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California Department of Fish and Game

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Department's 1954-55 Cost of Operation Exceeded Income by Only \$524

The Department of Fish and Game's operational expenditures for 1954-55 topped income by only \$524, according to Administrative Officer Harry Anderson in a talk before the annual convention of the Associated Sportsmen of California in Sacramento.

However, capital outlay items, which under state accounting procedures must be reflected in the year during which expenditures were made, created a deficit of \$127,358.

The previous year's overdraft was \$152,664, for a reduction of \$25,306.

Total Revenues \$7,030,448

Total revenues to the department were \$7,030,448 and total expenditures were \$7,240,603. There was a surplus adjustment from the prior year of \$82,799, leaving a deficit of \$127,358.

Anderson told the sportsmen that he estimates the current fiscal year will see the department operating with an overdraft of less than \$200,-

(continued on page 10)



COMMISSION SETS 1955 REGULATIONS FOR WATERFOWL

A 72-day split waterfowl season, October 15 to November 18 and December 10 to January 15, has been adopted for California by the Fish and Game Commission.

Bag and possession limit is seven ducks plus three additional sprig or widgeon authorized as an agricultural depredation control measure.

The bag and possession limit on geese remains at six, with no more than three of the dark species to be included in the bag. In District 22—Imperial County and eastern Riverside and San Bernardino Counties—only one Canada goose may be taken.

The limit on coots is 25 birds.

A straight 80-day waterfowl season has been set for the Colorado River area, to coincide with the season in the bordering states of Nevada and Arizona. Dates are October 28 to January 15.

No Noon Opening

The traditional noon opening has been eliminated this year. Shooting hours will be one-half hour before sunrise to sunset on every day of the season.

Not more than one hooded merganser and one wood duck may be included in the bag limit. No Ross geese may be taken.

Black Sea Brant

Black sea brant season will open December 10, to coincide with the opening of the second half of the split waterfowl season. Brant season extends to February 10. Bag and possession limit is three birds.

The season on jacksnipe will also open December 10. It will end December 24. Bag and possession limit will be eight birds.

Waterfowl hunters 16 years of age and over must have a federal duck stamp.

All hunters must possess valid state hunting licenses.

Details of the waterfowl regulations are available in printed form from all department offices and license agents.

Advance Registration Again Required On State's Public Waterfowl Shooting Areas

Applications for reservations to hunt on 14 public waterfowl shooting areas operated by the Department of Fish and Game are now available at department offices and license agencies.

With some streamlining of procedures, the program is operating on the same advance registration basis as in 1954. One new area, the department's recently acquired Mendota waterfowl management area in Fresno County, is open to public shooting this year for the first time.

First Come, First Served

As in 1954, permits to hunt on the areas are selected by drawing. If any

vacancies are left, they will be filled on a first come, first served basis at the area's checking stations.

Shooting days are Wednesdays, Saturdays, Sundays, certain holidays, and the opening and closing days of each half of this year's split waterfowl shooting season.

A \$2 daily fee is being charged on all areas except Napa Marshes, where a \$3 seasonal permit system is in effect.

Since a major function of waterfowl management areas in California is to attract birds away from agricultural crops, it is possible that crop depredation conditions in some areas

(continued on page 11)

Increase in Sturgeon Size Limit to 50 Inches Recommended on Basis of Year's Study

An increase in the minimum size limit of sturgeon from the present 40-inch standard to 50 inches probably will be recommended for next year by the Department of Fish and Game.

This recommendation will be based on information gained from a Dingell-Johnson federal aid to fisheries project conducted last year in San Pablo Bay and the lower delta.

Department of Fish and Game technicians netted and tagged 1,003 adult white sturgeon. From a study of these fish came some significant facts. One of the most important of these was the finding that the sturgeon increases in size and weight very slowly, reaching the 40-inch size about the seventh growing season.

But at that point in its life, the sturgeon then begins to add weight and length at an accelerated rate. During the next three or four years, although adding only 10 inches in length, it increases an average of 23 pounds in weight.

The average 40-inch fish weighs only 15 pounds, while a 50-inch sturgeon averages 38 pounds and is a real fighter.

Other highlights of the study:

It is estimated that the sturgeon population in San Pablo Bay in 1954 was between 9,000 and 16,000 fish.

Spawning success of the sturgeon shows extreme fluctuations. Six- and 16-year-old fish comprise 50 percent of the population. There were practically no fish found in the 9- to 13-year-old classes.

There is no evidence yet to indicate when the female sturgeon first lays eggs. Studies on the Columbia River indicate that it occurs about the eleventh or twelfth year.

The present rate of take on the sturgeon apparently is not excessive, providing that the snagging type of operation in vogue last year can be stopped under present regulations.

Age of the sturgeon is determined by counting the annual rings in a cross section of the pectoral fin spines.

The sturgeon study has been pointed out as another excellent example of how research makes available basic facts necessary for the wise management and preservation of a given species.



EIGHT-FOOT sturgeon taken by Catalino Diangson of San Francisco while striped fishing off Port Chicago last year. Fish measured 101 inches, weighed 277 pounds, probably took over 30 years to reach this size. SF News photo.

COMMENTS SOUGHT ON EYE-CHECK PROGRAM

The California Optometric Association, which is cooperating in the State's hunter safety program by offering free eye-checks to trainees who seem to have defective vision, would like to hear hunter safety instructors' comments on the eye-check program.

Instructors are invited to write of their experiences to Paul H. Yarwood, Executive Secretary, California Optometric Association, 204 Blue Anchor Building, 1400 10th Street, Sacramento 14.

1954-55 Expenditures

(continued from page 1)

000, despite the fact salary increases this year will cost approximately \$250,000 additional.

This figure is based on increased costs of operating new or expanded installations such as San Joaquin and Moccasin Creek hatcheries, and the Mendota and Wister waterfowl areas, all of which were built from Wildlife Conservation Board funds.

License sale increases, which usually parallel California's population growth, will help keep the deficit down in face of the added expenses, Anderson predicted.

Effects of Inflation

"With the major source of revenue, angling and hunting license fees, set at \$3 in 1947, the department is hard put to keep expenses in line with revenues because of inflationary trends since that year," Anderson told the sportsmen.

"Inflation has not brought in extra dollars. On the contrary it has substantially increased expenses, with population growth and added license sales as the primary offsetting factor.

"But to provide for the added license holders, the department has had to make large additional expenditures, such as more catchable trout hatcheries, cooperative hunting areas and other projects.

"A major factor in the struggle to keep revenue in line with expenses is the fact that departmental salaries, set by the State Personnel Board, have increased more than \$1,000,000 since 1948 as a result of keeping state salaries in line with comparable jobs in private employment."

Department Surplus

At the present time the Department of Fish and Game still has a surplus of \$5,244,184 as a result of funds accumulated during war years when there was little departmental capital outlay.

However, Anderson pointed to unhealthy results if any substantial portion of this surplus be used for operational costs, i.e., to start projects or services requiring annual recurring expenditures.

To use a portion of this surplus for a one-time expenditure or for capital replacements should not be objectionable, he concluded.