

THIRD READING

Bill No: AB 1987
Author: Aguiar-Curry (D) and Hadwick (R), et al.
Amended: 8/20/26 in Senate
Vote: 21

SENATE NATURAL RES. & WATER COMMITTEE: 7-0, 6/9/26

AYES: Becker, Seyarto, Allen, Cabaldon, Grove, Laird, Reyes

SENATE APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE: 7-0, 8/13/26

AYES: Cervantes, Seyarto, Cabaldon, Dahle, Grayson, Richardson, Wahab

ASSEMBLY FLOOR: 76-0, 4/13/26 - See last page for vote

SUBJECT: Department-managed lands: wildlife areas: hunting

SOURCE: California Waterfowl Association

DIGEST: This bill 1) creates the Waterfowl Management Areas Operations and Management Fund (fund) and requires moneys in the fund, upon appropriation, to be expended by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (department) for the operation and maintenance of certain wildlife areas; 2) requires all revenues generated from the sale of waterfowl hunting reservation applications and certain wildlife area entry passes to be deposited in the created fund; and 3) requires account funds to be used to augment and not replace current spending levels for the operation and maintenance of Type A and Type B wildlife areas, among other provisions, as provided.

Senate Floor Amendments of 8/20/26 create the fund as a stand-alone fund instead of an account within an established fund; authorize the department to use the existing online license system to sell entry permits for non-consumptive uses on department-managed lands; and make other minor and conforming changes.

ANALYSIS:

Existing law:

- 1) Establishes the department in the California Natural Resources Agency. States that the department's mission "is to manage California's diverse fish, wildlife, and plant resources, and the habitats upon which they depend, for their ecological value and for their use and enjoyment by the public," and provides that its core programs include biodiversity conservation, enforcement, and hunting, fishing, and public use, among others. (Fish and Game Code (FGC) §712.1)
- 2) States legislative intent that the costs of hunting and sportfishing programs be provided out of hunting and sportfishing revenues and reimbursements and federal funds received for hunting and sportfishing programs, and other funds appropriated by the Legislature, and that these funds not be used to support commercial fishing programs, free hunting and fishing license programs, or nongame fish and wildlife programs, as provided. (FGC §711)
- 3) Establishes the Fish and Game Preservation Fund (FGPF) in the State Treasury for all money collected relating to the protection and preservation of birds, mammals, fish, reptiles, or amphibia, and creates various accounts and subaccounts within the FGPF. (FGC §§13000 *et seq.*)
 - a) Makes the money in the FGPF available, upon appropriation by the Legislature, to the department for expenditure for the protection and preservation of birds, mammals, reptiles, amphibians, and fish, as specified. (FGC §13220)
- 4) Defines "department-managed lands" to include lands, or lands and water, acquired for public shooting grounds, state marine (estuarine) recreational management areas, ecological reserves, and wildlife management areas.
 - a) Requires that department-managed lands be operated on a nonprofit basis by the department.
 - b) Authorizes the department to enter into contracts or other agreements for the management and operation of department-managed lands with nonprofit conservation groups or resource conservation districts.
 - c) Requires the department to require the purchase of an entry permit for nonconsumptive use on department-managed lands if the department finds that it is practical and cost effective to require entry permit fees.

- d) Provides that multiple recreational use of department-managed lands is desirable and that use shall be encouraged by the commission.
 - e) Requires that revenue from entry permit fees be deposited in the Native Species Conservation and Enhancement Account within the FGPF.
 - f) Requires that, to the extent that the department is able to identify the source of revenue, the department provides no less than 35% of the funds generated from nonconsumptive entry permits to department-managed lands from which the fee revenues were collected. (FGC §1745)
- 5) Authorizes the department to lease department-managed lands for agricultural activities and provides that the revenue from agricultural leases be deposited into the Wildlife Restoration Fund or the FGPF and authorizes its use to support the management, maintenance, restoration, and operations of department-managed lands. (FGC §1745.1)
- 6) Provides that, except in accordance with California Fish and Game Commission regulations, it is unlawful to enter any department-managed wildlife area or public shooting ground. (FGC §1530)
- 7) Requires the department to provide an annual opportunity for licensed hunters to comment and make recommendations on public hunting programs, including anticipated habitat conditions, in the hunting areas on Type A and Type B wildlife areas. (FGC §1758)

Existing regulation:

- 1) Defines the following types of wildlife areas:
- a) “Type A” Wildlife Areas are wildlife areas which have restricted hunter access during waterfowl season and require a hunting pass to be purchased in advance and exchanged for an entry permit at the wildlife areas. Makes available reservations. Species open for hunting are waterfowl, coots, moorhens, snipe, pheasant, and dove, unless otherwise specified, and shoot days are Saturdays, Sundays, and Wednesdays during waterfowl season, youth waterfowl hunt days, and daily during the September dove season. Type A wildlife areas are closed to hunting on Christmas Day.
 - b) “Type B” wildlife areas are wildlife areas which have restricted hunted access during waterfowl season and require a Type A or Type B season hunting pass to be purchased in advance and presented for an entry permit at the wildlife area. Requires reservations for opening weekend. Species open

for hunting include waterfowl, coots, moorhens, snipe, pheasant, and dove, unless otherwise specified, and shoot days are Saturdays, Sundays, and Wednesdays during waterfowl season and daily during the September dove season. Some Type B wildlife areas are open to hunting on Christmas Day.

