This chapter deals with agencies that have estuary management responsibilities and authorities. Estuaries in the Pacific Northwest are managed by an overlapping set of authorities of a variety of federal, state, local, and tribal agencies. Some of these agencies are oriented toward function while others are oriented toward geography. For instance, state water quality agencies can apply their authorities to uses or functions anywhere within an estuary to protect water quality, whereas a state park agency or federal wildlife agency might have authority to manage activities or regulate uses only within a state park or national wildlife refuge.

Bureau of Land Management
Nationwide, the U.S. Bureau of Land Management manages 262 million acres of public lands, principally rangeland and forest lands, for different uses. However, the Bureau of Land Management manages coastal shorelands along the Oregon coast that include estuarine shorelands at Coos Bay and along North Spit, and lands surrounding the small New River estuary (the mouth of Floras Creek and related drainages) south of Bandon.

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service manages national wildlife refuges and administers the Endangered Species Act together with other agencies. Along the Pacific Coast, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
has become an important agency in acquiring and managing lands in and around estuaries as part of an international effort to conserve and restore wetlands important to migratory waterfowl.

In the Pacific Northwest, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service manages the following estuary-related refuges and resources:

**Washington**

- **Grays Harbor National Wildlife Refuge**, established in 1990, encompasses 1,500 acres in the northeast corner of the Grays Harbor estuary. Migratory shorebirds make extensive use of the estuary and the refuge. Habitats within the refuge include intertidal mudflats, salt marsh, and uplands. The refuge protects the Bowerman Basin, a key estuary for about one million northbound shorebirds that feed and rest here before flying north to nest.

- **Willapa Bay National Wildlife Refuge**, established in 1937 as the Willapa Migratory Waterfowl Refuge, encompasses several units, totaling 11,000 acres. Extensive expanses of American glasswort and eelgrass attract migrating shorebirds. The refuge is a key wintering area for Brant, Canada Geese, and other waterfowl.

**Columbia River**

- **Julia Butler Hansen Refuge for the Columbian white-tailed deer** includes about 4,750 acres of diked Columbia River floodplain and undiked islands in the river just upstream from the main estuary. Vegetation is a patchwork of small woodlots, old fields, managed fields, brushy thickets, tidal marshes, and forested tidal swamps. This is critical habitat for the endangered Columbian white-tailed deer.

**Oregon**

- **Nestucca Bay National Wildlife Refuge** was established in 1991. It includes about 730 acres, including key marsh habitat, pastures, grasslands, woodlands, tidal marsh, mudflats, and freshwater bogs. The short-grass fields around the estuary support 10 percent of the world population of dusky Canada geese.

- **Siletz Bay National Wildlife Refuge** encompasses a large complex of salt marsh, brackish marsh, tidal sloughs, and mudflats at the southern end of Siletz Bay. The refuge, bisected by a major highway and traversed by other dikes that impair natural tidal flow, was established in 1991 to allow the salt marsh to return to its natural tidally influenced state.

- **Bandon Marsh National Wildlife Refuge**, totaling 712 acres, was established in 1983 to protect a large salt marsh in the Coquille River estuary that is an oasis for migrating shorebirds, waterfowl, and threatened and endangered species, including coho salmon, the bald eagle,
and the California brown pelican. In 1999, the refuge was expanded to include a large area of former salt marsh that had been diked to create pastureland. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the Coquille Indian Tribe are cooperating to restore natural tidal flow and to identify and protect the many important archaeological sites in the area.

California

The Humboldt Bay National Wildlife Refuge is located on Humboldt Bay near the town of Arcata, California. The refuge protects wetlands and bay habitats for migratory birds, especially black Brant. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is working with local officials and landowners to address water quality problems in the estuary from surrounding agricultural and forestry practices. The refuge includes the Lanphere Dunes, one of the most pristine remaining dune ecosystems in the Pacific Northwest.

