From the Executive Director

Thank you for your interest in the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC).

It is a privilege to be a part of conserving fish and wildlife resources for their long-term well-being and the benefit of people. This document explains how we organize our agency and deliver on our mission.

Keeping Florida’s environment healthy and safe to provide pristine habitats and abundant recreational opportunities requires teamwork. FWC commissioners, appointed by the Governor, serve as trustees and make policy decisions to manage the resources for future generations. FWC staff are situated as subject matter experts, contributing hands-on research, management and law enforcement efforts. We work closely with a
diverse group of public and private partners and consider the public part of our team.

Sportsmen and women and other outdoor enthusiasts are vital to our mission. The fundamental principle of our country’s wildlife management structure is that oversight of these resources is largely entrusted to states, with all citizens owning an equal share. This conservation approach is referred to as the North American Model. Our efforts at the FWC rely upon the communications, funding and other support of Florida’s residents and visitors.

Please continue to participate in our commission meetings, write and call our staff, sit on advisory groups, buy fishing and hunting licenses, and subscribe to our communications products. Take advantage of participation opportunities from coral conservation, invasive species removal and habitat restoration, to hunter safety education, youth outreach, and more. The more we work together, the more we can accomplish.

I hope you find this document useful and inspiring.

With regards,

Eric Sutton
Executive Director
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The Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC) consists of 2,114.5 full-time-equivalent employees, including 848 sworn law enforcement officers. All personnel work together to protect and manage more than 575 species of wildlife, 200 species of freshwater fish and 500 species of saltwater fish. The FWC works to balance the needs of these fish and wildlife species and the habitats that support them with the needs of Florida’s population of 21.4 million people and the record number of visitors – more than 131 million last year.

**Mission**

Managing fish and wildlife resources for their long-term well-being and the benefit of people.

**Benefits**

♦ Scientific data drives management decisions for fish and wildlife populations and their habitats.

♦ Diverse wildlife resources and people benefit from studies about Florida’s delicate and complex ecosystems and the impact humans have on them.
♦ Quality hunting, fishing and outdoor recreational opportunities continue, due to management of fish, wildlife and habitats.

♦ Trained and sworn officers enforce rules that protect fish and wildlife and keep Florida’s waterways safe for millions of boaters.

♦ In the event of natural and other disasters, officers also cooperate with local, state and federal partners, using the agency’s specialized equipment and extensive knowledge about Florida’s aquatic and upland environments.

♦ Responsible recreation and stewardship of the state’s natural resources become a reality. Through the FWC’s communications with a variety of audiences, the agency:

♦ Provides information about human-wildlife interactions; conservation; fish and wildlife habitats; protected species; and hunting, fishing, boating and outdoor recreational opportunities.

♦ Conducts safety training and classes for hunters and boaters.

♦ Teaches classes in outdoor recreational activities, such as bird-watching, fishing and hunting.

♦ Coordinates programs, such as Kids’ Fishing Clinics, specifically for people who traditionally have not participated in outdoor activities.
FWC Core Values

Resource Stewardship
We are passionate about Florida’s natural resources and use our expertise to manage and conserve fish and wildlife.

Service Excellence
We are solution-oriented and committed to achieving wildlife and fisheries conservation results, and efficiently meeting the needs of the public and stakeholders.

Teamwork and Collaboration
We communicate openly and work together effectively to achieve our common goals. We appreciate the value of diverse backgrounds, expertise, and ideas, and incorporate multiple perspectives into decision making.

Professional Integrity
We operate honestly and ethically, and apply our processes, rules, and regulations in a consistent manner that engenders a climate of trust and fairness.

Scientific and Technical Excellence
We use our science-based expert knowledge, technology, and other available resources to achieve high-quality work.

Accountability
We set challenging goals for our achievement and hold ourselves accountable for the results.
The FWC’s seven Commissioners are appointed by the Governor and confirmed by the Florida Senate to 5-year terms. Their constitutional duty is to exercise the “…regulatory and executive powers of the state with respect to wild animal life and fresh water aquatic life and shall also exercise regulatory and executive powers of the state with respect to marine life, except that all license fees and penalties for violating regulations shall be as provided by law.”
Economic Contributions

When a family goes fishing or hunting, buys binoculars to view wildlife, visits a nature preserve, goes boating or visits a seafood restaurant in Florida, it is contributing to the economic prosperity of the state and to jobs. Results from various studies, summarized on the next page, show in human terms the value of protecting and managing wildlife.
### Economic impacts of hunting, freshwater fishing, saltwater fishing and wildlife-viewing

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Economic Contribution</th>
<th>Jobs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hunting*</td>
<td>$1.6 billion</td>
<td>14,673</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recreational freshwater fishing*</td>
<td>$1.7 billion</td>
<td>14,040</td>
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<tr>
<td>Recreational saltwater fishing**</td>
<td>$6.6 billion</td>
<td>96,801</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wildlife viewing*</td>
<td>$4.9 billion</td>
<td>44,623</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

* *Sources: Southwick Associates 2012 report, using 2011 USFWS 5-year survey.

### Economic impacts of boating industry

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Boating Industry</td>
<td>$10.4 billion</td>
<td>82,752</td>
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### Economic impacts of the seafood industry

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Commercial Harvesters</td>
<td>$479 million</td>
<td>6,658</td>
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<tr>
<td>Seafood Processors &amp; Dealers</td>
<td>$833 million</td>
<td>4,620</td>
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<td>Importers</td>
<td>$12.8 billion</td>
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<td>Seafood Wholesales &amp; Distributors</td>
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<td>Retail</td>
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<td><strong>Total Impacts</strong></td>
<td><strong>$17.7 billion</strong></td>
<td><strong>79,714</strong></td>
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<table>
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<tr>
<th>Programs</th>
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<th>FTE salaries</th>
<th>Other costs</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Divisions</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Freshwater Fish</td>
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<td>Habitat and Species</td>
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<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>2114.5</td>
<td>$156,270,628</td>
<td>$256,229,189</td>
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</table>

*Support offices provide central administrative support for the agency. The agency’s overhead from these offices is $21,462,468 or only 5.2 percent of the total agency budget.
FWC Funding Sources Fiscal Year 2020-21

- **Invasive Plant Control Trust Fund**: $9,645,974 - 2%
- **Nongame Wildlife Trust Fund**: $10,400,617 - 2.5%
- **Save the Manatee Trust Fund**: $3,286,960 - <1%
- **Florida Panther Research and Management Trust Fund**: $991,479 - <1%
- **Land Acquisition Trust Fund**: $103,062,585 - 25%
- **Federal Grant Trust Fund**: $81,154,672 - 19.5%
- **Marine Resources Conservation Trust Fund**: $48,660,369 - 12%
- **State Game Trust Fund**: $17,196,692 - 4%
- **General Revenue**: $31,884,286 - 8%
- **Administrative Trust Fund**: $16,199,645 - 4%
- **Grants and Donations Trust Fund**: $48,660,369 - 12%
- **Nongame Wildlife Trust Fund**: $90,016,538 - 22%
The FWC is comprised of six divisions and nine offices plus five regions with regional directors. The six divisions are:

- Fish and Wildlife Research Institute
- Freshwater Fisheries Management
- Habitat and Species Conservation
- Hunting and Game Management
- Law Enforcement
- Marine Fisheries Management
The work done by the Fish and Wildlife Research Institute reaches far beyond the confines of the FWC. Research conducted on habitats, freshwater and marine fisheries, harvested and imperiled species and other important plant and wildlife communities in Florida is used by federal, state and local governments, universities, recreational and commercial fishing interests, recreational hunting and boating interests, nongovernmental organizations and the public. FWRI integrates its research activities with management efforts of other FWC divisions.
Mission

Through effective research and technical knowledge, FWRI provides timely information and guidance to protect, conserve and manage Florida’s fish and wildlife resources.

Strategies

♦ Monitors and provides information on the status of terrestrial, aquatic and coastal habitats; freshwater and marine fisheries; harvested species; imperiled species; and valuable plant and animal communities in Florida.

♦ Develops and implements restoration techniques for enhancement of terrestrial, freshwater and coastal habitats and wildlife communities.

♦ Responds to and provides technical support for catastrophes, including oil spills, ship groundings, die-offs, major chemical spills and natural disasters.

♦ Provides cause-of-death determination on manatees, bears, panthers, sea turtles and other animals, and screens for wildlife diseases such as avian influenza and chronic wasting disease.

♦ Identifies and monitors red tides and other harmful algal blooms, providing both technical support and advisories.

