



STATE OF NEVADA

DEPARTMENT OF WILDLIFE

Game Division

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MEMORANDUM

April 22, 2016

To: Nevada Board of Wildlife Commissioners, County Advisory Boards to Manage Wildlife, and Interested Publics

From: Brian Wakeling, Administrator, Game Division

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "BW", is written over the "From:" line.

Title: **Consideration of Revisions to Existing Commission Policy 23 on Predation Management (Second Reading) – For Possible Action**

Description: The Commission will be asked to hear a proposed revision to existing Commission Policy 23 to make it consistent with 2015 Assembly Bill 78 and current practice. The Commission may take action to modify or adopt this revision of Policy 23.

Presenter: Game Division Administrator Brian F. Wakeling

Agenda No: 10

Summary:

On March 24, 2016, the Commission heard a proposed revision from the Wildlife Damage Management Committee to make existing Policy 23 consistent with provisions included in Assembly Bill 78 (AB 78) from the 2015 legislative session and current practice. The Commission moved the policy forward with removal of predation policies in subsection B.6. and B.7. on page 3 of the policy because these dealt with expenditures on habitat management, which had been specifically excluded through AB 78. The amended version is attached with track changes. The Commission may take action to modify or adopt this revision of Policy 23.

Recommendation:

The Department recommends that the Commission **VOTE TO ADOPT THE REVISION TO COMMISSION POLICY 23 AS PRESENTED.**

**STATE OF NEVADA
BOARD OF WILDLIFE COMMISSIONERS**

Commission Policy Number 23

Number: P-23
Title: Predation Management
Reference: NRS 501.100, 501.105,
501.181, 502.253
Effective Date:

PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to inform the public and guide the Nevada Department of Wildlife (Department) in actions relating to Predation Management. This policy specifically seeks to establish an informed Predation Management Program, primarily governed by the Predator Management Plan, which complies with NRS 502.253 and other applicable laws and incorporates the tools of habitat restoration for protection of nonpredatory game animals and sensitive wildlife species, research necessary to determine successful techniques for managing and controlling predatory wildlife, and the use of proven and emerging, science-based techniques of predator population management and control.

DEFINITION OF “PREDATION MANAGEMENT”

Predation Management is herein defined as selective reduction (i.e., limited lethal removal) and/or management (i.e., nonlethal actions) of predator or corvid (common raven, American crow and black-billed magpie) populations when and where predation is identified by the Department as a limiting factor negatively affecting another wildlife population. This includes monitoring and modeling of select predator populations, maintaining and/or managing viable predator populations, and studying select predator-prey relationships to better understand ecosystem function. It may also include the enhancement of various wildlife habitats according to the best available science as it relates directly to predator-prey relationships.

AUTHORITY FOR PREDATION MANAGEMENT

Pursuant to Nevada Revised Statutes (NRS) 501.100 the Legislature has declared “wildlife in this State not domesticated and in its natural habitat is part of the natural resources belonging to the people of the State of Nevada. The preservation, protection, management and restoration of wildlife within the State contribute immeasurably to the aesthetic, recreational, and economic aspects of these natural resources.”

In accordance with NRS 501.105 and 501.181, the Board of Wildlife Commissioners (Commission) shall establish policies necessary to the preservation, protection, propagation, restoration, transplanting, introduction, and management of wildlife and its habitat in this state.

Pursuant to NRS 502.253(1) a fee of \$3 is charged for processing each application for a game tag to be used by the Department for costs related to:

- (a) Developing and implementing an annual program for the management and

- control of predatory wildlife;
- (b) Wildlife management activities relating to the protection of non-predatory game animals and sensitive wildlife species ; and
- (c) Conducting research necessary to determine successful techniques for managing and controlling predatory wildlife.

Pursuant to NRS 502.253(2) the Department is hereby authorized to expend a portion of the money collected pursuant to subsection 1 of NRS 502.253 to enable the State Department of Agriculture to develop and carry out programs described in subsection 1 of NRS 502.253.

Pursuant to NRS 502.253(3) any program developed or wildlife management activity or research so conducted must be developed or conducted under the guidance of the Commission pursuant to NRS 501.181(2). Pursuant to NRS 501.181(2) the Commission shall guide the Department in its administration and enforcement of provisions of Title 45, Wildlife (Chapters 501–506) of NRS by establishment of broad policies for the protection, propagation, restoration, transplanting, introduction and management of wildlife in this State.

Pursuant to NRS 502.253(1) the revenue from the \$3 fee must be accounted for separately and deposited in the Wildlife Fund Account, of which 80% of the revenues from the most recent fiscal year for which the Department has complete information must be spent for lethal management and control of predatory wildlife in accordance with NRS 502.253(4)(b).