Environmental Protection Agency

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is the lead federal agency for air and water pollution control, including preventing and responding to oil spills. The EPA and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers are jointly responsible for implementing the Clean Water Act, including Section 404, regulating the disposal of dredged or fill materials, a set of activities that have done much to change the condition of many estuaries in the Pacific Northwest.

Washington and Oregon are within EPA Region 10 (which includes Alaska and Idaho). California is in EPA Region 9 (which includes Arizona, Hawaii, Nevada, and the U.S. Pacific Islands).

The EPA is directly involved in estuary management through several activities, including the National Estuary Program and the Coastal Nonpoint Source Program. The National Estuary Program was established by Congress in 1987 to improve the quality of estuaries of national importance. States may apply to the EPA for assistance under Section 320 of the Clean Water Act, which directs the EPA to develop plans for attaining or maintaining water quality in an estuary. Each National Estuary Program is charged with creating and implementing a comprehensive conservation and management plan (CCMP) that addresses all aspects of environmental protection for the estuary, including issues such as water quality, habitat, living resources, and land use. The EPA has supported three National Estuary Program efforts in the Pacific Northwest: the Puget Sound National Estuary Program, established in 1987; the Tillamook Bay National Estuary Program, established in 1994; and the Lower Columbia River National Estuary Program, established in 1995.
The Coastal Nonpoint Source Program (Section 6217 of the 1990 reauthorization of the National Coastal Zone Management Act) requires states to develop plans and management measures to protect coastal waters from effects of nonpoint pollution, which is pollution that occurs when rain water washes over streets, yards, and farmlands and carries oils, pesticides, and fertilizers into rivers, estuaries, and oceans. The act requires that plans must be coordinated with other existing federal and state water quality protection programs, so that all protection efforts are integrated and potential overlap is reduced. The EPA works with NOAA, state water quality agencies such as the Oregon Department of Environmental Quality, and state coastal management agencies, to complete nonpoint source control plans.

The EPA does coastal environmental research to acquire information to support estuary management and protection. It maintains a coastal ecology lab at Yaquina Bay, Oregon, that focuses on the effects of chemical and other anthropogenic stressors in the estuarine environment. On a regional scale, the EPA conducts the Environmental Monitoring and Assessment Program that sampled 700 sites in estuaries along the west coast during 1999-2000, with more focused sampling in Tillamook Bay, Oregon, to assess aquatic biological systems as integrators of stresses and to aggregate data from local, state, and regional levels.

**Federal Emergency Management Agency**

The Federal Emergency Management Agency is an independent agency of the federal government whose mission is “to reduce loss of life and property and protect critical infrastructure from all types of hazards through a comprehensive, risk-based, emergency management program of mitigation, preparedness, response and recovery.” The agency advises state agencies on floodplain management and disaster response, especially in response to river flooding and wave inundation from storm events in and around estuaries.

**NOAA Fisheries Service**

NOAA Fisheries Service, formerly known as the National Marine Fisheries Service, has jurisdiction over a wide range of ocean fisheries, including anadromous fish such as salmon and steelhead. NOAA Fisheries is responsible for evaluating the status of these stocks, and in the case of several species of salmonids in the Pacific Northwest, listing them as threatened under the federal Endangered Species Act. NOAA Fisheries then has authority to adopt regulations to protect habitat deemed “critical” to the recovery of the species and to prevent further loss. In the case of Pacific Northwest estuaries, NOAA Fisheries comments on federal waterway permits, principally from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, that are required for a variety of local and state
activities in estuarine waters. NOAA Fisheries reviews and must approve these permits to ensure protection of salmonid habitat and avoid impacts to these species as a result of dredging, dock placement, and other in-water work. NOAA Fisheries has worked closely with the salmon restoration programs in all three West Coast states to support watershed enhancement activities and restoration of habitat in rivers and estuaries.

