

# News Release

## **FWC sets Feb. 7-8 meeting at Sandestin**

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- [Agenda](#) (with links to background reports)

The Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC) will meet at Sandestin Resort, Feb. 7-8. The resort is at 9300 Emerald Coast Parkway West.

The Wednesday (Feb.7) agenda includes an array of changes to wildlife management area rules to allow for emergency closures for 14 days, negotiating contracts with vendors, regulating vehicle use, setting harvest regulations and other matters.

In addition, Wednesday's agenda includes proposed rules to sharpen regulations regarding captive wildlife. Rule proposals address importation, possession, caging, tagging and transportation requirements for various species, including potentially dangerous animals.

Other business on Wednesday's agenda includes regulations for the new Largo Central Park Nature Preserve Fish Management Area and updates to guidelines for the Fish and Wildlife Research Institute Grants Program, the State Wildlife Grants Program and the Nongame Wildlife Grants Program.

In addition, Commissioners will hear an update on completion of the Florida Bass Conservation Center and will review and discuss the proposed 2007-08 work plan for the FWC's Division of Habitat and Species Conservation.

On Thursday, Commissioners will take action on several marine fisheries issues, beginning with a final public hearing on a proposed rule to require persons recovering monofilament netting in Florida waters to notify FWC law enforcement prior to recovering the netting and to have an FWC officer present to supervise recovery and disposal of the material.

The Commission will review and discuss draft rules to allow commercial sponge harvest by divers in specified waters off the Florida Panhandle, and possibly to change the size limit and fishing season for red drum (redfish).

Commissioners also will review and discuss a series of draft federal consistency rule amendments that include regulation changes for snowy grouper, golden tilefish, vermilion snapper, red porgy and black sea bass in the Atlantic Ocean, and issues addressing grouper management and the red snapper individual fishing quota program in the Gulf of Mexico.

In other marine fisheries action, the FWC will receive updates on recommendations from its snook work group and on the FWC saltwater fish hatchery, consider various federal marine fisheries management issues and hear a report on the future of saltwater fishing in Florida.

FWC meetings are open to public participation. They will convene at 8:30 a.m. both days.

Anyone needing special assistance to participate because of a disability can make arrangements by contacting Cindy Hoffman at (850) 488-6411 at least five days before the meeting. Hearing- or speech-impaired persons can arrange assistance by calling (850) 488-9542.

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## **FWC agenda items Feb. 7-8, 2007 – Sandestin**

### **Wednesday**

- Recognition of Amos Morris for 27 years of volunteer service to the Wildlife Alert Program.
- Retirement recognition of Roy Williams for 38 years of service to the agency.
- Recognition of an agreement between the FWC and the National Wild Turkey Federation for wild turkey management in Florida.
- A proposed rule to allow areas managed by the FWC to be closed through closure order for up to 14 days when necessary, or longer with authorization from the executive director.
- A proposed rule to authorize the FWC to negotiate contracts for vendors to provide concession services on FWC-managed lands.
- A proposed rule to re-establish and simplify rules for inspecting and registering tracked vehicles on certain wildlife management areas (WMAs).
- A proposed rule change to adjust or establish hunter quotas on WMAs and wildlife and environmental areas.
- A proposed rule change to adjust season dates to conform to calendar year changes on Babcock/Webb WMA.

- Proposed rule changes to adjust season dates to conform to calendar year changes and/or revise regulations on the Osceola, Twin Rivers, Blue Springs Unit, San Pedro Bay and Lower Econfina River WMAs.
- Proposed rule changes to adjust season dates to conform to calendar year changes and/or revise regulations on the Econfina Creek, Escambia River, Wakulla, Perdido River, Tate's Hell and Tyndall Air Force Base WMAs.
- Proposed rule changes to adjust season dates to conform to calendar year changes and/or revise regulations on the Holey Land, Everglades and Francis S. Taylor, Rotenberger, Picayune Strand and Allapattah Flats WMAs.
- Proposed rule changes to adjust season dates to conform to calendar year changes and/or revise regulations on the Tosohatchee, Seminole Ranch and Matanzas WMAs.
- A proposed rule to establish definitions for "captive wildlife, critical incident, disaster, relative, reptiles of concern, venomous reptile" and "person."
- A proposed rule to add additional caging requirements for arboreal species of snakes, blood pythons and large constrictors.
- A proposed rule to be retitled to include Class I, II and III wildlife, to clarify how an applicant's previous convictions would affect his qualification for a permit and revise other details regulating such permit applicants.
- A proposed rule to clarify what constitutes leased property when applying for Class I and II permits and address other issues concerning such captive wildlife.
- A proposed rule to require nonnative venomous reptiles of concern to be permanently marked or identified and any escapes to be reported to the FWC immediately.
- A proposed rule to establish a list of reptiles of concern and establish qualifications for possessing such reptiles.
- A proposed rule to require certain record-keeping and reporting requirements for persons to possess venomous reptiles and reptiles of concern.
- A proposed rule to establish the new Largo Central Park Nature Preserve Fish Management Area and regulations for the area.
- Review and discussion of a draft rule to update guidelines for the Fish and Wildlife Research Institute Grants Program, the State Wildlife Grants Program and the Nongame Wildlife Grants Program.
- Review and discussion of a draft rule to consolidate portions of nonnative species regulations from FWC rules to statutes and list restricted and prohibited species and other details regarding possession and prohibition of possession of certain species.
- Review and discussion of a draft rule relating to taking, possession and sale of reptiles.
- Review and discussion of a rule concerning sale and inspection of fish for bait or propagation purposes and diseased fish.
- An update on completion of the Florida Bass Conservation Center.
- Review and discussion of the proposed 2007-08 work plan for the Division of Habitat and Species Conservation.
- An update on the future of hunting in Florida.

## Thursday

- A rule to require persons recovering monofilament netting in Florida waters to notify FWC Division of Law Enforcement prior to recovering the netting and to have an FWC officer present to supervise recovery and disposal of the material.
- Review and discussion of a draft rule amendment to allow commercial sponge harvest by divers in part of the northern Gulf of Mexico.
- Review and discussion of a draft rule potentially to change the size limit and fishing season for redfish.
- Review and discussion of draft rule amendments to implement federal consistency rules concerning snowy grouper, golden tilefish, vermilion snapper, red porgy and black sea bass in accordance with the South Atlantic Fishery Management Council's Amendment 13C, and Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council actions on grouper and the red snapper individual fishing quota program.
- An update on recommendations from the Snook Working Group.
- An update on the FWC saltwater fish hatchery.
- Federal issues.
- Administrative issues.
- Review and consideration of moving the Sept. 12-14 FWC meeting from Ft. Myers to St. Petersburg.
- Future of saltwater fishing in Florida.
- Update on the Financial Business Plan.
- New areas of emphasis for 2007.
- Legislative report.