*The North Atlantic Right Whale is one of the most endangered whales in the world. Every year from November – April pregnant females migrate from their northern feeding grounds to the coasts of Georgia and Florida where FWRI biologists and partners document each calf, respond to entanglements and mortality events. Photo courtesy of Clearwater Marine Aquarium NOAA permit # 20556-01.*
♦ Provides science-based biological, social and economic assessments of fish and wildlife resources, as well as decision support, to the Commission and others responsible for managing or regulating activities that depend on Florida’s unique and diverse natural resources.

♦ Uses social science methods to describe, understand, predict and affect human attitudes and behaviors toward the natural environment. Encourages community members to act as citizen scientists by creating opportunities to report, share and submit information.

♦ Applies for and receives external grants representing over 40% of the Institute’s funding to increase resources for critical research projects.

Fish and Wildlife Research Institute sections

Center for Conservation Social Science Research

The Center is responsible for conducting social science research geared toward better understanding human attitudes and behaviors toward the natural environment and informed decision-making. It has a twofold mission. First, a core group of social scientists provide consulting services for FWC programs – this includes advisement and consultation for biologists.

FWC biologists, with help from Law Enforcement and citizen scientists, continue to collect samples from wild Florida panthers and bobcats to learn more about the prevalence of feline leukomyelopathy.
and other FWC staff on the development and implementation of social science inquiry. Second, the staff affiliated with the center support the development and integration of social science within broader FWC programs. Staff conduct training on qualitative and quantitative social science methods, science communication, and stakeholder outreach and education.

**Ecosystem Assessment and Restoration**

The Ecosystem Assessment and Restoration Section is responsible for monitoring and investigating harmful algal blooms, such as Florida red tide; collecting and analyzing habitat and species data for freshwater, marine and upland habitats; and monitoring for and responding to fish and wildlife disease outbreaks. This section assesses seagrass, oyster reefs and coastal wetlands statewide; monitors coral reefs; and conducts freshwater plant and upland research to support habitat management actions. Researchers respond to fish and wildlife mortality events and stony coral tissue loss disease; study the unknown neurological disorder impacting the endangered Florida panther; conduct surveillance for wildlife diseases, such as chronic wasting disease in deer; and provide technical assistance to partners.

*FWRI’s freshwater fisheries researchers use radio telemetry to track trophy-sized bass movements, range and behavior. Coupled with FWC’s TrophyCatch program, researchers are also able to record angler catches of these telemetry fish using external dart tags that display an FWC phone number and reward for reporting a tagged bass.*
Freshwater Fisheries Research

To ensure the health and sustainability of Florida’s aquatic resources, the Freshwater Fisheries Research section provides freshwater fishery, invertebrate and habitat information to those in federal, state and local governments who make decisions that affect Florida’s freshwater resources.

Information Science and Management

The Information Science and Management section produces, analyzes, manages and distributes scientific data and information that is used to aid in the conservation of fish and wildlife. This section employs techniques that include ensuring the statistical validity of FWRI research, electronic sharing, delivery of research findings, and computer mapping of habitats and species ranges. Researchers also maintain an extensive collection of fish and invertebrate specimens and provide data-management services and scientific library services.

Marine Fisheries Research

To assess and predict marine fishery population trends, the Marine Fisheries Research section collects and integrates biological and harvest information from commercial and

The State Reef Fish Survey (SRFS) builds upon successes on the Gulf Coast, where improved data have already contributed to enhanced recreational fishing opportunities. The expanded survey will provide more timely and precise data needed to manage and assess important reef fish stocks throughout Florida.
recreational marine fisheries and invertebrate species. This section also provides nearly all biological information, expert assessments and analyses used by the FWC, interstate commissions and federal councils charged with managing Florida’s marine fisheries resources.

**Research Operations**

The Research Operations section consists of small work groups that support scientific activities of the FWRI. Facilities management staff oversees maintenance of all FWRI facilities and equipment. Administrative Services carries out financial operations and coordinates grants, which support much of the FWRI’s research activities. The Communications Office collaborates agency-wide to promote and protect FWRI’s reputation of excellence by creating strategic communications that enhance the understanding and value of scientific research.

**Wildlife Research**

The Wildlife Research section is responsible for acquiring and distributing biological and ecological information critical for the science-based management, conservation, restoration and wise use of Florida’s wildlife resources. This section provides information for conserving these resources to federal, state and local managers and the public.

*A year since FWC biologists reintroduced 100 Florida scrub lizards to Hypoluxo Scrub Natural Area in Palm Beach County, a monitoring survey shows the population is growing and continues to disperse along sand trails throughout Hypoluxo Scrub. Researchers will continue monitoring for another year.*
FWRI’s Disturbance Response Monitoring Program is highly complementary to their existing long-term coral monitoring programs and continues to be a critical component in providing field-based coral health information to reef managers and reef researchers.

**FWRI budget summary**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Funding Source</th>
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<th>FTE Salaries</th>
<th>Other Costs</th>
<th>Total Budget</th>
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<td>Land Acquisition Trust Fund</td>
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<td>Marine Resources Conservation Trust Fund</td>
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<td>Nongame Wildlife Trust Fund</td>
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<td>Fixed Capital Outlay:</td>
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<td>FWRI Repairs</td>
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<td>$644,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mote Marine Laboratory</td>
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<td>$1,000,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Marine Recovery Program</td>
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<td>$1,931,931</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total Budget</strong></td>
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<td><strong>$50,267,754</strong></td>
<td><strong>$73,224,687</strong></td>
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</table>
The Division of Freshwater Fisheries Management promotes Florida’s well-earned title of “Fishing Capital of the World” and works to improve freshwater fish populations and anglers’ use of the resource.
FFM engages anglers and other stakeholders to develop management plans for lakes, rivers and 80 Fish Management Areas, providing anglers with the best fishing anywhere and expanding the $1.7 billion freshwater fishing economic impact. FFM has developed a private-public partnership through the TrophyCatch conservation and marketing program, which uses citizen science to provide valuable information that contributes to the management of Florida’s trophy bass fisheries. Special projects such as the high school fishing program and fishing and boating camps encourage responsible fishing practices and help bolster future generations’ understanding of and personal investment in the conservation of fish and wildlife resources.

Mission

To manage, enhance and conserve Florida’s freshwater aquatic life for public benefit.

Strategies

♦ Evaluates resource characteristics, informs the public of resource conditions and incorporates stakeholder input to determine goals in managing freshwater fisheries.

*TrophyCatch is an award-winning partnership between FWC biologists, anglers and fishing industry leaders, such as Bass Pro Shops, that rewards the catch, documentation and release of largemouth bass weighing 8 pounds or heavier in Florida. The program is now in Season 8 and has approved over 10,000 trophy bass. FWC biologists use TrophyCatch data for bass research, to make informed decisions about the management of Florida bass fisheries, and to promote the catch-and-release of trophy bass.*
♦ Uses innovative and scientifically proven management strategies, including habitat enhancement, harvest regulations, public outreach and fish stocking to conserve or improve quality freshwater fishing opportunities.

♦ Manages aquatic plant habitat and interacts with agencies responsible for water quality and quantity to represent the needs of the fisheries and enhance habitat for freshwater fish and aquatic life.

♦ Maintains 80 Fish Management Areas throughout the state to provide fishing opportunities for a diversity of anglers.

♦ Provides technical services to public, state and federal organizations, universities and other interest groups about fisheries management issues, fishing opportunities, fish pond management, fish kills, boating access and other issues.

♦ Provides hatchery operations to produce dependable quantities of healthy freshwater fish to cost-effectively meet stocking program objectives.

♦ Encourages freshwater stewardship through instructional clinics, camps, publications, electronic media and fishing events.

Recreational fishing is an American tradition that brings friends and families together to enjoy the outdoors.
Division of Freshwater Fisheries Management sections

**Fisheries Management**

The Fisheries Management section ensures the best freshwater fishing opportunities in Florida’s lakes, rivers and streams through stocking desirable sportfish, producing annual fishing regulations, enhancing habitats and maintaining Fish Management Areas. FFM coordinates with stakeholders and federal, state and local entities to protect and conserve freshwater resources and maintain fishing quality. Fisheries management information and strong aquatic stewardship, ethics and ecology messages are communicated through publications, electronic media, youth fishing camps, seminars and events.

**Hatchery Operations and Stocking**

The state has two freshwater hatcheries: the Florida Bass Conservation Center at Richloam Hatchery and the Blackwater Fisheries Research and Development Center. They produce approximately 4-5 million freshwater fish annually, which are stocked in more than 100 Florida lakes, rivers and community-managed waters.