**National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration**

The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) has many subagencies and programs that carry out a variety of responsibilities for protecting and enhancing coastal and marine resources. One of these program activities is to work with coastal states in a variety of efforts: to carry out the National Coastal Zone Management Act through the Office of Ocean and Coastal Resources Management, to implement the National Estuarine Research Reserve System, to support the National Estuary Program and the National Nonpoint Pollution Control Program, and to run a variety of research and information programs that support estuary and coastal management at the state and local level.

**U.S. Army Corps of Engineers**

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (the Corps) is the lead federal agency for waterway management in the U.S. The Corps is responsible for building and maintaining such navigational aids as jetties and channels and for regulating activities in the nation’s waterways, such as dredging and material disposal, filling, placement of in-water structures, and bank stabilization up to the mean or ordinary high-water line. The Corps is involved in every estuary in the region that has a jetty, bulkheads, docks, maintained channels, buoys, and other navigational facilities.

**Coast Guard**

The U.S. Coast Guard has a major presence with a wide range of responsibilities and authorities in estuaries with boating and shipping activities. The Coast Guard is responsible for maintaining safe navigation in U.S. waters, which includes vessel inspections, placement and maintenance of buoys, channel markers, warning devices, charts, and so on. It conducts search-and-rescue operations, which in the Columbia River and other well-used ports, means both vessels and aircraft. The Coast Guard is also the lead federal agency for federal ballast water exchange programs and for oil spill prevention, response, and cleanup in U.S. coastal waters and deepwater ports.
U.S. Forest Service

Like the Bureau of Land Management, the U.S. Forest Service is a major landowner in the coastal zone of the Pacific Northwest and has similar planning processes (land and resource management plans). Along the Oregon coast, in particular, the U.S. Forest Service manages three areas that have estuarine components:

- The Oregon Dunes National Recreation Area in Coos, Douglas, and Lane Counties, encompasses a number of small natural estuaries, such as Tenmile, Siltcoos, and Takenitch Creeks, that flow through the dunes and into the ocean. Protection and management of these estuaries is accomplished through the overall plan for managing the national recreation area.

- The Cascade Head Scenic Research Area in Lincoln County includes most of the Salmon River estuary that is being restored to natural conditions as dikes are removed and wetlands restored.

- The Sand Lake Estuary Off Highway Vehicle Riding Area in Tillamook County is a dune area that abuts the north side of the Sand Lake estuary and is managed primarily for off-highway vehicle recreational use.
State Government—Washington
Environmental Hearings Office
The Environmental Hearings Office includes the Pollution Control Hearings Board, which hears appeals against orders and decisions by the Department of Ecology and other agencies, as provided by law, and the Shorelines Hearings Board, which hears appeals against permit decisions and against those shoreline penalties issued jointly by local government and the Department of Ecology or by the Department of Ecology alone.

Washington State Department of Agriculture
The Washington State Department of Agriculture has regulatory authority over the application of pesticides. The Department of Agriculture reviews applications, grants permits, and enforces activities related to application of the pesticide carbaryl, which is used by oyster growers in Grays Harbor and Willapa Bay to control the population of mud shrimp and other burrowing organisms. Because oysters here are cultivated “on the bottom,” mud shrimp and other burrowing animals can bury young oysters with mud. Carbaryl is used to kill these burrowing organisms in favor of oyster production, a practice that is increasingly controversial.

Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife
The Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife has a number of programs with estuary management.

- The Habitat Management Program regulates the protection and restoration of estuaries and works on habitat restoration and management, with a focus on salmon recovery and watershed restoration.

- The Fish and Shellfish Management Program sets annual sportfishing regulations that apply in estuaries and streams for salmon, sturgeon, and shad. The program also conducts pre- and postseason stock assessments, carries out spawning surveys, and participates in planning forums with the Salmon Culture Division.

