
ONTARIO FISH AND WILDLIFE HERITAGE COMMISSION ANNUAL REPORT

April 1, 2019 – March 31, 2020

It is a distinct honour to present Ontario's Fish and Wildlife Heritage Commission Annual Report for the period of April 1st, 2019 to March 31st, 2020.

This document celebrates the ongoing efforts of the FWHC and the support provided to the Minister of Natural Resources and Forestry and MNRF staff over the course of this past year.

Each and every individual takes their role very seriously and collectively feel it a distinct honour to serve.

This document not only represents the very best efforts of Commission members, but also recognizes the ongoing support the Commission receives from MNRF staff, who collectively have contributed their talents and expertise to the outcomes.

I would also be remiss if I did not thank the Minister and his staff for their support and confidence placed in the Commission. Their acknowledgement of the importance of the role the Commission plays is appreciated and acknowledged.

Mike Reader
Chair
Fish and Wildlife Heritage Commission

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, 2002* (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 be representative 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 2019/20 fiscal year, members of the Fish and Wildlife Heritage Commission included:

Name	Location	Role	Appointment Date	Appointment Expiry
Mike Reader	Peterborough	Chair	Oct. 17, 2019	Oct. 16, 2021
Len Dickinson	Lanark	Member	Oct. 2, 2013	Sept. 13, 2020
John McDonald	Sioux Lookout	Member	Nov. 29, 2017	Jan. 30, 2023
Deborah Rivard	Thunder Bay	Member	May 2, 2012	Mar. 21, 2023
Gord Mitchell	Field	Member	Jan. 4, 2011	Mar. 21, 2023
Glenn Rivard	Thunder Bay	Member	Mar. 7, 2018	Mar. 6, 2020

There was one new appointment to the Commission during the 2019/20 fiscal year (Mike Reader, Chair). One appointment expired (Glenn Rivard) and three appointments were renewed (John McDonald, Deborah Rivard, and Gord Mitchell). The Commission began the 2019/20 fiscal year with five members (six vacancies, including Chair) and entered the 2020/21 fiscal year with five members, including a new Chair.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 2019/20 fiscal year was \$5,281.25

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. These ex-officio members provide 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 black bear, invasive wild pigs, trapline allocation, and management of the Fish and Wildlife Special Purpose Account.

The Commission typically meets quarterly throughout the fiscal year to discuss new and ongoing fish and wildlife program and policy issues. In 2019/20 the Commission was approved by Cabinet Office to hold two in-person meetings per fiscal year, with the remainder of the meetings to be held via conference calls to accommodate scheduling and budget considerations. The Commission's quarterly meetings were held during the 2019/20 fiscal year as follows:

- June 24, 2019 (Conference call)
- September 19, 2019 (Conference call)
- December 12-13, 2019 (In-person; Mississauga)
- March 3-4, 2020 (In-person; Peterborough)

The Commission members were pleased to host Minister John Yakabuski at the December 2019 meeting, and Deputy Minister Monique Rolf von den Baumen-Clark at the March 2020 meeting.

The Commission may also hold additional brief meetings or check-ins, 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 2019/20 fiscal year, the Commission held an additional four check-in meetings with ministry staff as follows:

- May 14, 2019 (Conference call)
- August 20, 2019 (Conference call)
- October 22, 2019 (Conference call)
- January 17, 2020 (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:
 - Ongoing modernization of hunter and trapper education programs;
 - Black bear management, including bear baiting setbacks;
 - White-tailed deer management and proposed population objective setting/harvest management guidelines for Ontario;
 - Hunter reporting requirements;
 - Moose management, including the work of the Big Game Management Advisory Committee (BGMAC);
 - Trapline allocation;
 - Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD), including public consultation on a plan for the management of CWD;
 - Cormorant management; and
 - Eurasian Wild Boar and other invasive species considerations
- Fisheries specific topics:
 - Sustainable bait management policy review;
 - Fish stocking policies;
 - Multi-line fishing for Common Carp;
 - Updates to the Contraventions Regulations applicable to the federal Fisheries Act; and
 - Commercial fishing on the Great Lakes.
- Operations and Licensing topics:
 - Operation of the Fish & Wildlife Special Purpose Account (FW SPA);
 - Implementation of the new Fish and Wildlife Licensing Service (FAWLS);
 - Updates to Fishing and Hunting Regulations Summaries; and
 - Modernization/renewal of marketing strategies for fishing and hunting.

Advice received from Commission members during meetings and check-ins on the topics noted above helped ministry staff frame program and policy advice to the Minister.

Additionally, there were two sets of formal written recommendations developed by the Commission and provided to the Minister during the 2019/20 fiscal year. The first set of formal recommendations was provided to the Minister in January 2020 and outlined several recommendations regarding the ministry's management of Black Bears in Ontario. The second set of recommendations for the Minister was developed by the Commission in March 2020 and set out several recommendations regarding the management of Eurasian Wild Boar in the province, the operation of the FW SPA, and updates to the ministry's trapline allocation policy.

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 ministry 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.	5	62.5%	9	1.1
3. Opportunities to promote tourism, public, and youth participation in hunting, fishing and other fish and wildlife activities are identified.	8	100%	11	1.4
4. New opportunities for hunting, fishing and other fish and wildlife activities are identified.	2	25%	3	0.4
5. Effective, efficient and sustainable operation of the SPA to finance matters referred to in section 2(3) of the HHFA.	7	87.5%	17	2.1

On average, the Commission provided approx. 5 recommendations/advisory comments per Commission meeting/check-in held in 2019/20 (up from approx.4/meeting in 2018/19).⁵ Average meeting costs were approx. \$3,659.95 per Commission meeting in 2019/20.⁶

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 2019/20 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 2019/20 was 8).

⁵ Assessed by dividing the total number of recommendations/advisory comments made by the Commission by the total number of meetings and check-ins held by the Commission (which in 2019/20 was 8).

⁶ Assessed by dividing the total amount of Commission expenditures by the number of formal meetings held by the Commission (which in 2019/20 was 4).

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 Commission members 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; a slight reduction in the number of Commission members from the 2018/19 fiscal year, as well as expenditure constraints put in place across the Ontario Public Service in June 2018, resulted in slightly lower expenditures over the previous 2018/19 fiscal year.

Total expenditures to support the Commission between April 1, 2019 and March 31, 2020 were as follows:

<u>Expense</u>	<u>Cost</u>
Commissioner Per Diems	\$5,281.25
Travel & Accommodations	\$7,077.38
Administrative Expenses	\$2,281.18
TOTAL	\$14,639.81

The 2019/20 total expenditure is comparable to the 2018/19 fiscal year (\$16,287.74).

Fish and Wildlife Special Purpose Account (FW SPA)

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

The information and data provided to the Commission by ministry staff indicates that FW SPA funding was properly allocated on fish and wildlife initiatives during the 2019/20 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 FW 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 FW SPA.

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