*Season 8 TrophyCatch Hall of Fame Leader, Vance Mccullers, shows off his 15 pound, 2 ounce trophy bass caught in Polk County.*
## FFM budget summary

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Funding Source</th>
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<th>FTE Salaries</th>
<th>Other Costs</th>
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<td>$2,358,467</td>
<td>$5,972,695</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**Total Budget**: 59.0

FFM's hatchery program plays a key role in implementation of the Florida Black Bass Management Plan, especially the Fish Management action steps.
The Division of Habitat and Species Conservation integrates scientific data with applied habitat and species management to maintain stable or increasing populations of fish and wildlife. Conservation integration efforts focus on the ecosystem or landscape scale to provide the greatest benefits to the widest possible array of fish and wildlife species.

Imperiled Species Management staff conducted a Warm-Water Saves Manatees outreach campaign to alert stakeholders about the importance of not disturbing manatees in warm water refuges. Staff distributed letters and flyers to over 350 ecotour and watersport vendors which may promote viewing, or interactions with, manatees near warm-water sites.
Accomplishing this mission requires extensive collaboration and partnering with local, state and federal agencies as well as nongovernmental organizations and stakeholders to maintain diverse and healthy fish and wildlife populations for the benefit of all Floridians and visitors. Doing so provides direct ecological, economic, aesthetic, scientific and recreational benefits.

**Mission**

To ensure healthy populations of all native wildlife and their habitats on a statewide basis.

**Strategies**

- Manages aquatic habitat for marine, estuarine and freshwater systems to benefit the widest possible array of fish and wildlife.
- Manages natural plant communities on public lands for diversity of wildlife species while providing quality recreational experiences.
- Works in partnership with landowners to provide for a diversity of species.
- Provides support and assistance for habitat-related issues to private and public sector landowners, including local, state and federal governments, to inform and influence land- and water-use decisions affecting wildlife habitat management.

The FWC approved Species Conservation Measures and Permitting Guidelines for several of the more than 50 species in the agency’s Imperiled Species Management Plan, including the gopher frog.
♦ Develops and implements species management plans that serve as conservation blueprints for managing threatened species and implements conservation programs that are designed to maintain Florida’s unique wildlife diversity.

♦ Coordinates nonnative species management and research to protect native species in Florida by funding the control of invasive fish and wildlife and focusing on prevention, early detection, removal activities and rapid response to introductions of nonnative fish and wildlife.

♦ Implements conservation programs for imperiled species, such as manatees, Florida panthers and sea turtles, to increase populations of these imperiled species.

♦ Directs, regulates and funds the control of invasive plants on public conservation lands and in public water bodies for the protection of native plant and animal life, human health, safety, recreation and property.

♦ Provides services to enhance visitors’ experiences on Florida’s wildlife management area system, promotes wildlife-focused tourism and engages volunteers to participate in the agency’s conservation mission.

The FWC, partnering with the South Florida Water Management District, held the Florida Python Challenge™ 2020 Python Bowl. The high-profile event was designed to protect the rare Everglades habitat and the animals that live there from the invasive, nonnative Burmese pythons.
Habitat and Species Conservation sections

Wildlife and Habitat Management

Florida has one of the nation’s largest systems of state-managed wildlife lands. The Wildlife Management Area system includes over 6 million acres. The Wildlife and Habitat Management section is the FWC’s lead manager on 1.5 million acres and assists cooperators with wildlife management on another 4.5 million acres. This section’s activities are designed to maintain, enhance and restore native natural habitats for the benefit of plant and animal populations and the citizens of Florida. Habitat management is adaptive and is based on sound land management principles and practices. Habitat management activities include prescribed fire, mechanical and chemical control of invasive exotics, and hydrology restoration. Section programs include land conservation, long-term management planning and a variety of surveys and monitoring designed to ensure management efforts are accomplishing desired objectives. Wildlife-centric public use is emphasized and promoted through development and maintenance of infrastructure designed to provide WMA users with a quality outdoor experience. Public use activities include a variety of hunting, fishing and wildlife viewing opportunities.

Wildlife management areas such as Triple N Ranch provide homes for some of Florida’s most iconic, and threatened, wildlife species. At the same time, they contribute unparalleled hunting, fishing, wildlife viewing and other recreational opportunities.
Aquatic Habitat Conservation and Restoration

This section uses a multidisciplinary approach to restore, enhance and manage publicly-owned aquatic resources to improve the ecological health of freshwater, estuarine and marine habitats. This is accomplished by designing and constructing projects to improve aquatic habitat and implementing a variety of management treatments to maintain or enhance ecological resource values for wetland-dependent fish and wildlife. This Section works cooperatively with other state, local and federal agencies, non-governmental organizations, stakeholders, and user groups to build partnerships to address various issues affecting aquatic resources, including nutrient enrichment, public access and habitat improvements.

Wildlife Diversity Conservation

The mission of this section is conserving Florida’s wildlife diversity and associated habitats. It develops and implements high priority conservation activities for native wildlife, with an emphasis on imperiled species and Species of Greatest Conservation Need. Partnerships with other governmental agencies (local, state and federal), nongovernmental organizations and individuals help achieve conservation goals for wildlife. This section manages most of the state’s threatened species and coordinates activities relating to

Aquatic restoration and enhancement projects are designed not only to improve habitat conditions, but to ensure the long-term sustainability of fish and wildlife resources that depend on these systems.
Florida’s listing process and permitting of human activities that may affect listed species, as well maintaining and revising the State Wildlife Action Plan. The SWAP is a comprehensive, statewide plan for conserving the state’s wildlife and vital natural areas, and outlines native wildlife and habitats in need, why they are in need and conservation actions for protecting them. The section is implementing the Imperiled Species Management Plan to conserve 59 species currently listed as state-threatened or recently removed from the state’s imperiled species lists. The ISMP combines specific species action plans with broader integrated conservation strategies benefiting multiple species. This section also continues developing, implementing and/or coordinating activities associated with the Gopher Tortoise Management Plan, the Coastal Wildlife Conservation Initiative, the Florida Shorebird Alliance, wildlife permitting, incentive based conservation, and regional wildlife diversity conservation operations and technical assistance.

**Imperiled Species Management**

This section is responsible for conservation of manatees, sea turtles, panthers and black bears through implementation of federal recovery plans and state management plans. Staff With only 30 breeding pairs detected by surveys in 2019, extinction is a real possibility for the critically-endangered Florida grasshopper sparrow. The FWC, working with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and other partners, successfully released captive-reared sparrows into the wild, and released birds successfully fledged young. With this significant achievement, along with nest protection and critically-important habitat management, FWC and partners are hoping to set the sparrow on the path to recovery. The 2019 update to the state’s comprehensive Florida Black Bear Management Plan was approved by the FWC Commissioners at the December 2019 meeting. The plan provides a statewide framework for actions needed to ensure the long-term survival of bears and address bear management challenges.
in the programs with federally-listed species work closely with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service on management and recovery tasks. All four programs have seen significant gains for the species they manage, including population increases. The Bear Management Program works with local governments, communities and waste management companies to assist them with adopting BearWise measures, such as securing garbage, to reduce human-bear conflicts. Staff updated the Bear Management Plan in 2019 with new data, and added a section on population management strategies. The program meets with a statewide stakeholder group, as well as seven local bear stakeholder groups to provide the agency with input on how people and bears can coexist and to engage citizens in actions that support bear conservation. Other key section tasks include development of rules and regulations that provide needed protections, providing technical assistance to local governments and other state agencies for planning purposes and permit reviews, and addressing human-wildlife conflicts. The section coordinates with the Fish and Wildlife Research Institute’s researchers to identify information needs that will assist in making management decisions. The section conducts outreach activities to encourage the public to become engaged in actions that will help these iconic species’ long-term survival.

The 2019 update to the state’s comprehensive Florida Black Bear Management Plan was approved by the FWC Commissioners at the December 2019 meeting. The plan provides a statewide framework for actions needed to ensure the long-term survival of bears and address bear management challenges.
Wildlife Impact Management

This section is the organizational home of two programs addressing human-wildlife interactions and managing the impact of native and nonnative fish and wildlife species. The role of the FWC’s wildlife assistance biologists is to assist the public with nuisance wildlife and conflict issues regarding many species, including coyote and bear, through education, outreach and technical assistance. Staff working with the nonnative fish and wildlife program are working with local, state and federal partners to manage invasive species in Florida, including Burmese pythons and tegus. The section works with staff in the FWC Division of Law Enforcement’s Captive Wildlife and Investigations Sections to prevent nonnative species from harming native fish and wildlife and to develop science-based regulations to prevent the release and establishment of nonnative species. The section also partners with other agencies to promote responsible pet ownership of nonnative wildlife and increase awareness of the problems associated with introduced species.

Invasive Plant Management

This section is responsible for directing, coordinating and funding two statewide programs controlling invasive upland plants on public conservation lands and invasive aquatic plants.