Pursuant to NRS 502.253(4)(a), the Department will first consider the recommendations of the Commission and the State Predatory Animal and Rodent Committee (PARC) before adopting any program for the management and control of predatory wildlife.

PREDATION MANAGEMENT POLICIES

A. POLICY FOR PROGRAMS FOR THE MANAGEMENT AND CONTROL OF PREDATORY WILDLIFE

1. Conduct projects in the most efficient and cost-effective manner possible, with clear goals, objectives and timelines defined at the onset, and with an emphasis on identifying and refining prescriptive measures of Predation Management for use in the future. Lethal and/or nonlethal predator control efforts will be undertaken in a targeted fashion to reduce specific wildlife-related losses to wildlife populations without endangering long-term health, vigor and/or ecological services provided by balanced and viable predator and/or corvid wildlife populations.
2. Geographical locations for project areas will be determined based on an objective analysis and on the needs of wildlife populations in the area. Priority will be given to act in areas where other efforts are completed, under way, or planned that will also benefit wildlife populations to provide the best data possible.
3. Control activities will be conducted where game and sensitive wildlife populations are at risk of being disproportionately affected by predation.

4. If needed to assess project viability, statewide and project area estimates of predator and corvid populations or densities will be based on an objective analysis.
5. Statewide and regional projects that allow the Department to engage in predator management programs as needed to protect game and sensitive wildlife populations.
6. The Commission recognizes the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, Wildlife Services (Wildlife Services), as a cooperating agency in lethal predatory wildlife control. The Commission also recognizes qualified contractors and cooperators may be available for predator population management, predator-prey research, and predator population monitoring efforts.
7. In terms of lethal control, Wildlife Services personnel or other contractors shall salvage (when practicable) and give the hide and skull of any mountain lion, black bear, and bobcat removed under authority of a contract with the Department within 96 hours of the removal.

B. POLICY FOR WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT ACTIVITIES FOR THE PROTECTION OF NONPREDATORY GAME ANIMALS AND SENSITIVE WILDLIFE SPECIES

1. Wildlife management activities will be undertaken in a targeted fashion to reduce specific wildlife losses including, but not limited to, enhancing habitat conditions to better provide adequate forage, water, or cover or remove naturally occurring habitat or corvid and raptor perches that increases the susceptibility to predation. Such wildlife management activities will be conducted in accordance with existing land use agreements.
2. Geographical locations for project areas will be determined based on an objective analysis and on the needs of wildlife populations in the area. Priority will be given to act in areas where other efforts are completed, under way, or planned that will also benefit wildlife populations to provide the best data possible.
3. Wildlife management activities will be conducted in the most efficient and cost-effective manner possible with clear goals, objectives and timelines defined at the onset, with an emphasis on improving wildlife populations and their habitats.
4. Statewide and regional projects that allow the Department to engage in wildlife management activities as needed to protect game and sensitive wildlife populations.
5. If needed to assess project viability, statewide and project area estimates of predator and corvid populations or densities will be based on an objective analysis.

~~Habitat restoration efforts such as selective piñon-juniper removal, riparian zone improvement or habitat rehabilitation after fire will be promoted that provide wildlife habitats wherein game and nongame species alike can find suitable nesting, brood-rearing, fawning, transition and wintering habitats, complete with ample security cover for the purpose of eluding predators and limiting corvid and raptor perching that facilitates predation.~~

~~Habitat projects may be considered after all necessary state and federal project clearances have been completed and documentation has been provided to the Wildlife Damage Management Committee of the Commission~~

C. POLICY FOR CONDUCTING RESEARCH FOR MANAGING AND CONTROLLING PREDATORY WILDLIFE

1. Wildlife research activities will be undertaken in a targeted fashion to address questions regarding predator-prey or predator community relationships including improved control techniques, predator-prey responses to habitat restoration activities and influences of large and medium-sized predators on ecosystems.
2. Geographical locations for project areas will be determined based on an objective analysis and on the needs of wildlife populations and habitats in the area, as well as the need for objective science on subjects related to Predation Management. Priority will be given to act in areas where other efforts are completed, under way, or planned that will also benefit wildlife populations to provide the best data possible.
3. Wildlife research efforts will be promoted that: a) provide wildlife managers with objective scientific analysis for making sound decisions regarding future wildlife population and habitat management; and b) provide insights into the role predators play in maintaining vigorous and healthy ecosystems.
4. If needed to assess project viability, statewide and project area estimates of predator and corvid populations or densities will be based on an objective analysis.
5. Statewide and regional projects that allow the Department to engage in wildlife research efforts as needed to identify better techniques for predator control and management.