- The Wildlife Management Program is charged with the protection, preservation, and perpetuation of Washington’s wildlife resources (including endangered species management), as well as managing game and sport fish (trout and steelhead). Wildlife’s research arm is currently involved in studies of marbled murrelet and common murre populations and of harbor seal toxins.
Washington State Department of Health

The Washington State Department of Health has several authorities that apply to estuaries. The Office of Shellfish Programs is responsible for the licensing and certification of commercial shellfish operations and classifies commercial shellfish-growing areas to determine their suitability for harvest. It is also charged with the protection of consumers from illnesses related to shellfish consumption.

Washington Department of Natural Resources

The Washington Department of Natural Resources manages more than 5 million acres of forest, range, agricultural, and aquatic lands throughout the state to produce income to support state services and to provide other public benefits. The department manages 2.6 million acres of state-owned aquatic lands, including the beds of Puget Sound, estuaries, navigable rivers, lakes, and other waters, part of the state’s tidelands, and much of the shores of navigable lakes and other freshwater bodies.

The Department of Natural Resources is currently developing a program of aquatic reserves on publicly owned aquatic lands. The purpose of such reserves would be to maintain natural biodiversity, protect and restore ecosystem functions, and maintain appropriate public access to aquatic lands for scientific, educational, and recreational uses.

Washington State Parks and Recreation Commission

The Washington State Parks and Recreation Commission manages a system of 125 developed state parks (including 21 marine parks), covering 260,000 acres. About 25 of these parks are related to estuary shoreline areas and resources of Puget Sound. There are no state parks on either Grays Harbor or Willapa Bay estuaries.

Washington State Conservation Commission and Local Conservation Districts

The Washington State Conservation Commission provides procedural guidance and administrative support to local conservation districts, which were established in state law (Chapter 89.08 RCW) in 1939. Conservation districts are units of local government formed to coordinate soil and water conservation efforts. The commission administers grants for conservation projects, assists with audits, guides conservation district procedures and operations, coordinates district programs across the state, and promotes cost-effective use of public funds.

The Grays Harbor Conservation District covers the watershed areas around Grays Harbor estuary, and the Pacific Conservation District includes the watershed surrounding Willapa Bay and the
Washington shore of the Columbia River estuary. The Wahkiakum Conservation District abuts the shore of the Columbia River just upstream from the main estuary. Ten conservation districts, one in each county, abut shorelands of Puget Sound and the Strait of Juan de Fuca.

**Washington Department of Ecology**

The lead agency charged with coordinating state coastal and ocean resource management and planning activities is the Washington Department of Ecology. The agency implements the state’s federally approved Coastal Zone Management Program and the state Shoreline Management Act (the principal component of its Coastal Zone Management Program). The Shoreline Management Act establishes a cooperative program between local and state governments, in which local governments develop and administer local shoreline master programs and the state agency provides support and oversight.

In partnership with the USEPA, the Department of Ecology is responsible for water-resource development and water quality management. The strategic initiatives of the Department of Ecology include meeting the current and future water needs of people, farms, and fish and developing a comprehensive approach to watershed management that covers water quality, quantity, and habitat. The Department of Ecology is the lead agency in Washington for planning for and responding to oil spills.

**Puget Sound Water Quality Action Team**

The Puget Sound Water Quality Action Team works with tribal and local governments, community groups, citizens, businesses, and state and federal agencies to develop and carry out two-year work plans that guide the protection of water quality (including nonpoint pollution, oil spills, and dredged material) and biological resources in the Puget Sound. The biennial work plans are based on the Puget Sound Water Quality Management Plan, Washington’s strategy for protecting Puget Sound. Members include a governor-appointed chair; the directors of 10 state agencies; a city and a county representative and a representative of federally recognized tribes, each appointed by the governor; and nonvoting representatives of three federal agencies.

