



Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission

Farris Bryant Building
620 South Meridian Street
Tallahassee, Florida 32399
www.myfwc.com

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

MISSION STATEMENT AND OBJECTIVES:

The mission of the constitutionally established Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission ("FWC" or "Commission") is to manage fish and wildlife resources for their long-term well-being and the benefit of people. This mission is accomplished through the coordination of the commission with other state and federal agencies, public stakeholders, Florida residents, and visitors. FWC conducts program services through principal units called the "Office of Executive Director" ("OED") (OED includes sub-units known as "Offices"), "Divisions" (Divisions include sub-units known as "Sections"), and the "Fish and Wildlife Research Institute" ("FWRI"). OED, FWRI, and the Divisions perform the public responsibilities of research, land management, law enforcement and outreach. Divisions consist of Hunting and Game Management, Freshwater Fisheries Management, Law Enforcement, Habitat and Species Conservation, and Marine Fisheries Management. FWC's main headquarters are located in Tallahassee, Florida, with five regional offices located in Panama City, Lake City, Ocala, Lakeland, and West Palm Beach.

The agency is headed by the board - the Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission - which is composed of seven commissioners appointed by the governor, and subject to confirmation by the Senate, for staggered five-year terms. The Commission's constitutional responsibility 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." (Article IV, Section 9, Florida Constitution).

For any questions concerning FWC's operations and activities, visit our website at <https://www.myfwc.com/> or contact the Community Relations Office at 850-488-4676.

AGENCY STRUCTURE AND AUTHORITY:

The Commission is headed by seven commissioners with some authority delegated to the Executive Director. The Office of the Executive Director houses several offices and divisions with the responsibility of ensuring the administrative needs of the agency are met. Additionally, there are five principal units called Divisions that regulate fish and wildlife species and their habitat in Florida. FWC is responsible for implementing Article IV, Section 9 of the Constitution of the State of Florida, Sections 20.055, 20.331, 20.3311, 20.33115, 369.20, 369.22, Florida Statutes, Chapters 327, 328, and 379, Florida Statutes and Title 68, Florida Administrative Code, in order to achieve its constitutional and statutory responsibilities.

The Commission

Statute: Sections 379.102, 379.1025, and 379.10255, Florida Statutes (F.S.) and Article IV, Section 9, Florida Constitution

Duties/Responsibilities: The head of the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission is the commission, comprised of seven commissioners, appointed by the governor and subject to confirmation by the Senate. They serve staggered five-year terms. The commissioners meet five times per year at locations across the state to hear staff reports,

consider rule proposals and conduct other commission business. The commission has the authority to exercise the executive and regulatory powers delegated to FWC through Article IV, Section 9 of the Florida Constitution.

Office of the Executive Direction and Administrative Support Services

The Executive Director

Statute: Sections 20.331(3) & (5), 379.103, F.S.; 68-1.009, Florida Administrative Code

Duties/Responsibilities: The responsibility of OED and the executive director are to aid the Commission in the implementation of its constitutional and statutory goals by providing the day-to-day administrative leadership for the employees of the Commission. The executive director is also responsible for supervising, directing, coordinating, and administering all necessary activities for the FWC. The Executive Director is appointed by the Commission, serves at the pleasure of the Commission, and must be confirmed by the Senate.

Finance and Budget Office

Statute: Section 20.331(5)(a)

Duties/Responsibilities: The Finance and Budget Office is responsible for accounting and operational services and central agency budget support for all programs and offices. This office includes the Accounting section, which is responsible for the financial activity of the agency, the Office Services section, which is responsible for the operational activity of the agency, and the Grant section, which is responsible for providing central agency coordination and support for securing grant-funding resources.

Policy and Accountability Office

Statute: Section 20.331(6)(c), F.S.

Duties/Responsibilities: The Policy and Accountability Office is responsible for strategic planning, operational measurement and analysis, performance-improvement methodology and support, human dimensions coordination, inter-agency commenting coordination, rule-development management, stakeholder engagement and facilitation, and climate change team coordination.

Human Resources Office

Statute: Section 20.331(5)(b), F.S.

Duties/Responsibilities: The Human Resources Office assists FWC employees with payroll, benefits, attendance and leave, retirement, workers compensation, and other employment related issues. The Human Resources office also is the Commission's public point of contact for Americans with Disabilities Act ("ADA") related questions and requests.

Licensing and Permitting Office

Statute: Section 20.331(6)(c), F.S.

Duties/Responsibilities: The Licensing and Permitting Office provides a coordinated point of contact for customers to obtain licenses and permits and to provide answers to general information licensing and permitting questions from the public.

Public Access and Wildlife Viewing Services Office

Statute: Section 20.331(6)(c), F.S.

Duties/Responsibilities: The Public Access and Wildlife Viewing Services Office provides opportunities for Floridians and visitors to view wildlife and experience the rugged expanses of Florida's wildlife management area system. The Office works with agency biologists to develop wildlife-viewing sites and recreational trails and develops recreation guides and interpretive products to increase visitors' enjoyment and understanding of wildlife and wildlife habitat.

