

BILL ANALYSIS

Senate Research Center
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AUTHOR'S / SPONSOR'S STATEMENT OF INTENT

The Lone Star State is blessed with abundant wildlife and natural resources, and for more than 125 years, Texas game wardens have played a vital role in preserving and protecting this rich legacy for all Texans. The profession of Texas game warden has its roots in the office of the Fish and Oyster Commissioner, which was created in 1895 by the 24th Texas Legislature. The first commissioner was I. P. Kibbe, and he appointed several deputies, including William Henry Sterling, one of the first conservation law enforcement officers in the state. Staff salaries--\$150 a month for the commissioner and up to \$50 a month for the deputies--were funded by the sale of licenses and permits. In 1899, the commission was given jurisdiction over all public waters, including freshwater streams, lakes, and ponds, and four years later the agency's duties were expanded to include commercial shrimping.

Over the years, the name of the agency has changed several times; it was designated the office of the Game, Fish, and Oyster Commissioner in 1907, the Game, Fish, and Oyster Commission in 1929, and the Game and Fish Commission in 1951. Since 1963, the agency has been known as the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department, and in 1965, the professionals now known as Texas game wardens were further tasked with enforcing recreational safety on all waters of the state. In 1971, the 62nd Texas Legislature formally recognized TPWD game wardens as peace officers, granting them full authority to preserve the peace within Texas. The ranks of game wardens in Texas have grown over the years, from six officers in 1919 to more than 550 today. Active and retired game wardens joined together in 1979 to found the Texas Game Warden Association and again in 2000 to establish the Game Warden Peace Officers Association, with both organizations working to further the vitality and the heritage of the profession.

The dedicated men and women who serve as game wardens in the Lone Star State work tirelessly to safeguard the rich bounty of our natural resources and to maintain them for the use and enjoyment of present and future generations, and their exemplary service is deeply appreciated by their fellow Texans.

RESOLVED

That the 87th Legislature of the State of Texas hereby designate the third Tuesday in February as Texas Game Warden Day.

That, in accordance with the provisions of Section 391.004(d), Government Code, this designation remain in effect until the 10th anniversary of the date this resolution is finally passed by the legislature.