The Puget Sound Water Quality Action Team program includes a number of elements, among which is the Puget Sound Council, which advises the Action Team on work plan priorities and tracks the progress of state and local agencies in implementing the plans. The Puget Sound Management Plan, Work Plan, and Shared Waters Program all guide state and local agencies in addressing ongoing water quality issues in Puget Sound.
Columbia River (Washington and Oregon)

Columbia River Estuary Study Taskforce

The Columbia River Estuary Study Taskforce (CREST), formed in 1974, is a council of governments that includes the local counties, cities, and port districts surrounding the Columbia River estuary in both Oregon and Washington. Current members include Clatsop (Oregon), Wahkiakum (Washington), and Pacific (Washington) Counties; the cities of Astoria, Warrenton, and Seaside in Oregon and Ilwaco in Washington; the port districts of Astoria, Ilwaco, and Wahkiakum (No. 2); and the Clatsop Soil and Water Conservation District. The governing body of CREST is the CREST Council, comprising an elected official and an appointed alternate from each jurisdiction. CREST is not a regulatory agency but is a regional organization providing a forum for members to identify and discuss issues of regional importance; to monitor and comment on governmental activities related to the development and management of the natural, economic, and human resources of the Columbia River estuary; and to improve communication and cooperation among member governments.

Lower Columbia River Estuary Program Partnership

Initiated by Washington and Oregon in 1995 as part of the National Estuary Program under the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, the Lower Columbia River Estuary Program Partnership is now a non-profit program that is implementing a comprehensive management plan for the 146 miles of the lower Columbia River and estuary. The partnership involves agricultural interests, industry, ports, environmental groups, tribes, recreational groups, commercial fishing interests, and federal, state, and municipal governments and agencies from the mouth of the Columbia River to the “head of tide” at Bonneville Dam on the main stem and Willamette Falls at Oregon City. The partnership, which is voluntary, seeks to carry out a management plan that is based on scientific studies of the river and its needs, the visions and objectives developed for each of the seven priority issues, and significant input from citizens. The Management Plan has no regulatory authority, and actions to implement it are voluntary.

State Government—Oregon

Department of Agriculture

The Oregon Department of Agriculture regulates oyster and mussel cultivation as an agricultural activity, investigates and classifies those state waters suitable for oyster cultivation, and leases state tidelands classified as plats suitable for commercial oyster cultivation. The Division of Natural Resources within the Department of Agriculture assists soil and water conservation districts and oversees the confined
animal feeding program, noxious weed program, and other resource concerns that affect estuarine water quality.

**Department of Environmental Quality**

The Oregon Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) is responsible for water, air, and land quality in Oregon’s ocean area. DEQ monitors and controls water pollution in coastal watersheds and estuaries before this water reaches the ocean and regulates discharge of treated municipal sewage or industrial waste into estuaries and the ocean. DEQ establishes standards of water quality for each of the Oregon Water Resources Department’s 18 basins in Oregon and is responsible for managing both point and nonpoint source pollution. In addition, DEQ is the lead agency on oil spill prevention and response in the marine environment.

**Department of Fish and Wildlife**

The Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW) regulates commercial and recreational fisheries in freshwater, estuaries, and the ocean; protects marine wildlife; manages marine habitat in state ocean waters (including rocky shores); and advises other agencies and local governments on proper measures to protect and enhance habitat. ODFW must be consulted by other state agencies regarding the effects of development on marine fish and wildlife and their habitats, including estuaries. ODFW regulates recreational clam digging and crab catch in estuaries in Oregon, regulates private fish hatcheries, and is responsible for state-operated fish hatcheries.

