
ONTARIO'S FISH AND WILDLIFE HERITAGE COMMISSION ANNUAL REPORT

April 1, 2020 – March 31, 2021



It is once again a pleasure to present Ontario's Fish and Wildlife Heritage Commission Annual Report for the period from April 1, 2020 to March 31, 2021.

This report is a testament to ongoing efforts of the Fish and Wildlife Heritage Commission members and Ministry of Northern Development, Mines, Natural Resources and Forestry employees, who provided important and timely advice to the Minister and staff over the course of this past year.

All of us take our role very seriously and collectively deliberate all issues without prejudice or conflict in an effort to provide our very best counsel.

The talent and high standards of work ethic and expertise of NDMNRF employees is clearly reflected in the report. Without this advice and presentation materials, the Commission members would be unable to meet the bar on the standards I would expect from this Commission.

My sincere thank you to former Minister Yakabuski and his staff for their support and confidence placed in this Commission, to Deputy Minister Monique Rolf von den Baumen-Clark for her sincere interest in the Commission and our deliberations, and Fish and Wildlife Policy Branch Director Christie Curley for her inspiration and leadership.

This annual report is respectfully submitted on behalf of all who share our passion for Ontario's fish and wildlife resources.

Mike Reader

Chair
Fish and Wildlife Heritage Commission

June 25, 2021

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 Northern Development, Mines, 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.

There were five new appointments to the Commission during the 2020/21 fiscal year (Yvonne Brown, Greg Farrant, Jim Greenwood, Brent McNamee, and William (Jerry) Walker) and one re-appointment (Len Dickinson). The Commission began the 2020/21 fiscal year with five members and entered the 2021/22 fiscal year with ten members.

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 2020/21 fiscal year was \$11,305.39

NOTE: The Director of the Ministry of Northern Development, Mines, Natural Resources and Forestry's Fish and Wildlife Policy Branch (FWPB) and one additional staff are assigned as ex-officio, non-voting members of the Commission. These ex-officio members provide administrative support and liaison services to the Commission.

During the 2020/21 fiscal year, members of the Fish and Wildlife Heritage Commission includes:

Name	Location	Role	Appointment Date	Appointment Expiry
Mike Reader	Peterborough	Chair	Oct. 17, 2019	Oct. 16, 2021
Yvonne Brown	Inverary	Member	Jun. 18, 2020	Jun. 17, 2023
Len Dickinson	Lanark	Member	Jun. 16, 2020	Sep. 13, 2023
Greg Farrant	Warkworth	Member	Apr. 24, 2020	April 23, 2023
Jim Greenwood	Simcoe	Member	Oct. 22, 2020	Oct. 21, 2023
John McDonald	Sioux Lookout	Member	Nov. 29, 2017	Jan. 30, 2023
Brent McNamee	Manotick	Member	Jun. 18, 2020	Jun. 17, 2023
Gord Mitchell	Field	Member	Jan. 4, 2011	Mar. 21, 2023
Deborah Rivard	Thunder Bay	Member	May 2, 2012	Mar. 21, 2023
William (Jerry) Walker	Haliburton	Member	Apr. 24, 2020	Apr. 23, 2023

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 fish and wildlife management policies and programs, including invasive wild pigs, trapline allocation, hunter reporting penalties 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. The Commission is approved 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. In the 2020/2021 fiscal year, as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, all business was conducted virtually following public health recommendations. Those meetings occurred:

- June 12, 2020
- September 29 and 30, 2020
- December 9 and 10, 2020
- March 3 and 4, 2021

The Commission members were pleased to host Minister John Yakabuski at the March 2021 meeting, and the Deputy Minister Monique Rolf von den Baumen-Clark at the September 2020 and March 2021 meetings (note: the ministry name and Minister changed in June 2021). The Commission meetings were regularly attended by Minister's Office staff throughout the 2020/2021 fiscal year.

