

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 2238

As Reported by House Committee On: Appropriations

Title: An act relating to dividing the state wildlife account into the fish, wildlife, and conservation account and the limited fish and wildlife account.

Brief Description: Dividing the state wildlife account into the fish, wildlife, and conservation account and the limited fish and wildlife account.

Sponsors: Representatives Ormsby, Stokesbary, Ryu and Lekanoff; by request of Department of Fish and Wildlife.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Appropriations: 1/22/20, 1/27/20 [DP].

Brief Summary of Bill

- Replaces the State Wildlife Account with the Limited Fish and Wildlife Account and the Fish, Wildlife, and Conservation Account.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

Majority Report: Do pass. Signed by 31 members: Representatives Ormsby, Chair; Robinson, 1st Vice Chair; Bergquist, 2nd Vice Chair; Stokesbary, Ranking Minority Member; Rude, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Caldier, Chandler, Chopp, Cody, Corry, Dolan, Dye, Fitzgibbon, Hansen, Hoff, Hudgins, Kilduff, Kraft, Macri, Mosbrucker, Pettigrew, Pollet, Ryu, Schmick, Senn, Steele, Sullivan, Sutherland, Tarleton, Tharinger and Ybarra.

Staff: Dan Jones (786-7118).

Background:

State Wildlife Account.

The State Wildlife Account (SWA) is an account in the State Treasury that is appropriated to the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) and is primarily used for the operating costs of WDFW activities, such as recreational fishing and hunting regulations,

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land management, wildlife conservation efforts, and enforcement. The SWA receives revenue from a number of sources, some of which include:

- sales of a variety of recreational fishing and hunting licenses, permits, tags, and permits;
- fees from certain personalized license plates;
- sales of property;
- a portion of an excise tax on anadromous game fish; and
- a portion (8 percent) of Discover Pass sales revenue.

Many of the sources of revenue into the SWA may only be used for a specified purpose. For example, revenue from migratory bird stamps may only be used for the costs of producing the stamps and for migratory waterfowl habitat projects on certain lands. Because of these restrictions, the WDFW manages the SWA as having a restricted portion, including each of the dedicated revenue streams, and a nonrestricted portion, which may be used for WDFW operations generally.

Special Wildlife Account and Warm Water Game Fish Account.

The Special Wildlife Account and the Warm Water Game Fish Account are two additional accounts administered by the WDFW that are appropriated separately from the SWA.

Summary of Bill:

State Wildlife Account.

The SWA is replaced by two new accounts, the Limited Fish and Wildlife Account (LFWA) and the Fish, Wildlife, and Conservation Account (FWCA). The revenue streams and authorized uses of the SWA are redirected to either the LFWA or the FWCA based on whether they are restricted or may be used for WDFW operations generally.

Revenue streams redirected from the SWA to the LFWA include concealed pistol license late renewal penalties, personalized license plate fees, migratory bird stamps, catch record cards, a portion of turkey tags, two-pole stamps, auctions and raffles, wildlife decals, Discover Pass revenue, and the portions of sales of licenses, permits, tags, stamps, endorsements, and application fees that are specified for a limited purpose.

Revenue streams redirected from the SWA to the FWCA include property sales, a portion of commercial license fees, sales of informational materials, a portion of turkey tags, a portion of the anadromous game fish tax, and the portions of sales of licenses, permits, tags, stamps, endorsements, and application fees that are not specified for a limited purpose.

Special Wildlife Account and Warm Water Game Fish Account.

The Special Wildlife Account and the Warm Water Game Fish Account are amended to specify that they are separate accounts, rather than accounts that exist "in" the SWA.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Effective Date: The bill takes effect on July 1, 2021.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony:

(In support) In 2017 the Legislature required an outside audit and other analysis of the WDFW's financial situation. One issue identified in that process was the fact that the SWA combines restricted and nonrestricted revenue in the same account. The combination of these two revenue streams makes it look like the account has a positive fund balance even when the nonrestricted side is negative. This bill was partly in response to a letter from the Office of Financial Management encouraging the change.

(Opposed) None.

Persons Testifying: Tom McBride and Morgan Stinson, Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: None.