**Department of Forestry**

The Department of Forestry administers state-owned forestlands, including the Tillamook State Forest, the Elliott State Forest, and other state forest lands in the coastal zone totaling over 600,000 acres. The Department of Forestry administers the Oregon Forest Practices Act on all nonfederal lands. This act regulates timber harvest activities, including riparian set-backs, replanting, and other practices, and sets policy to encourage the growth and harvest of trees consistent with sound management of other forest resources, such as wildlife habitat, fish habitat, and water quality. The Department of Forestry has developed a Northwest Region long-range plan to guide the management of state forestlands in northwestern Oregon, principally for the Tillamook State Forest, which covers about 550 square miles and includes numerous watersheds that drain into estuaries on the northern Oregon coast. This plan’s objectives are to promote timber growth and harvesting while maintaining the integrity of the forest ecosystem.
Department of Land Conservation and Development

The Oregon Department of Land Conservation and Development (DLCD), designated by law (ORS 196) as the state’s coastal management agency, has primary responsibility for administering the statewide land-use planning program under ORS 197 in the coastal zone. The bases for DLCD’s program are statewide planning goals, especially Goal 16, Estuarine Resources, and Goal 18, Coastal Shorelands, which establish the coastwide estuary management program that is carried out by local governments through comprehensive plans. DLCD also receives federal funds to support these coastal program activities, including planning assistance to local governments and other state agencies. DLCD, through the Land Conservation and Development Commission, reviews and approves all local comprehensive plans and amendments to ensure compliance with the statewide planning goals.

Division of State Lands

The Division of State Lands is the administrative agency for the State Land Board, comprising the governor, secretary of state, and state treasurer, which holds a wide range of public lands in trust for the public. These trust lands include submerged and submersible lands under all estuaries, lakes, navigable waterways (rivers and streams), and the state’s territorial sea (three nautical miles wide). The Division of State Lands regulates removal and fill of the seabed, estuaries, and streams under the Removal-Fill Law (including any dredged or seabed material); activities that affect wetlands; and the placement of docks and other waterside structures. It also shares authority over rocky intertidal areas along the ocean shore with the Oregon Parks and Recreation Department.
Oregon Economic and Community Development Department
The Ports Division of the Oregon Economic and Community Development Department assists the state’s port districts in promoting economic development.

Oregon Health Division
The Oregon Health Division, in the Department of Human Services, monitors the water quality of Oregon estuaries as it relates to the quality of oysters and other shellfish grown and harvested for human consumption. The Oregon Health Division reviews and approves plans for new public water systems and major improvements to existing systems, including systems for recreational vehicle parks. Furthermore, it can order water or sewer services by cities or districts to areas where inadequate installation poses a danger to public health.

Oregon Parks and Recreation Department
The Oregon Parks and Recreation Department has authority over the “ocean-shore recreation area,” which includes the ocean shore that is submerged by the daily tide as well as the adjacent dry sand beach. This area does not include estuary beaches. The agency has very few parks or recreational facilities in estuarine areas.

Oregon State Marine Board
The Oregon State Marine Board regulates boating activity in state waters, provides funds from boat registration fees and other sources for boating facilities such as docks and boat launches, and works with local government to enforce local regulations. The State Marine Board is an important agency in providing facilities that ensure access to the water in estuaries along the coast.

Water Resources Department
Along with the Water Resources Commission, the Water Resources Department administers state laws regulating the use of surface water and groundwater. The department promotes wise use of state waters through basin plans and state water management policies. The commission protects public resources and uses, including fish, water quality, and recreation, by setting minimum stream flows and in-stream water rights.

Watershed Councils
Watershed councils are nonregulatory organizations that were established through the Oregon Plan, a statewide program encouraging public participation and direct stakeholder involvement in watershed stewardship and restoration of native salmon stocks. There are over 90
watershed councils in Oregon, many with strong estuary stewardship programs, dedicated to enhancing watershed health through protecting riparian zones and improving fish habitat.