Invasive plants harm Florida’s natural environment and lead to a loss of biodiversity and ecosystem health. They usually cannot be completely eradicated and grow back quickly if not managed consistently. Mechanical harvesters are one method used by the FWC to control nuisance and invasive vegetation.
in public waterways. It regulates, through a permitting program, projects for control of aquatic plants that do not meet the eligibility requirements for state funding. The FWC protects Florida's native plant and wildlife diversity through the management of invasive plants on public lands and waterways, dissemination of information, public education efforts; contractual research; and surveillance of plant communities on public lands and waterways. This section’s goal is to protect native fish and wildlife habitat by reducing existing populations of invasive plants and preventing new invasive plant populations from becoming established.

**Office of Conservation Planning Services**

This office utilizes a science-based, proactive approach to inform and influence land and water use decisions to build public-private conservation partnerships with Florida landowners. Conservation Planning Services staff coordinates the agency’s review of and comments on growth management and regulated land and water use project proposals that have potential to impact Florida’s fish, wildlife and habitat resources.

The Landowner Assistance Program is a cooperative, voluntary effort among Florida private landowners, the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission and other partners to improve habitat conditions for fish and wildlife. Biologists with the Landowner Assistance Program can help private landowners manage their land to benefit wildlife. They also can help landowners with other available conservation resources, including financial and educational support.
Working with private and public sector landowners, this office develops and helps implement comprehensive habitat-based management plans and incentive programs for private landowners. Best management practices for conserving wildlife on private lands used for agriculture or forestry have been developed in partnership with the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services. Conservation Planning Services also provides managers of publicly owned lands with technical assistance to implement wildlife conservation strategies that reduce negative impacts on fish and wildlife.

Public Access Services Office

The Public Access Services Office develops recreational opportunities, public access improvements and interpretive materials to enhance visitors’ enjoyment and understanding of fish and wildlife and their habitats on Florida’s wildlife management area system. The office also promotes wildlife tourism through programs such as the Great Florida Birding and Wildlife Trail, and provides technical assistance to local governments that fosters sustainable nature-based recreation particularly in rural communities and regions. The office coordinates and supports agency volunteer programs to achieve greater conservation benefits and leverage state dollars. Tens of thousands of Floridians partner with the FWC through these programs.

FWC Wildlife Management Areas offer many recreational opportunities such as hiking the Florida National Scenic Trail at the Aucilla WMA. The FWC’s Public Access Services Office develops trails, facilities and interpretive materials for our WMAs as well as wildlife viewing and citizen science opportunities throughout the state.
## HSC budget summary

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Fixed Capital Outlay:
- Fisheating Creek WMA: $900,000
- Babcock-Webb WMA office: $550,000
- Marine Recovery Program: $4,551,583

The FWC’s Wildlife Assistance Program provides education, outreach, and technical assistance to citizens to help reduce human-wildlife conflict. Staff work with individuals and communities experiencing conflicts with wildlife to find sustainable resolutions and to develop strategies to coexist with native wildlife wherever possible. Program staff continue to develop educational materials including a new wildlife in structures brochure.
The Division of Hunting and Game Management uses scientifically proven game-management strategies and professional expertise to perpetuate safe, sustainable hunting opportunities statewide, with an emphasis on waterfowl, small game, deer, wild turkey and alligators. The Division also develops rules and recommends wildlife management policies on 6 million acres of public hunting lands, which provide various hunting opportunities.
The Division of Hunting and Game Management uses scientifically proven game-management strategies and professional expertise to perpetuate safe, sustainable hunting opportunities statewide, with an emphasis on waterfowl, small game, deer, wild turkey and alligators. The Division also develops rules and recommends wildlife management policies on 6 million acres of public hunting lands, which provide various hunting opportunities. Division staff participate in national, state and regional advisory groups to support management and regulation of Florida’s game wildlife. The Division also manages public shooting sports facilities throughout the state and offers hunter safety courses to help students become safe, responsible and knowledgeable hunters and learn about conservation.

In addition, the Division oversees Florida’s initiative to recruit, retain and reactivate (R3) hunters and target shooters. R3 in Florida, which is founded on a national initiative, coordinates resources and programs of conservation agencies, industry partners and non-governmental organizations to increase participation in conservation. R3 efforts focus on identifying what people need to become involved in conservation and developing, measuring and adapting programs to better serve those interested in learning to hunt and target shoot. Providing people with opportunities to engage in hunting and the shooting sports helps the conservation funding model remain strong.

*Florida’s initiative to recruit, retain and reactivate (R3) hunters and shooting sports enthusiasts is a collaborative effort focused on harnessing the resources of conservation agencies, industry partners and non-governmental organizations. To increase participation in hunting and conservation, R3 efforts focus on identifying what people need to become involved and then better serving those who are interested with training and tools such as the FWC’s MyFWC.com/NewHunter webpage.*
Mission

To manage and conserve game wildlife for the future, while fostering safe and responsible hunting.

Strategies

♦ Manages hunting activities and associated wildlife resources using science-based strategies to ensure that conservation objectives are met and hunting opportunities are sustainable.

♦ Develops or expands new hunting opportunities and improves existing hunting opportunities statewide.

♦ Provides programs to recruit Floridians as participants in conservation, hunting and other wildlife-related activities, retain those already involved in hunting, and reactivate those who have lapsed.

♦ Provides high-quality programs for hunter safety training.

♦ Manages public shooting ranges throughout the state to safely support the needs of recreational target shooters, hunters and hunter safety students.

Volunteers from Florida Sportsmen’s Conservation Association, the South Florida Water Management District and the FWC’s Youth Hunting Program teamed up to educate the next generation about conservation by hosting a youth python hunt in 2019 and 2020. Before both hunts, youth participants received training about how to safely remove these invasive constrictors from the wild. Youth participating in the two hunts, along with members of the Python Action Team and the South Florida Water Management District’s Python Elimination Program, made a positive impact for Florida’s native wildlife by removing 19 invasive Burmese pythons. The FWC’s Youth Hunting Program provides safe, educational, mentored hunts for youth who might not have the opportunity to experience hunting and learn about conservation.
Brings together hunting interest groups, governmental and nongovernmental agencies, research institutes and the public to consider ways to effectively manage Florida’s game wildlife species.

Provides scientific expertise to the Commission so they can make informed decisions about managing Florida’s game wildlife resources.

Division of Hunting and Game Management sections

Game Management and Public Hunting

Managing Florida’s wild game populations using science, leadership and key partnerships occurs in this section. Section staff use scientific research to develop sound management practices to conserve game wildlife species while providing opportunities for responsible and sustainable hunting. The section also develops partnerships, rules, regulations and publications that facilitate safe and sustainable public hunting opportunities on 6 million public acres in Florida. Section staff coordinate the distribution of rule-related information and publications, provide technical assistance to the hunting public, and work with stakeholders and partners to coordinate support for hunting-related activities on public lands.

The Division of Hunting and Game Management launched a new online tool – WMA Finder – to help people search for the wide range of recreational opportunities available on Florida’s wildlife management area system. WMA Finder enables users to search for public hunting opportunities by location, season, species, and hunt type. It also lets outdoor enthusiasts find public shooting ranges as well as fishing, camping, and horseback riding opportunities on the WMA system. Florida has one of the largest WMA systems in the country at 6 million acres.
Hunter Safety and Public Shooting Ranges

In this section, programs are offered throughout the state to address the Division’s mission. Florida Statutes require most hunters to be certified. The section provides hunter safety courses as well as workshops and special events to ensure Florida hunters are well prepared to be safe, responsible and conservation-minded. Specialized courses include Becoming an Outdoors-Woman, advanced archery, basic muzzleloading firearms and safety training camps for young hunters. To safely support the needs of recreational target shooters, hunters and hunter safety students, the Division manages 11 public shooting ranges located throughout the state. The newest FWC-managed range was constructed in Palm Beach County to meet the growing demand for safe, clean and family-friendly public shooting sports facilities.