Information Technology Office

Statute: Section 20.331(5)(c), F.S.

Duties/Responsibilities: The Information Technology Office manages an automated information-processing environment that is reliable, secure, cost-effective and responsive. The Office provides for the processing, storing and retrieval of data, system development and maintenance, statewide computer network management, information security administration, and general information consulting services supporting the FWC.

the Inspector General Office

Statute: Section 20.331(5)(d) and Section 20.055

Duties/Responsibilities: The Inspector General Office provides a central point for coordination of and responsibility for activities that promote accountability, integrity and efficiency within the FWC. The Office achieves these goals through internal audits, investigations, and management reviews.

Legal Office

Statute: Section 20.331(5)(e), F.S.

Duties/Responsibilities: The Legal Office provides a wide range of legal services to the Commission and its staff. Services include but are not limited to representing FWC in litigation, providing general legal counsel to FWC, preparing legal opinions, developing and reviewing contracts, legislation, rules, and other legal instruments.

Regional Offices

Statute: Section 20.331(5)(f), F.S.

Duties/Responsibilities: Each Regional Office, headed by a director, is in charge of administrative services and project management within each of the five regions. The Northwest Regional Office is located in Panama City and can be contacted at (850)265-3676. The North Central Regional Office is located in Lake City and can be contacted at (386) 758-0525. The Northeast Regional Office is located in Ocala and can be contacted at (352) 732-1225. The Southwest Regional Office is located in Lakeland and can be contacted at (863) 648-3200. The South Regional Office is located in West Palm Beach and can be contacted at (561) 625-5122. For additional information concerning the operations and responsibilities of the Regional Offices, please visit our website at <http://myfwc.com/contact/fwc-staff/regional-offices>.

Community Relations Office

Statute: Section 20.331(6)(c), F.S.

Duties/Responsibilities: The Community Relations Office coordinates public-communication efforts, educational activities, and developing nature-based activities. They are also responsible for publishing the Florida Wildlife Magazine, the official online publication of FWC, which can be accessed at FloridaWildlifeMagazine.com.

Legislative Affairs Office

Statute: Section 20.331(6)(c), F.S.

Duties/Responsibilities: The Legislative Affairs Office coordinates the Commission's legislative lobbying efforts and prepares legislative proposals, as well as any planning, policy and budgetary analyses or recommendations on legislative bills. This information helps the Legislature, Governor's Office and the public understand the commission's legislative proposals. The Office is also responsible for developing legislation and support information and serving as the central point of contact for legislators and their staffs for information about the FWC's programs and activities.

Program and Research Services

Division of Freshwater Fisheries Management

Statute: Section 20.331(4)(a)1., 20.331(7)(b), F.S.

Duties/Responsibilities: The Division of Freshwater Fisheries Management provides expertise on freshwater fish populations, angler use, or other aspects of freshwater fisheries needed for management decisions by the FWC, and to assess impacts of decisions made by others to ensure quality fisheries and fishing in selected Florida lakes, fish management areas, rivers and streams. The Division of Freshwater Fisheries Management is further divided into the following subunits: Fisheries Management and Hatchery Operations and Stocking.

Division of Habitat and Species Conservation

Statute: Section 20.331(4)(a)2., 20.331(7)(c), F.S.

Duties/Responsibilities: The Division of Habitat and Species Conservation ensures healthy populations of all native species and their habitats by integrating scientific data with applied habitat management. Integration efforts focus on the ecosystem or landscape scale to provide the greatest benefits to the widest possible array of fish and wildlife species. Accomplishing this mission requires extensive collaboration and partnering with local, state and federal agencies to maintain diverse and healthy fish and wildlife populations for the benefit of all Floridians and visitors. The division's primary goals are to be focused on the management of public lands, habitat restoration on public lands, development and implementation of nongame species management plans, development and implementation of imperiled species recovery plans, providing scientific support and assistance on habitat-related issues to public and private landowners, aquatic habitat restoration, habitat management assistance, land acquisition, and exotic species coordination focused on measures that prevent and control the introduction of exotic species. Direct benefits include ecological, economic, aesthetic, scientific and recreational benefits. The Division of Habitat and Species Conservation is further divided into several subunits to better allocate the responsibilities assigned to the Division. Those sections include: Operations and Program Development, Planning and Policy Development, Species Conservation Planning, Aquatic Habitat Conservation and Restoration, Conservation Planning Services, Wildlife and Habitat Management, Imperiled Species Management, Exotic Species Coordination, and Invasive Plant Management.

Division of Hunting and Game Management

Statute: Section 20.331(4)(a)3., 20.331(7)(d), F.S.

Duties/Responsibilities: The Division of Hunting and Game Management provides for the safe and responsible use of wildlife species that are hunted by offering scientific expertise on game wildlife, developing science-based management strategies for game wildlife, providing hunter safety training and certification to citizens, developing and managing public shooting ranges, and developing regulations and brochures for wildlife management areas, wildlife and environmental areas, and other public hunting areas throughout the state. The Division of Hunting and Game Management is further divided into the following subunits: Hunter Safety and Ranges, Game Species Management, and Public Hunting Areas.