**State Government—California**

**California Coastal Commission**

The lead agency responsible for carrying out California’s coastal management plans, the California Coastal Commission is one of the three designated state coastal management agencies that administer the federal Coastal Zone Management Act in California. The other two agencies are the California State Coastal Conservancy and the Bay Conservation and Development Commission, whose jurisdiction is exclusively San Francisco Bay. The commission is an independent entity consisting of 16 members (12 voting, 4 nonvoting) that carries out a variety of planning, permitting, and resource protection programs. Headquartered in San Francisco, with district offices along the coast, the commission staff works with each of 73 cities and counties in the coastal zone to develop local coastal programs and land use plans. The commission also reviews port master plans for the industrial ports along the coast (Hueneme, Los Angeles, Long Beach, and San Diego) and plans for universities with land along the coast (UC Santa Cruz, UC Santa Barbara, UC San Diego, Pepperdine University, and San Diego State).

**California State Coastal Conservancy**

The California State Coastal Conservancy, established by voter approval, has nonregulatory management responsibilities for the entire coast, including all coastal watersheds. The conservancy uses entrepreneurial techniques to purchase, protect, restore, and enhance coastal resources and to provide access to the shore. The conservancy relies on partnerships with local governments, other public agencies, nonprofit organizations, and private landowners to acquire land, design and implement public access, restore coastal land and urban waterfronts, and enhance wetlands and watershed enhancement. It also provides gap funds and technical assistance to local governments, other public agencies, and nonprofit organizations for these purposes. The California State Coastal Conservancy program has four components: (1) resource enhancement, (2) acquisition, (3) technical assistance, and (4) public information.

**California State Lands Commission**

Members of the California State Lands Commission include the lieutenant governor, the state controller, and the state director of finance. The staff is composed of specialists in mineral resources, land manage-
ment, boundary determination, petroleum engineering, and the natural sciences. The lands commission has management authority over all state-owned lands, including lands from mean high tide seaward to the three-mile territorial sea boundary. These lands embrace estuarine areas and much of the tidal marshlands fringing estuaries. The commission is responsible for developing and implementing the state’s ballast water program and working with other state agencies to develop and implement the state’s invasive species control program.

**California Department of Fish and Game**

The California Department of Fish and Game manages California’s fish, wildlife, and plant resources, and their habitats, for their ecological values and public recreation. It is responsible for wildlife and fishery management programs. The Department of Fish and Game, in consultation with the California Coastal Commission and the Department of Boating and Waterways, studies degraded wetlands and conducts wetland restoration feasibility studies.

**State Water Resources Control Board**

The Porter-Cologne Water Quality Control Act is the principal law governing water quality regulation in California. It applies to surface waters, wetlands, and groundwater and to both point and nonpoint sources. The statute established the State Water Resources Control Board and nine regional water quality control boards and charged them with implementing provisions of the Water Quality Control Act. The state board provides program guidance and oversight, allocates funds, and reviews decisions made by the regional boards. The regional boards have responsibility for individual permitting, inspection, and enforcement actions within each of the nine hydrologic regions.

**California Fish and Game Commission**

A separate entity from the Department of Fish and Game, the California Fish and Game Commission has been involved in the management of California’s fish and wildlife resources since 1870. It is composed of up to five members, appointed by the governor and confirmed by the senate. The commissioners are not full-time state employees, but individuals involved in private enterprise with expertise in various wildlife-related fields.

The commission meets at least 11 times each year to publicly discuss various proposed regulations, permits, licenses, management policies, and other subjects within its areas of responsibility. It also holds a variety of special meetings to obtain public input on items of a more localized nature, requests for use permits on certain streams, or establishment of new ecological reserves. Probably the best-known respon-
sibility of the commission is its general regulatory powers function, under which it decides seasons, bag limits, and methods of take for game animals and sport fish.

**Office of Spill Prevention and Response**

Housed in the Department Fish and Game, the Office of Spill Prevention and Response is the lead state agency charged with oil spill prevention and response within California’s marine environment. The Lempert-Keene-Seastrand Oil Spill Prevention and Response Act of 1990 established the Office of Spill Prevention and Response and provides its administrator with substantial authority to direct spill response, cleanup, and activities that assess damage to natural resources.