- c) “Type C” wildlife areas are wildlife areas that are open daily for hunting all legal species and do not require the purchase of a hunting pass for entry. (Title 14, California Code of Regulations, Section 551)

This bill:

- 1) Creates the Waterfowl Management Areas Operations and Management Fund (fund) within the State Treasury, as provided.
 - a) Upon appropriation by the Legislature, requires moneys in the fund to be expended by the department for:
 - i) Operation and maintenance of Type A and Type B Wildlife Areas.
 - ii) Reasonable administration costs directly related to public hunting programs for Type A and Type B Wildlife Areas.
- 2) Requires all revenues generated from the sale of waterfowl hunting reservation applications and daily and season-long entry passes from Type A and Type B Wildlife areas to be deposited in the fund.
- 3) Requires funds in the fund to augment and not replace current spending levels for the operation and maintenance of Type A and Type B Wildlife Areas.
- 4) Requires, rather than authorizes, moneys in the Wildlife Restoration Fund or the FGPF from agricultural leases on department-managed lands to be used to support the management, maintenance, restoration, and operations of department-managed lands.
- 5) Requires the department, on or before October 1, 2033, to prepare and submit a legislative report including, but not limited to, detailed information on annual department expenditures on the operations and maintenance and administration of, and other hunting or public use program-related activities on, department-managed lands; and revenues to and expenditures from the fund, as provided.

- 6) Adds anticipated wetland floodup to conditions in the hunting areas on Type A and Tube B Wildlife Areas that licensed hunters are provided an annual opportunity to comment on to the department, as provided.
- 7) Provides that nothing in this act shall be construed to invalidate, impair, or require the rebidding or any memorandum of understanding, cooperative agreements, or partnership agreements entered into before January 1, 2027 between the department and a nonprofit organization or other qualified entity for the provision of certain programming on department-managed lands.
- 8) Makes additional minor and technical changes.

[NOTE: For additional information regarding this bill, see the Senate Natural Resources and Water Committee analysis.]

FISCAL EFFECT: Appropriation: No Fiscal Com.: Yes Local: No

According to the Senate Appropriations Committee:

- Unknown but potentially significant costs, likely over \$150,000 (General Fund or Fish and Game Preservation Fund [FGPF]) for the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) to prepare and submit a report to the appropriate policy and budget committees of the Legislature, as specified, among other things.

SUPPORT: (Verified 8/20/26)

California Waterfowl Association (source)
Audubon California
Backcountry Hunters & Anglers
Cal-Ore Wetlands and Waterfowl Council
California Rice Commission
California Rifle and Pistol Association
Delta Waterfowl
Ducks Unlimited
Grassland Water District
Northern California Water Association
Suisun Resource Conservation District
The Black Brant Group
The Nature Conservancy
Tulare Basin Wetlands Association

OPPOSITION: (Verified 8/20/26)

None received

ARGUMENTS IN SUPPORT: According to the author, “State Wildlife Areas play a vital role in protecting California’s wetlands and waterfowl while also providing opportunities for outdoor recreation such as hunting, fishing, and wildlife viewing. However, many of these lands face growing maintenance challenges due to limited staff and declining traditional funding sources. Yolo, Lake, Colusa, and Napa Counties all include several wildlife areas, making their long-term stewardship especially important to communities and wildlife in my district. AB 1987 will ensure that revenues generated by these areas are reinvested directly into their operation and management so they can continue to service both conservation and public access for years to come.”

ASSEMBLY FLOOR: 76-0, 4/13/26

AYES: Addis, Aguiar-Curry, Ahrens, Alanis, Alvarez, Arambula, Ávila Farías, Bains, Bauer-Kahan, Bennett, Berman, Boerner, Bonta, Bryan, Calderon, Caloza, Carrillo, Castillo, Chen, Connolly, Davies, DeMaio, Dixon, Elhawary, Ellis, Fong, Gabriel, Gallagher, Garcia, Gipson, Jeff Gonzalez, Mark González, Hadwick, Haney, Harabedian, Hart, Hoover, Irwin, Jackson, Johnson, Kalra, Krell, Lackey, Lowenthal, Macedo, McKinnor, Muratsuchi, Nguyen, Ortega, Pacheco, Papan, Patel, Patterson, Pellerin, Petrie-Norris, Quirk-Silva, Ramos, Ransom, Michelle Rodriguez, Rogers, Blanca Rubio, Sanchez, Schiavo, Schultz, Sharp-Collins, Solache, Soria, Stefani, Ta, Tangipa, Wallis, Ward, Wicks, Wilson, Zbur, Rivas

NO VOTE RECORDED: Flora, Lee, Celeste Rodriguez, Valencia

Prepared by: Katharine Moore / N.R. & W. / (916) 651-4116
8/24/26 17:54:53

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