Division of Law Enforcement

Statute: Section 20.331(4)(a)4., 20.331(7)(e), F.S.

Duties/Responsibilities: The Division of Law Enforcement aims to protect Florida's natural resources and people through proactive and responsive law enforcement services. The division focuses on resource protection, environmental protection, boating and waterways, and public safety. The Division of Law Enforcement is further divided into the following subunits: Law Enforcement Operations, Field Operations, and Boating and Waterways.

Division of Marine Fisheries Management

Statute: Section 20.331(4)(a)5., 20.331(7)(f), F.S.

Duties/Responsibilities: The Division of Marine Fisheries Management develops regulatory and management recommendations for consideration by FWC Commissioners designed to ensure the long-term conservation of Florida's valuable marine fisheries resources. The division creates recreational and commercial marine fisheries outreach and education programs, facilitates artificial reef development and deployment, prepares fishery strategic plans, issues special activities licenses, conducts wholesale fish dealer audits, and assists with trap-retrieval efforts. The Division of Marine Fisheries Management is further divided into the following subunits: Marine Fisheries Management, Analysis and Rulemaking, and Marine Fisheries Service. Additionally, the Division coordinates with Federal Fisheries Management to create the best plans for Florida's marine fisheries.

Fish and Wildlife Research Institute

Statute: Sections 20.331(4)(b), 20.331(7)(a), 379.224 and 379.2271, F.S.

Duties/Responsibilities: The Fish and Wildlife Research Institute, headquartered in St. Petersburg, serves as the primary source of research and technical information and expertise on the status of all marine life, freshwater aquatic life, and

wild animal life resources within the State. It is responsible for obtaining data and research needed for habitat managers and stakeholders. The Institute's main requirements are to monitor marine and freshwater resources, wildlife, and habitats, develop and implement techniques for restoring plant and animal species and their habitats, provide technical support when oil spills, human-related or natural disasters occur, monitor red tides and providing technical support for state and local government public health concerns, and provide fish and wildlife research technical results to state and local governments. The Fish and Wildlife Research Institute is further divided into the following subunits: Marine Fisheries Research, Research Operations, Freshwater Fisheries Research, Wildlife Research, Ecosystem Assessment and Restoration, and Information Science and Management.

FILING RECORDS WITH THE FWC AND AVAILABILITY OF FWC RECORDS:

Public records requests

Except as limited by applicable statutory restrictions, all records of FWC are public and shall be made available for inspection. Copies of any available record may be obtained at a cost not to exceed the cost of reproduction plus any special service charge for clerical or supervisory assistance.

To make a public records request, for questions or assistance relating to public records requests please contact the Commission's Agency Clerk/Public Records Manager at:

Hollie Weathersbee, Agency Clerk/Public Records Manager
620 South Meridian Street
Tallahassee, FL 32399-1600
Phone: (850) 488-6553
Facsimile: (850) 487-1790
Email for filing administrative petitions: EFile@MyFWC.com
Email for all other clerk related inquiries: Hollie.Weathersbee@myfwc.com

Additionally, public records requests and questions may be submitted online, at the following website:
<http://mygovhelp.info/FLFWC/>.

Administrative Petitions

The Agency Clerk/Records Management Liaison Officer is also responsible for accepting administrative petitions filed pursuant to Florida law, including petitions for variance or waiver. Administrative petitions sent to or filed with FWC may be delivered to our Agency Clerk at the above address, by US Mail, hand delivery, facsimile, or email (EFile@MyFWC.com) between the hours of 8:00am and 5:00pm Monday through Friday, excluding State holidays. The filing date for a document transmitted by email or by facsimile shall be the date the agency receives the complete document before 5:00 p.m. Any document received by the agency clerk after 5:00 p.m. shall be filed as of 8:00 a.m. on the next regular business day. The information included in the petitions must conform to the requirements specified in the Uniform Rules found in Chapters 28-101 through 28-112, Florida Administrative Code.

Commission Rules and Orders

The Commission's administrative rules are published in the Florida Administrative Code (FAC) by the Department of State. The FAC can be accessed online at <https://www.flrules.org/default.asp>. Pursuant to 68-1.001(2), Final Orders issued by the agency disposing of administrative petitions are published and indexed by the Florida Administrative Law Reporter (FALR). Final Orders are available online through the FALR Official Reporter <http://www.falr.com/default.shtml>. Additional fees may apply. Executive Orders may be accessed on the Commission's website at <http://myfwc.com/about/inside-fwc/executive/executive-orders/>.

Applying for Permits and Licensing

The Office of Licensing and Permitting is responsible for issuing and regulating licenses and permits for activities including hunting, fishing, wildlife management, and captive wildlife. For general information concerning licenses and permits for hunting and fishing please visit our website at <https://myfwc.com/license/>. To search for licenses and permits and to find out how to apply, you can visit the License and Permit Information Search (LPIS) at <https://public.myfwc.com/CrossDOI/LPIS/LicensePermits.aspx> or contact the Office of Licensing and Permitting.

The Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission will provide a copy of this Statement of Agency Organization and Operation to any person upon request.