The rifle and handgun ranges at Palm Beach Shooting Sports Complex opened in May 2020 to meet growing demand for public shooting sports facilities and offer a place for people to gain skills and knowledge for safe, responsible hunting and target shooting. When finished, this complex will be one of the largest shooting sports facilities in Florida with five rifle and handgun ranges; five Olympic trap fields; six American trap fields; nine skeet fields; and a 15-station sporting clays course. It also includes a classroom, restrooms, drinking water, and concession store with eye and ear protection, ammunition and other convenience items for sale.
## HGM budget summary

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<tr>
<td>Palm Beach Recreational Shooting Park</td>
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The Youth Hunting Program of Florida is designed to introduce more young people to hunting and conservation by offering safe, educational, mentored hunts. Youth between the ages of 12 and 17 who are accompanied by a parent or guardian can learn about conservation and outdoor skills from an experienced mentor during organized hunts. The FWC and its partners and volunteers are passionate about connecting youth to the outdoors and creating the next generation of natural resource stewards. Learn more at MyFWC.com/YHPF.
The FWC Division of Law Enforcement’s 1,043 members, including 848 sworn law enforcement officers, operate in six regions throughout the state. FWC officers are responsible for uniformed patrol and investigative law enforcement services on more than 8,400 miles of coastline, 13,200 square miles of offshore waters, and more than 34 million acres of land encompassing a variety of habitats including private lands, wildlife management areas, state parks and forests.
FWC officers stand as sentinels for the conservation of Florida’s natural resources and the public who utilize these resources. FWC officers are highly trained, versatile law enforcement officers with full police powers and statewide jurisdiction. Cooperative agreements with the National Marine Fisheries Service and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service cross-deputize FWC officers to enforce federal marine fisheries and wildlife laws, thus ensuring state and federal consistency in resource protection.

FWC officers are an effective model of modern law enforcement multi-tasking – providing law enforcement that:

♦ Protects Florida’s fish, wildlife and habitats to ensure their long-term well-being and continued viability for educational, recreational and commercial activities.

♦ Safeguards public safety and enriches the outdoor experience of residents and visitors.

♦ Conducts search-and-rescue to protect the public statewide – performing hundreds of missions each year on land, sea and in the air.

♦ Utilize specialized training, capabilities and equipment that enables officers to respond to emergencies, natural disasters and other critical incidents through coordinated efforts with local, state and federal mutual-aid partners.

♦ Provides for public safety and law enforcement services in Florida’s 175 state parks and nine state trails covering 800,000 acres.

FWC officers have full police powers and statewide jurisdiction. They patrol rural, wilderness and inshore and offshore areas and are often the sole law enforcement presence in many remote parts of the state.
♦ Enforces laws to protect the resources of Florida and the safety of people using these resources when hunting, boating, freshwater and saltwater fishing, visiting state parks, viewing wildlife, fishing commercially or processing seafood.

♦ Enforces boating and waterways laws and promotes educational activities to enhance boating safety for residents and visitors – an economic value of approximately $17 billion.

♦ Enhances boating safety and waterway experiences through maintenance and repair of 244 boat ramps, construction of new boat ramps and placement and maintenance of waterway markers.

♦ Protects the public in rural, semi-wilderness, wilderness and offshore areas where no other law enforcement agencies routinely patrol.

♦ Provides for public safety and the well-being of animals at captive wildlife facilities throughout the state.

♦ Investigates and monitors the illegal shipping of protected and regulated wildlife into and out of Florida.

♦ Supports domestic and homeland security initiatives in Florida’s ports.

♦ Encourages the next generation of conservationists and enhances outdoor experiences through education, public outreach partnerships and youth-oriented programs.

FWC officers are charged not only with enforcing state and federal laws but also with protecting Florida’s wildlife and habitats, including rescuing injured animals.
Division of Law Enforcement Sections

FWC officers and investigators protect fish, wildlife and their habitats as well as Florida’s residents and visitors. They provide service on Florida’s waters and state-owned lands, including wildlife management areas, state parks and state forests. FWC officers patrol more than 34 million acres of state and private lands, protecting game and non-game wildlife, as well as endangered species, like the Florida panther. FWC officers are responsible for patrolling all of Florida’s woods, including public and private lands, as well as its waters, so they must be well versed on a wide variety of topics and information. It is this blend of resource protection and law enforcement that makes the FWC Division of Law Enforcement unique.

Law Enforcement North Operations

This section oversees law enforcement services throughout the FWC’s three northern regions, as well as the Training section.

The FWC’s Northwest Region encompasses 16 counties from Escambia to Jefferson.

The North Central Region includes 17 counties - from Taylor, south to Citrus on the west coast and over to Nassau and Duval on the east coast.

The Division of Law Enforcement prides itself on professionalism in all aspects. It is an accredited law enforcement agency, achieving its initial accreditation from the Commission for Florida Law Enforcement Accreditation (CFA) in 2009 and was reaccredited in 2018. There are approximately 240 prescribed standards reflecting best management practices that a law enforcement agency must consistently meet or exceed over a three-year period in order to achieve this status.
The Northeast Region’s 12 counties include St. Johns on the north end, down to Indian River on the east coast and west over to Sumter.

Training

This section manages officer recruitment and provides professional basic recruit instruction, advanced training and career development programs for approximately 848 sworn law enforcement officers statewide. Six recruiters located throughout the state work to fill open positions with the most qualified applicants. Staff trains FWC officers in conservation law enforcement methodology as well as standard police practices. Approximately 80 officers are hired, trained and assigned throughout the state following graduation every year. This section also provides extensive ongoing instruction to maintain mandatory certifications for all sworn law enforcement officers.

Law Enforcement South Operations

This section oversees law enforcement services throughout the FWC’s three southern regions, as well as the Operational Support section.

The Southwest Region contains 12 counties – from Hernando to the north end down to Lee in the south and east to Polk and Highlands counties.

FWC officers are not only trained in standard police practices, but undergo rigorous training in conservation law enforcement methodology as well.
The South “A” Region includes the counties of Okeechobee (including Lake Okeechobee), St. Lucie, Martin, Palm Beach, Broward, Glades, and Hendry.

The South “B” Region includes Miami-Dade, Collier and Monroe counties.

**Operational Support**

This section coordinates all aviation assets (assisting in the hundreds of search-and-rescue missions conducted each year), offshore federal Joint Enforcement Agreement and state fisheries enforcement, state Emergency Operations Center activities and readiness for natural disasters, mutual aid requests, K-9 operations, multiple dive teams and Special Operations Group activities, including dignitary protection details. Staff also provides proactive solutions for situations within the Division of Law Enforcement and FWC to increase employee effectiveness and efficiency through strategic and operational planning, policy development, accreditation and communication.

**Investigations and Intelligence**

This section provides direction and oversight to investigators in each of the six regions for long-term undercover and commercial resource investigations, protecting legal businesses from unfair competition by unlicensed, illegal entities. It also coordinates agency law enforcement involvement in the Homeland Security and

FWC K-9 teams are specially trained in tracking and wildlife detection. The K-9s receive no aggression training and are very “user-friendly.” In addition to their law enforcement functions, they have proved to be a great community-oriented policing relations tool.
USCG Fusion Centers, the FBI terrorism task force and the Interstate Wildlife Violator Compact.

Investigations/Intelligence staff oversees the Internet Crimes Unit, forensics program and the Wildlife Alert program, as well as provides intelligence information to officers in the field and coordinates with other agencies and entities. It uses the division’s unique capabilities to further the agency’s mission and assists with coordination of mutual-aid efforts with local, state and federal partners.

**Boating and Waterways**

Enhances boating safety and waterway experiences through maintenance and repair of more than 244 boat ramps, construction of new boat ramps and placement and maintenance of waterway markers. They coordinate the removal of derelict vessels and the development of boating infrastructure. They promote boating safety through education and outreach, and investigation and analysis of boating accident data. Staff also improves and increases boating access to Florida’s waters through the management of two grant programs that enhance boating access and maintain public boating facilities.

**Captive Wildlife**

The FWC promotes responsible ownership of captive wildlife, from zoos to private individuals, and strives to develop the best

_FWC dispatchers use a computer-aided dispatch system to stay in contact with officers in the field, whether those officers are on land, at sea or in the air._
framework possible that provides for public safety, animal welfare and the legitimate use of wildlife for educational, exhibition or personal purposes. Florida’s captive wildlife regulations are among the most stringent in the nation. Nearly 6,000 captive wildlife licensees who possess wildlife in Florida must be licensed and meet all safe housing and humane treatment standards. This section also responds during critical emergencies, including environmental and natural disasters.

**Office of Deputy Chief**

This section is responsible for managing the finances for the division, assisting legislative affairs, negotiations with the law enforcement labor union, performance-based budgeting, rules review, staff inspections and disciplinary management to ensure that the agency has the most professional, courteous and knowledgeable staff possible.

**Fleet and Technical Services**

Staff members support the officers in the field by ensuring they have the best operating patrol fleet and technological equipment available to law enforcement. Dedicated support personnel install and maintain vital communications equipment, vehicles and patrol vessels. They also manage data entry of arrest and warning citations, a computer-aided dispatch system and the Statewide Law Enforcement Radio System.

