 23, 2019.

The Commission discussed and provided advice to the ministry on the following topics during these meetings and check-ins:

- Wildlife specific topics
 - Modernization of the hunter and trapper education programs
 - Translocation of species
 - Black bear management, including a black bear socio-economic survey
 - White-tailed deer management and deer hunter survey
 - Open Data and hunter reports
 - Proposed provincial Wildlife Management Strategy
 - Moose management, including the Moose Aerial Inventory (MAI) pilot program
 - Trapline allocation policy
 - Wolf and coyote management
 - Elk citizen science project
 - Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD) management and surveillance
 - Rabies management
 - Forest Management Planning (moose and deer emphasis areas)
 - Cormorant management
- Fisheries specific topics
 - Bait policy review
 - Amendments to the Federal Fisheries Act
 - Proposed federal Aquaculture Act
 - Fish stocking policies
 - Updates to the Fisheries Management Plan for Fisheries Management Zone 16
 - Free fishing licences for Canadian Armed Forces and veterans
 - Multi-line fishing for Common Carp
 - Management Framework for Cage Aquaculture
- Operations and Licencing topics
 - Financial summaries and operation of the Special Purpose Account (SPA)
 - Licensing Automation System Renewal project leading to the development and implementation of the new Fish and Wildlife Licensing System
 - Fishing and hunting regulations summaries

No formal written recommendations were requested by, or provided to, the Minister during the 2018/19 fiscal year. Advice received from Commission members during meetings and check-ins helped ministry staff frame program and policy advice to the Minister in relation to the above noted matters.

Other activities

Upon request, Commission members continue to make themselves available to attend events and conferences or make presentations to a variety of groups including local game and fish clubs as well as the Ontario Federation of Anglers and Hunters (OFAH).

Performance

To assess the Commission's progress towards achieving its goals and objectives (i.e. intended outcomes) as well as to demonstrate the Commission's effectiveness and efficiency in delivering on its mandate (as described under section 2(3) of the HHFA and section 85(4) of the FWCA), five intended outcomes have been identified for the Commission². Corresponding performance measures to track the Commission's progress toward each intended outcome have also been identified and are described below:

- Outcome 1:** Opportunities to promote the value of recreational hunting and fishing to future generations are identified.
- Outcome 2:** Opportunities to promote public participation in fish and wildlife conservation programs are identified.
- Outcome 3:** Opportunities to promote tourism, public, and youth participation in hunting, fishing and other fish and wildlife activities are identified.
- Outcome 4:** New opportunities for hunting, fishing and other fish and wildlife activities are identified.
- Outcome 5:** Effective, efficient and sustainable operation of the SPA to finance matters referred to in section 2(3) of the HHFA.

Performance Measures:

- Number of meetings where the outcome was discussed;
- Percentage of Commission meetings where the outcome was discussed;
- Number of recommendations provided to the minister regarding the outcome;
- Avg. number of recommendations (per meeting) regarding the outcome.

Table 1.0 on page 7 outlines the Commission's achievements in delivering on its mandate as assessed through the above identified performance measures.

Additional performance measures regarding the overall efficiency and effectiveness of the Commission have also been included regarding:

- The average number of recommendations provided to the Minister or ministry staff per Commission meeting; and
- The average cost of Commission meetings.

² Measuring performance makes progress visible (Treasury Board Secretariat, 2016, Putting Outcomes First: A Roadmap for Evidence-Based Decision-Making in the OPS, Toronto, ON).

Table 1.0: Performance Measures for the Fish and Wildlife Heritage Commission

Intended Outcome	Performance Measures			
	Number of meetings where discussed	Percentage of meetings where discussed ³	Number of recommendations provided	Avg. number of recommendations ⁴
1. Opportunities to promote the value of recreational hunting and fishing to future generations are identified.	4	50%	2	0.3
2. Opportunities to promote public participation in fish and wildlife conservation programs are identified.	6	75%	8	1.0
3. Opportunities to promote tourism, public, and youth participation in hunting, fishing and other fish and wildlife activities are identified.	8	100%	13	1.6
4. New opportunities for hunting, fishing and other fish and wildlife activities are identified.	3	38%	2	0.3
5. Effective, efficient and sustainable operation of the SPA to finance matters referred to in section 2(3) of the HHFA.	8	100%	5	0.6

On average, the Commission provided approx. 4 recommendations to the Minister or ministry staff per Commission meeting/check-in held in 2018/19. Average meeting costs were approx. \$4,071.94 per Commission meeting in 2018/19.

³ Assessed by dividing the number of meetings where the topic was discussed by the total number of meetings and check-ins held by the Commission (which in 2018/19 was 8).

⁴ Assessed by dividing the number of recommendations provided on that topic by the by the total number of meetings and check-ins held by the Commission (which in 2018/19 was 8).

Financial Statements

Commission Expenses

Commission expenses are processed by Species Conservation Policy Branch in Policy Division of the Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry. Costs include travel and accommodation expenses, per diems for commissioners and administrative support costs, which include rental fees for meeting space as well as registration costs for training, conferences or courses attended by Commission members on behalf of the Commission.

NOTE: Travel and accommodation expenses include mileage, car rental, gas, taxi services, hotel accommodations, airport parking, hotel parking and meals in accordance with the Management Board of Cabinet Travel, Meal and Hospitality Expenses Directive (January 2017).

The Commission continues to fulfill its role as effectively and efficiently as possible; expenditure constraints put in place across the Ontario Public Service in June 2018 resulted in the Commission holding all its remaining 2018/19 meetings via conference call, resulting in significantly lower expenditures over the previous 2017/18 fiscal year.

Total expenditures to support the Commission between April 1, 2018 and March 31, 2019 were as follows:

<u>Expense</u>	<u>Cost</u>
Commissioner Per Diems	\$5,956.25
Travel & Accommodations	\$7,584.09
Administrative Expenses	\$2,747.40
TOTAL	\$16,287.74

The 2018/19 total expenditure amount represents an approximate 46 percent reduction in total costs over the 2017/18 fiscal year (\$35,587.35).

Fish and Wildlife Special Purpose Account (SPA)

As part of its mandate, the Commission is also updated regularly on the financial position and sustainability of the SPA, including the activities conducted using SPA funding, SPA annual work plans and funding requirements, and SPA annual reports.

The information and data provided to the Commission by ministry staff indicates that SPA funding was properly allocated on fish and wildlife initiatives during the 2018/19 fiscal year.

The Commission notes that the delivery of fish and wildlife services continues to evolve, with new programs added and existing programs modified periodically, as appropriate. However, new or updated fish and wildlife programs have the potential to significantly impact available SPA funds. The Commission recognizes the need for change but cautions that any change must be considered in relation to the long-term use and sustainability of the SPA.

The Commission recognizes the many challenges facing the sustainability of the SPA going forward and will continue to provide specific recommendations around revenue generation to the Minister as requested and appropriate.