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 2020/21 fiscal year, the Commission held one additional check-in meeting with ministry staff:

- February 22, 2021 (Conference call)

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;
 - White-tailed deer management review;
 - Mandatory hunter reporting and hunter compliance;

- Moose management, including the work of the Big Game Management Advisory Committee (BGMAC);
 - Trapline allocation;
 - Falconry; and
 - Chronic wasting disease (CWD) response plan for Ontario.
- Fisheries specific topics:
 - Multi-line fishing for Common Carp;
 - Implementation of Ontario's Sustainable Bait Management Strategy;
 - Brook Trout in Ontario;
 - Reviews of Fisheries Management Zone plans;
 - Updates to the Contraventions Regulations related to the federal Fisheries Act; and
 - Ontario's Recreational Fishing Survey.
- Invasive Species topics:
 - Wild pigs regulation and strategic plan; and
 - Invasive Species listings under the Invasive Species Act, including boating pathway regulation.
- Operations and Licensing topics:
 - Operation of the Fish & Wildlife Special Purpose Account (FW SPA);
 - Updates to the Fish & Wildlife Licensing Service (FAWLS);
 - Review of the Fish & Wildlife Program;
 - Modernization/renewal of marketing strategies for fishing and hunting; and
 - Fish and Wildlife revenue generation and consumer survey initiatives.

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 seven formal written recommendations developed by the Commission and provided to the Minister during the 2020/2021 fiscal year. The written recommendations were provided to the Minister following the Commission's quarterly meetings and provided specific advice about hunter reporting, the Recreational Fishing Survey, chronic wasting disease, regulatory proposals related to trapping, fishing licence requirements, compliance with mandatory hunter reporting, the management of invasive wild pigs, and modernization of hunter education. Additionally, ongoing discussion with staff and with the Minister's office allowed the Commission to provide verbal advice regularly throughout the 2020/2021 year.

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 2020/21 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.

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 Commission¹. 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;
- Average 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.

¹ 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 formal meetings where discussed	Percentage of formal meetings where discussed ²	Number of recommendations provided	Avg. number of recommendations per formal meeting ³
1. Opportunities to promote the value of recreational hunting and fishing to future generations are identified.	3	75%	2	0.5
2. Opportunities to promote public participation in fish and wildlife conservation programs are identified.	4	100%	4	1.0
3. Opportunities to promote tourism, public, and youth participation in hunting, fishing and other fish and wildlife activities are identified.	4	100%	3	0.75
4. New opportunities for hunting, fishing and other fish and wildlife activities are identified.	4	100%	4	1.0
5. Effective, efficient and sustainable operation of the SPA to finance matters referred to in section 2(3) of the HHFA.	4	100%	4	1.0

On average, the Commission provided approximately 4.25 recommendations/advisory comments per Commission meeting/check-in held in 2020/21 (down from approximately 5 per meeting in 2019/20).⁴ As a result of the COVID-19 impacts on fish and wildlife activities in Ontario and the impact to the Special Purpose Account, meetings focused more heavily on these topics throughout the 2020/2021 fiscal year. Average meeting costs were approximately \$2,826.35 per meeting in 2020/21.⁵

² Assessed by dividing the number of meetings where the topic was discussed by the total number of formal meetings (excluding check-in) held by the Commission (which in 2020/21 was 4).

³ Assessed by dividing the number of recommendations provided on that topic by the by the total number of formal meetings (excluding check-in) held by the Commission (which in 2020/21 was 4).

⁴ Assessed by dividing the total number of recommendations/advisory comments made by the Commission by the total number of formal meetings (excluding check-in) held by the Commission (which in 2020/21 was 4).

⁵ Assessed by dividing the total amount of Commission expenditures by the number of formal meetings (excluding check-in) held by the Commission (which in 2020/21 was 4).

Financial Statements

Commission Expenses

Commission expenses are processed by Fish and Wildlife Policy Branch in Policy Division of the Ministry of Northern Development, Mines, Natural Resources and Forestry. Costs include travel and accommodation expenses, per diems for Commission members and administrative support costs, which can 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. As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic in the 2020/2021 fiscal year, the Commission met virtually and did not incur travel or administrative expenses. A higher number of members as compared to the previous year resulted in higher per diems than the previous fiscal year.

Total expenditures to support the Commission between April 1, 2020 and March 31, 2021 were as follows:

<u>Expense</u>	<u>Cost</u>
Commissioner Per Diems	\$11,305.39
Travel & Accommodations	\$0
Administrative Expenses	\$0
TOTAL	\$11,305.39

The 2020/21 total expenditure is lower than the 2019/20 fiscal year (\$14,639.81).