_Captive Wildlife oversees nearly 6,000 permits designed to protect the well-being of the animals as well as ensuring public safety. Those holding permits must meet all safe housing and humane treatment standards._
### LE Budget Summary

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As part of ongoing boating safety messaging, a PSA regarding the importance of wearing life jackets is filmed.
Protecting our Resources: Case Highlights

Northwest Region Investigators, the Northwest Region SOG Team, and local officers served a search warrant and recovered nearly 6,000 oysters. The Northwest Dive team was able to locate and assist in the recovery of thousands more oysters. This case resulted in four subjects being charged with 10 felonies and 66 misdemeanors. Front: (SOG) Officer Britton Corbin; Far left: (SOG) Officer Charles Bradshaw; Back middle: Officer John Clark; Back right: (SOG) Lt. Shelton Bartlett; Far right: (SOG) Officer Randall Brooks.

Officers worked a complaint regarding subjects illegally accessing private property and looting artifacts from a designated artifact site known as the Flint Creek Site. They worked with the state’s Bureau of Archaeological Research to access the damage, which surpassed $15,000. The landowner was extremely grateful since the damage was costing his farming business significant money. Left: Officer Malachi Wilkins; Right: Investigator Nick Guerin.

Officer Rodney Boone, Lt. Bryan Humphries, Investigator Leslie Sharpe, Officer Luke Davenport and the Department of Correction’s K-9 team responded to the property for assistance in locating the fleeing subject who was trespassing on private property. The subject was quickly apprehended only to confess to felony trespass, killing a turkey out of season, and hiding both the gun and turkey in the woods nearby. The individual was transported to the Suwannee County Jail and charged appropriately.
Using digital forensics, DNA analysis, and some good old-fashioned investigative skills, Officers Wash Wear, Bo Dias, Mike Rice, and Lt. Robby Creech charged multiple hunters who had been illegally harvesting trophy deer as far back as 2018. In addition to multiple arrests, the officers discovered the elaborate scheme the poachers were using to cover their tracks, which included falsifying documents and posting photos on social media during open seasons to appear as if they were taken legally.

Officers Jeremy Foell, Jason Richards, Austin Cobb, and Lt. Josh Peters conducted a commercial fisheries inspection on a vessel in the closed area of the Tortugas South Ecological Reserve. The inspection revealed the vessel to be in possession of 756 pounds of illegally caught reef fish. The captain and crew of the commercial vessel were cited for the closed area violations as well as several charges for possession of undersize reef fish and harvest of specific reef fish during a closed season.

While aboard the Offshore Patrol Vessel Guardian, Lt. Jason Marlow and Officers Tom Nelson and Will Raker were on patrol in the Gulf of Mexico when they stopped a commercial longline vessel and conducted an inspection. The inspection of their gear revealed that shark, tilefish and amberjack were being used as bait. During the stop, officers watched the crew hang additional sharks on the overhead line on the side of the vessel and had the crew release them along with the other sharks that were hanging. The violations included: use of reef fish as bait, failure to leave finfish intact, failure to land shark intact, no shark permit, failure to return shark immediately with the minimal amount of harm and possession of greater amberjack during closed season. Officer Tom Nelson, Lt. Jason Marlow and Officer Galen Boyd. Not pictured but related to the case, Officer Will Raker.
Division of Marine Fisheries Management

Jessica McCawley, Director
Russell Building
1875 Orange Avenue East
Tallahassee, FL 32301
850-487-0554

The Division of Marine Fisheries Management works with stakeholders, federal agencies, other states and regional councils to manage and provide outreach on more than 500 marine fish and invertebrates.
The Division also provides expertise, monitoring and grant funding for the deployment of artificial reefs; recovers lost or abandoned lobster and crab traps; conducts wholesale-dealer audits; provides agency comments on proposed development projects that may affect marine resources; and issues special activity licenses for harvest of species for research and educational purposes. This division also provides outreach and education in an effort to introduce people to the sport of fishing, instill ethical angling values, and ensure comprehension of marine fisheries regulations. And finally, staff works to raise awareness and encourage removal of invasive lionfish.

**Mission**

To manage Florida’s marine fisheries for their long-term sustainability, their economic benefits and for the enjoyment of the public.

**Strategies**

♦ Brings together fisheries interest groups, research institutions, government agencies and the public to consider ways to manage Florida’s marine fisheries effectively.

♦ Supports Commission efforts to make informed management decisions based on the best available scientific data and public input.

*The FWC offers several programs that teach youth saltwater fishing skills and marine resource stewardship, including Saltwater Fish Camps, Kids’ Fishing Clinics and the High School Fishing program.*
♦ Develops fisheries management plans to prevent overfishing of important commercial and recreational marine species while allowing for sustainable levels of harvest to benefit people.

♦ Provides grants for artificial reef construction, monitoring and research.

♦ Provides the public with information regarding conservation and management of Florida’s valuable marine fisheries.

**Division of Marine Fisheries Management sections**

**Analysis and Rulemaking**

This section compiles fishery data, coordinates with other government agencies and research institutions, and solicits information from the public regarding fishery management strategies for state saltwater fisheries regulations. Section employees use this information to develop management and rulemaking recommendations for Commission consideration.

**Federal Fisheries**

This section serves as liaison between the FWC Commissioners and federal councils, including the Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council and the South Atlantic Fishery Management Council.

*The FWC’s Catch a Florida Memory program promotes conservation-minded fishing practices while providing rewards and recognition to new and experienced saltwater anglers. Over 5,500 individual catches were submitted with 1,111 achievements awarded in the 2019-2020 Fiscal Year.*
Council. These federal councils manage marine fish species such as snapper and grouper in federal waters. Staff members in this section serve on these regional fishery councils and coordinate with stakeholders on federal fisheries issues.

**Fisheries Services**

This section works as a liaison between the marine fishing community and the FWC, promoting responsible recreational and commercial fishing activities. The Marine Fisheries Services section also works to resolve issues related to proposed regulations, commercial license applications and wholesale-dealer compliance; promotes lionfish removal; conducts educational activities such as saltwater fishing clinics; creates partnerships for youth fishing camps; provides outreach on regulatory changes, responsible angling, marine conservation and the Federal Aid in Sport Fish Restoration Program; coordinates with the industry to document fisheries disasters, seeks fisheries disaster-relief financial assistance and distributes funding; operates a trap-retrieval program; administers the statewide artificial reef programs; comments on environmental projects; and issues special activity licenses for harvest of species for research and educational purposes.

Approximately 70-100 public artificial reefs are constructed annually off Florida using a combination of federal, state and local government, and private funds. These reefs increase reef fish habitats and enhance recreational and charter fishing and diving opportunities.
## MFM budget summary

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Funding Source</th>
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<th>FTE Salaries</th>
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<td>$21,002,114</td>
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### Fixed Capital Outlay:
- **Artificial Reef**: $600,000
- **Innovation Technology - Lionfish**: $400,000
- **Total Budget**: 34.0
- **Total Budget**: $2,468,619
- **Total Budget**: $19,533,495
- **Total Budget**: $22,002,114

“The years of collaborative work with stakeholders and partners has resulted in a significant increase in the number of fishing opportunities over the past few years, from just a few days to 51 red snapper fishing days in Gulf state and federal waters this year,” said FWC Executive Director Eric Sutton.

Photo courtesy of Brice Williamson
Within the Office of the Executive Director are the:

Community Relations Office
Finance and Budget Office
Legal Office
Legislative Affairs Office
Office of Human Resources
Office of Information Technology
Office of the Inspector General
Office of Licensing and Permitting
Office of Strategic Initiatives
Regional Operations
The executive director provides day-to-day administrative leadership for the 2,100+ full-time and 840+ OPS employees of the FWC. The director serves at the pleasure of the Commissioners, and any new appointee the Commissioners select must also be confirmed by the Senate.
The Office of the Executive Director provides coordination, oversight and support for FWC operations. It provides policy guidance, fosters accountability and promotes continual improvement among the agency’s divisions and offices. The office coordinates and supports strong engagement of commissioners and facilitates effective interaction with agency customers, stakeholders, the Florida Legislature, federal and state agencies and FWC staff to address important conservation issues. Further responsibilities include maintaining facilities and infrastructure and leading efforts to strategically focus agency staff and resources on conservation priorities. OED staff work closely with the agency’s Senior Leadership Team to ensure effective integration of agency activities and programs across all divisions and offices.

