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**Agriculture & Natural Resources  
Committee**

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**HB 1930**

**Brief Description:** Reforming the fish and wildlife commission.

**Sponsors:** Representatives Dent and Orcutt.

**Brief Summary of Bill**

- Establishes a process by which one member of the Fish and Wildlife Commission (Commission) is appointed from each of the Department of Fish and Wildlife's (WDFW) six regions by the counties within each region.
- Requires three at-large members of the Commission to be appointed by the Governor.
- Requires the Commission, subject to appropriation, to conduct in-person meetings in each of the six WDFW regions.
- Provides that WDFW is encouraged to invite Commissioners to participate in trainings offered to staff on tribal sovereignty, treaty rights, co-management, and working with tribal governments.

**Hearing Date:** 2/19/25

**Staff:** Rebecca Lewis (786-7339).

**Background:**

The Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) is composed of the Fish and Wildlife Commission (Commission) and the Director of the WDFW (Director). The Commission is the

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executive head of the WDFW, which operates under a statutory mandate to preserve, protect, perpetuate, and manage Washington's wildlife, food fish, game fish, and shellfish. The Commission has a variety of statutory duties related to the mandate including: classifying fish and wildlife; establishing basic rules and regulations governing the time, place, manner, and methods to harvest or enjoy fish and wildlife; and coordinating with other federal, state, tribal, and local agencies and organizations in managing the state's fish, wildlife, and habitats. The Commission must meet annually with the Governor to review and prescribe basic goals and objectives related to the mandate of the WDFW; review the performance of the WDFW in implementing fish and wildlife policies.

The Commission is composed of nine members appointed by the Governor with the advice and consent of the Senate. Each even-numbered year, three Commissioners are appointed for six-year terms. Three members of the Commission must reside in Eastern Washington, three in Western Washington, and the remaining three members are appointed at-large. No two members may reside in the same county. In order to be eligible for appointment to the Commission, a person must have general knowledge of the habits and distribution of fish and wildlife, and may not hold another state, county, or municipal elective or appointive office. In making appointments to the Commission, the Governor must seek to maintain a balance reflecting all aspects of fish and wildlife, including representation recommended by organized groups representing sportfishers, commercial fishers, hunters, private landowners, and environmentalists. If a vacancy occurs on the Commission before the end of the Commissioner's term, the Governor must appoint a successor within 60 days to complete the term.

The WDFW is organized into six geographic regions that contain the following counties:

- Eastern—Region 1: Asotin, Columbia, Ferry, Garfield, Lincoln, Pend Oreille, Spokane, Stevens, Walla Walla, and Whitman.
- North Central—Region 2: Adams, Chelan, Douglas, Grant, and Okanogan.
- South Central—Region 3: Benton, Franklin, Kittitas, and Yakima.
- North Puget Sound—Region 4: Island, King, San Juan, Skagit, Snohomish, and Whatcom.
- Southwest—Region 5: Clark, Cowlitz, Klickitat, Lewis, Skamania, and Wahkiakum.
- Coastal—Region 6: Clallam, Grays Harbor, Jefferson, Kitsap, Mason, Pacific, Pierce, and Thurston.

### **Summary of Bill:**

#### Appointments to the Fish and Wildlife Commission.

##### *Generally.*

Instead of nine members appointed by the Governor with the advice and consent of the Senate, six members of the Fish and Wildlife Commission (Commission) must be appointed, one from each of the Department of Fish and Wildlife's (WDFW) regions, by county legislative authorities. Three at-large members must be appointed by the Governor with the advice and consent of the Senate. Each member is appointed to a six-year term, however, in order to

establish staggered terms, the members must draw lots to establish which members initial terms end after two years and four years. No region may be represented by more than two Commissioners. Currently appointed Commissioners are eligible for reappointment.

Individuals eligible for appointment to the Commission must have held a hunting or fishing license in three of the five years immediately preceding the appointment. The requirement that appointees have general knowledge of the habits and distribution of fish and wildlife is deleted. The Governor and appointing counties must continue to seek to maintain a balance in reflecting all aspects of fish and wildlife, including representation recommended by organized groups representing sportfishers, commercial fishers, hunters, private landowners, and environmentalists.

#### *Regional Appointments.*

Six members, one from each of the WDFW's six regions, must be appointed to the Commission by the counties within each region, instead of by the Governor. Each county legislative authority must nominate candidates from within their county, and in doing so, may solicit input from the Regional Director and organizations representing all aspects of fish and wildlife. The county legislative authorities must each delegate one member to vote on the final list of nominated candidates for the Commission. In the event of a vacancy, this process must be repeated to appoint a new Commissioner within 60 days to complete the term.

#### *Governor Appointments.*

The Governor must appoint three at-large members with the advice and consent of the Senate. At least one of the three at-large members must be from Eastern Washington, and at least one must be from Western Washington. If a vacancy occurs, the Governor must make an appointment within 60 days to complete the term.

#### Meetings and Training.

Subject to appoints appropriated, the Commission must conduct in-person meetings in each of the six WDFW regions to increase the capacity of participants to represent different interests and constructively communicate and address conflicts.

The WDFW is encouraged to invite Commissioners to participate in any WDFW trainings offered to staff on tribal sovereignty, treaty rights, co-management, and working with tribal governments. Commissioners may participate in such trainings within existing resources.

**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Available.

**Effective Date:** The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of the session in which the bill is

passed.