### OED support offices budget summary*

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Funding Source</th>
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*These support offices provide central administrative support to all agency programs. The following offices are included in this group: OED, CFO, Legislative, IG, SI, Legal, HR, IT, FBO, Regions. Several of the service offices are highlighted on the following page.
### Community Relations budget summary

<table>
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### Licensing and Permitting budget summary

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### Florida Youth Conservation Centers Network budget summary

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Community Relations Office

Susan Neel, Director
Russell Building
1875 Orange Avenue East
Tallahassee, FL 32301
850-488-4676

The Community Relations Office informs residents and visitors about fish and wildlife resources and encourages responsible behavior and safety while enjoying outdoor recreational activities, with the goal of raising awareness of conservation issues and the agency’s strategic initiatives. CR coordinates agency connections with the public through mass media by issuing news releases, conducting press conferences, providing interviews, writing articles and communicating with both the mainstream and outdoor press. The FWC’s social media sites, such as Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Instagram, Snapchat, Periscope and Flickr, as well as the FWC website, deliver news and resources instantly to the public and media. This office keeps abreast of important conservation issues facing Florida, and informs FWC employees, who then can communicate effectively about relevant issues. It has established a database of thousands of FWC photos in Flickr, which is accessible to anyone online.

The number of people subscribed to the FWC’s GovDelivery system is now more than 2.75 million and continues to increase each year!

FWC’s use of social media and its social media audiences continue to grow.

@MyFWC (main pages):

♦ Facebook – over 252,000 followers
♦ Instagram – over 81,200 followers
♦ Twitter – over 39,000 followers
♦ Flickr – over 25.5 million views
♦ YouTube – over 4.5 million views

Additional FWC Facebook accounts include:

♦ FWRI – over 68,200 followers
♦ HuntFlorida – over 19,900 followers
♦ Great Florida Birding & Wildlife Trail – over 20,800 followers
OLP issues more than 3 million recreational fishing and hunting licenses and permits annually through the online licensing system, Fish|Hunt FL mobile app, by telephone and interactive voice response options, and at more than 700 agent and tax collector locations. Additionally, more than 2 million licenses, permits and tags for commercial saltwater and freshwater fishing are processed through OLP.

License purchasers donated over $383,000 last year to support youth hunting and fishing programs.

The FWC’s Fish|Hunt Florida app provides options to renew, purchase and store licenses; report harvest; access sunrise/sunset and feed times; locate boat ramps; check seas and tide stations; access current regulations; connect with recognition programs; and more!
Finance and Budget Office

Charlotte Jerrett, Chief Financial Officer
Russell Building
1875 Orange Avenue East
Tallahassee, FL 32301
850-617-9600

The Finance and Budget Office is responsible for providing oversight for the Commission’s administrative functions such as disbursements, financial management, procurement, leasing and property. The office has two sections: Accounting and General Services.

During the past fiscal year, FBO:

♦ Assisted with state and federal audits.
♦ Assisted FWC Contract Managers with obtaining the required Florida Certified Contract Manager training/certification.
♦ Significantly reduced paper costs to the public by changing invoicing requirements.
♦ Improved financial and private data security by completing the People First Employee ID Conversion project.
♦ Enhanced vendor selection impartiality through uniform requirements for advance payment approval requests.
♦ Saved public taxpayer dollars by developing more effective, electronic data storage procedures.
♦ Increased frequency and types of safety training for staff in order to decrease risk.
♦ Reduced taxpayer requirements through the sale of more than $1 million of surplus equipment.
♦ Initiated a project to develop electronic routing of agreements and contracts to help lower costs and improve efficiency.
Legal Office

Emily Norton, General Counsel
620 South Meridian Street
Tallahassee, FL 32399-1600
850-487-1764

In-house attorneys provide a wide range of legal services for all the Divisions and Offices of the FWC. The Legal Office represents the FWC in litigation, prepares legal opinions, develops and reviews contracts and other legal instruments, drafts and reviews legislation and rules, and provides general legal counsel relating to FWC operations. The general counsel also provides legal support for the FWCs five annually held public Commission Meetings.
The Legislative Affairs Office develops and coordinates state and federal legislative activities for FWC and serves as the central point of contact for legislators and their staff for information about FWC’s programs and activities. This office works with the Florida Senate and the Florida House of Representatives as they consider the agency’s legislative proposals; and provides necessary information to both chambers, the U.S. Congress and legislative staff about legislation under consideration that might affect Florida’s fish and wildlife resources. This information helps the Legislature, Governor’s Office and the public understand FWC’s legislative proposals and other legislation that will impact the agency. The Legislative Affairs Office, in conjunction with FWC’s Chief Financial Officer, also works with the Legislature as it develops the agency’s budget.

During the 2020 Legislative Session, FWC staff worked closely with the bill sponsors for SB 812 and HB 549, Pub. Rec./Site-specific Location Information of Endangered and Threatened Species, to create section 379.1026, Florida Statutes, to allow FWC to exempt from public record the specific site location information of state threatened species, federally endangered species and federally threatened species. HB 549 passed the Legislature and was signed into law by the Governor, Chapter 2020-21, Laws of Florida.

In addition, FWC staff worked closely with Senators and Senate staff during the confirmation process for two of our FWC Commissioners: Commissioner Rodney Barreto and Commissioner Steven Hudson. They were confirmed unanimously by the full Senate on March 13.
The Office of Human Resources provides services and support to all FWC employees. This office advises agency personnel on employment law and state personnel rules and assists managers with recruitment and selection, attendance and leave, discipline, workers’ compensation, unemployment compensation, classification and pay, retirement, state insurance benefits, and collective bargaining. Human Resources also coordinates training and develops diversity programs for the agency.

The FWC is a member agency with the Southeastern Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies representing and supporting minority students participating in the Minorities in Natural Resources Conservation Program, under the directions of Dr. Rosezetta Bobo, Diversity Director and Mr. Paul Clemons, Interim Human Resource Director. The mission of the MINRC subcommittee is to assist SEAFWA member agencies and federal natural resource conservation agencies in the Southeastern U.S., in efforts to enhance the overall representation of minorities and women in professional occupations within the field of natural resource conservation.

Student MINRC participants and agency representatives, including Dr. Bobo (back row behind participants in maroon and black shirts) at the 73rd Annual SEAFWA Conference, held in Hilton Head, South Carolina, October 2019.
The Office of Information Technology supports the program areas of FWC by managing an information technology environment that is reliable, secure, cost-effective and responsive. This office works closely with divisions and offices to provide technology tools, services and infrastructure which enhance information accessibility and quality. The OIT supports (IT) system development and maintenance, statewide network management, information security administration and support for business processes automation. Emphasis is also placed on data processing, storage and retrieval, and providing exceptional technology support services.

During the past fiscal year, OIT:
♦ Supported IT infrastructure installation and configuration to relocate 300+ staff to two new office complexes.
♦ Played key roles in supporting the Agency’s transition to telework within 10 days in response to COVID-19.
♦ Led the development and implementation of the Agency’s Strategic Plan for compliance with ‘Cloud First’ alignment with HB5301.
♦ Supported the development and implementation of the Voucher Management System and Division of Law Enforcement Training Document Management System to improve business function and efficiency.
♦ Provided direct support for agency websites and IT applications which support public service and agency initiatives including the Catch a Florida Memory website update, the 2020 Python Challenge Initiative, and the deployment of both the Interactive Public Bear Map and the WMA Brochures online database.
As mandated by state law, this office is responsible for coordinating activities that promote accountability, integrity and efficiency in government and serves as the FWC’s ombudsman. The Office of Inspector General conducts performance and compliance audits of agency programs and investigates allegations of fraud, waste, abuse, mismanagement and employee misconduct. These complaints may include whistle-blower, criminal wrongdoing and administrative investigations.

The Office of Inspector General continues to work closely with numerous Divisions/Offices on various projects including: strengthening and improving policies and procedures, program reviews, and employee misconduct investigations.
The Office of Strategic Initiatives coordinates agency-wide collaborative programs, processes and initiatives that span the boundaries of a single division. OSI coordinates FWC’s strategic planning efforts and assists with integrative processes such as policy analysis, rule-making and commission meeting development.

OSI coordinates FWC’s efforts on Everglades restoration. By working across ecosystems and divisions, OSI ensures that the FWC is strategically positioned to support restoration of the South Florida ecosystem.

OSI houses the Florida Youth Conservation Centers Network, which supports youth conservation programming and education in the FWC. Through a network of partners and conservation centers, FYCCN provides opportunities for youth and families to participate in outdoor activities in the four core areas of shooting sports, boating, fishing and wildlife exploration to inspire lifelong passion for nature-based recreation and conservation.

OSI leads FWC’s participation with the Florida Department of Environmental Protection on Gulf restoration activities in response to the Deepwater Horizon oil spill. These restoration projects derive from the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation’s Gulf Environmental Benefit Fund, the Natural Resource Damage Assessment process and the RESTORE Act. OSI staff also provide technical assistance to other Gulf decision-makers and stakeholders.
The Office of Strategic Initiatives leads the development and implementation of FWC’s strategic planning efforts. Strategic planning leverages our values and behaviors as an agency with our operational workforce to produce significant conservation outcomes that align with an ever-changing world. Released in July 2020, the 2020+ Agency Strategic Plan focuses on aligning our agency resources to proactively address priorities and shift resources accordingly. The 2020+ Agency Strategic Plan includes a framework for identifying emerging issues and opportunities to best position the agency to achieve our mission, and reinforces agency values of fostering a culture to accept, understand, engage and serve people with different interests and uses of fish, wildlife and habitats.

Children practice casting at a fishing clinic sponsored by FYCCN.

The Suncoast Youth Conservation Center’s accessible pier was dedicated in November.
The FWC is divided into five administrative regions, each staffed with representatives of the divisions and headed by a regional director.
Recognitions

Every year, FWC programs and employees are recognized for their excellence. Here are some of the awards they garnered last year.

The Park Law Enforcement Association honored Officer Kyle Yurewitch with the 2019 Distinguished Service Award. The annual award recognizes a state law enforcement officer’s exceptional service, above regular duties, to park law enforcement and to the community. Officer Yurewitch is a highly regarded officer who has been serving Collier County since 2017. He is a member of the FWC’s Field Training Officer program, training, motivating and mentoring new officers.

At its December meeting, the Commission approved a measure to name its volunteer hunter safety instructor award to honor the important contributions of Victor Heller, former assistant executive director of the FWC. The newly named Victor Heller Hunter Safety Instructor of the Year Award will continue to annually recognize a volunteer who significantly advances the cause of safe hunting through extraordinary service in training and education. Heller, who passed in November 2019, was a passionate supporter of the FWC’s hunter safety program.

For the second consecutive year, FWC law enforcement was chosen as the winner of the Association of Fish & Wildlife Agencies Conservation Law Enforcement Award. The Port Investigations Team was presented with this award during the AFWA annual meeting in St. Paul, Minnesota. Investigator 2 Steve Wayne proudly holds the award, while Officer Jeff Sidor and K-9 Harry joined Col. Brown, Director Sutton and AFWA Executive Committee members to celebrate the occasion.

The Shikar-Safari Club International named Officer Michael Rice its 2019 Wildlife Officer of the Year. The annual award honors a state officer whose efforts show outstanding performance and achievement among sworn conservation law enforcement personnel. Officer Rice patrols Marion County where he shares his time and passion for outdoor activities, especially with his region’s youth. He excels as a Field Training Officer, serves as the Northeast Regional Intoxilizer 8000 Inspector and worked to become the area’s first Drug Recognition Expert.
Capt. David Pate was recently honored by the Commission for Law Enforcement Accreditation as the recipient of the 2018 Executive Director Award. The award honors individuals who have made exceptional contributions toward advancing Florida Accreditation. Presenting the award and pictured with Capt. Pate is CLA Executive Director Lori Mizell.

Avian Conservation Coordinator Craig Faulhaber was awarded the 2019 Rodney Barreto FWC Employee of the Year Award from the Fish & Wildlife Foundation of Florida. Faulhaber is a driving force behind protection of birds in Florida, coordinating efforts on the passage of a first-of-its kind landmark rule to prohibit the use and possession of bird traps, the reintroduction of over 100 critically endangered Florida grasshopper sparrows into the wild and the protection of imperiled beach-nesting shorebirds and wading birds through permitting guidelines. He tackled these projects with a tireless work ethic, an unwavering positive outlook and a true dedication to conserving Florida’s natural resources.

The Florida Sportsmen’s Conservation Association honored Linda Collins for her work managing the agency’s Statewide Nuisance Alligator Program. The award recognizes Collins’ commitment to public safety. Collins has worked for the FWC for 18 years. She started as an administrative assistant with the Alligator Management Program and now manages SNAP, which proactively addresses public safety risk from alligators in developed areas, while conserving alligators in areas where they naturally occur.

In addition to his Lifesaving Award with valor from FWC, Investigator II Jesse Alford was honored by FHP Troopers with a Certificate of Appreciation for his life saving heroism pulling a female driver from an overturned car in a water-filled canal.
Mothers Against Drunk and Drugged Driving (MADD) recently celebrated Officer Joshua Arbogast of South Bravo Region as their Officer of the Year. He is pictured with his wife, Stephanie.

The Southwest Region BUI Team was honored by MADD as the BUI Team of the Year. Pictured are Lt. Bontrager, Lt. Tye and Lt. VanTrees. Specifically honored was Lt. Van Trees’ squad consisting of Officers Bibeau, Bibler, Martinez, Godfrey, Wilkins, Ferguson and Phillipi.

The FWC received four awards from the annual Association for Conservation Information awards program:

First Place Video: PSA and Marketing: Thank you for your participation in Sport Fish Restoration

Second Place video: Hunting and Fishing: Lionfish: From Harvest to Table

Third Place Education: Shore-based Shark-smart Fishing Educational Module

Third Place Website: Florida Python Challenge Website

Officer Heath Nichols from NW Region was presented with the FWC Officer of the Year Award for District 1 for the Florida Park Service. Presenting the award is DEP Bureau Chief Chuck Hatcher. Also pictured is Lt. Jarrod Molnar and Assistant Director of the Florida Park Service Chief Warren Poplin.
Officer Michael McKay from South Region Bravo was presented with the FWC Officer of the Year Award for the State Parks Service District 5. Joining in the presentation (R to L) are Lt. James Yetter, Capt. David Dipre, Officer McKay and Kevin Jones, Southeast District Bureau Chief for State Parks.

Maj. Alfredo Escanio received the U.S. Department of Defense Patriot Award for his exceptional support of the members of the Coast Guard and Reserve that are employed by our organization. L to R: FWC Lt. Smith, USCG Capt. Jo-Ann Burdian, Mike Mills of the Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve, Maj. Escanio, Capt. Alberto Maza and Marine Enforcement Specialist Willie Almagro, USCGR.

The Fish & Wildlife Foundation honored now-retired FYCCN Director Rae Waddell with the 2019 Louise Ireland Humphrey Award. The Humphrey Award recognizes FWC employees for outstanding service over their entire careers. Waddell began her tenure at FWC in 1991, spending 15 years working with Florida youth at the Joe Budd Youth Conservation Center. In December of 2010, Waddell became head of the statewide FYCCN. Under her leadership, FYCCN grew to more than 350 partners and serves as a national model for developing outdoor education programs and partnerships. Her contributions are groundbreaking and long-lasting.

Lt. Dan Dickson from Northeast Region received the Officer of the Year award for the State Parks Service District 3. L to R: District 3 Assistant Manager Robert Yerro, Capt. Byron Smith, Lt. Dickson and District 3 Manager Larry Fooks.
Officer Specialist Michael Rice from NE Region was honored by the Southeastern Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies (SEAFWA) for his selection as FWC’s 2019 Officer Of The Year. Col. Curtis Brown and Lt. Col. Jack Daugherty joined him in the celebration.

NW Region Officer Heath Nichols is presented the statewide DEP State Park Officer of the Year award in Tampa by State Parks Director Eric Draper. Joining the presentation is Lt. Jarrod Molnar.

South Bravo Region Officer Shawn Polly was chosen by the sportsmen community of Florida as their Law Enforcement Officer of the Year. The award was presented to Officer Polly “in recognition of your exemplary service and selfless dedication to our wildlife, resources, and the community.”
Officer Jeremy Foell and Officer Jason Richards were presented with the Monroe County Coastal Conservation Association award. Joining them for the presentation were Lt. Mark Shea and Capt. Mitts Mravic.

From left to right, Northwest Region Investigator Justin Pifer, Officer Specialist Britton Corbin and Officer Specialist Dan Hahr were all recognized by Mothers Against Drunk Driving for their number of Boating Under the Influence arrests.

Brian Rehwinkel received the Communication Award from the National Safe Boating Council. This award had both international and national competition. Receiving this award speaks volumes to Brian’s professionalism, innovative thinking and the wealth of knowledge he brings to work every day!

Lt. George Wilson from Investigations was joined by Col. Curtis Brown and Deputy Chief Rett Boyd as he was in the inaugural class of the TCC Heroes in Public Safety Hall of Fame.
The Naples Chapter of the Florida Coastal Conservation Association recognized South Region Bravo Officer Peter Knutson as their Regional Officer of the Year. Lt. Marc Shea joined the DLE in offering congratulations.

North Central Region Officer Jordan Hilliard received the Officer of the Year award for Florida from the National Wild Turkey Federation. Joining him to celebrate was Lt. Robert Johnston. Jordan is now a nominee for the National Officer of the Year.

The Coastal Conservation Association of Collier County honored chose Officers Kevin Kleis and Chris Lugg as Officers of the Year.