PREDATION MANAGEMENT PLAN

Pursuant to the above Commission policies, the Department, in coordination with and under the guidance of the WDMC shall prepare a Predation Management Plan. The Predation Management Plan shall identify and implement (a) programs for the management and control of predatory wildlife for the benefit of other species of wildlife (“Control Program”), (b) wildlife management activities for the protection of non-predatory animals and related wildlife habitat (“Management Activity”), and (c) research relating to predatory wildlife and research to determine successful techniques and effective programs for managing and/or controlling predatory wildlife and related habitats (“Research Program”), all to be conducted for the fiscal period beginning July 1 and ending June 30 of each year (Fiscal Year).

Whenever possible, Control Programs, Management Activities, and Research Programs should be integrated on the landscape to provide the best possible outcome in terms of healthy functioning ecosystems and the furthering of wildlife management science.

The Predation Management Plan shall be developed each Fiscal Year according to the following procedure:

1. The Department shall prepare a Draft Predation Management Plan (Draft Plan) outlining proposed actions needed for the protection, preservation, management and restoration of wildlife populations and their habitats. Descriptions of Control Programs, Management Activities, and Research Programs, collectively referred to as “project(s),” shall include specific project goals, a detailed description of anticipated results, predator and prey wildlife species that may be affected, whether or not the project will span more than one Fiscal Year, and if the project is for a Control Program, a statement of why the Department believes that the predatory wildlife is a limiting factor in the growth and or maintenance of a target prey population. A description of the project area should be provided, including a map, an assessment of the habitat conditions, and identification if such habitat is a migratory corridor, summer range, winter range, fawning, calving, nesting or brood-rearing habitat or a combination of any of the above. Regarding all projects proposed to be continued from the prior Fiscal Year, the Draft Plan shall address the Department’s comments from the prior Fiscal Year’s Status Report.
2. A Draft Plan shall be submitted to the Commission during its first meeting of the calendar year (typically February). In so doing, the Draft Plan will be made available to all “Stakeholders,” including but not limited to contractors (including Wildlife Services), County Advisory Boards to Manage Wildlife (CABMWs), PARC, conservation organizations, and the general public. This Draft Plan shall serve as a vehicle to elicit suggestions for changes, adjustments, new ideas and input from all Stakeholders.
3. The Department shall attend a meeting of the PARC between the Commission's first meeting of the year and the Commission's March meeting to present and discuss the Draft Plan.
4. The WDMC shall set a meeting in conjunction with the March meeting of the Commission to review all comments received on the Draft Plan. After consideration of findings and recommendations of the Department, and with respect to lethal control projects, recommendations of Wildlife Services and other contractors, PARC, as well as all comments and recommendations received, the Chairman of the WDMC shall make a preliminary report to the Commission on which projects should be funded in the subsequent Fiscal Year. At the March meeting, the Commission shall review the report of the WDMC and may vote to make a recommendation to the Department on the ranking of all projects. If the Commission determines that more projects are proposed than funding is available for the subsequent Fiscal Year, this will factor into their deliberations and recommendations to the Department.
5. The Department shall prepare a Final Draft Predation Management Plan (Final Draft Plan) and present it to the WDMC and/or Commission at their May Meeting. The Final Draft Plan shall be posted on the Department’s website and made available to the public and distributed to CABMWs and PARC. The Commission shall review the Final Draft Plan and shall take further comments from the Department, Stakeholders, PARC, and with respect to lethal Control Programs, from Wildlife Services and other contractors. After consideration of such

comments, the Commission shall make its final recommendations to the Department on the Final Draft Plan.

6. On or before June 30, after consideration of all comments, the Department shall finalize the Predation Management Plan for the next Fiscal Year. The Final Predation Management Plan shall be posted on the Department's website and made available to the public and distributed to members of the Commission and CABMWs and to all contractors and cooperators.
7. If, at any other time of the year, the Department, in consultation with the WDMC and PARC, identifies additional or changing Predation Management needs and determines that money is available to fund additional projects, the Department may approve projects which are urgent in nature or which present unique opportunities.
8. Contracts or grants will be finalized and/or amended as soon as possible after the finalization of the Predation Management Plan.
9. Any time after June 30 but no later than August 1, each contractor or grantee of a project from the previous Fiscal Year shall submit a report to the Commission on a form prescribed by the Department and which has been developed in consultation with the WDMC. Such reports may include:
 - (a) For a Control Program, (1) all of the information set forth in Section 1, above; (2) for lethal Control Programs, required quarterly removal reports, (3) for lethal and nonlethal Control Programs, a detailed description of results may include: a) estimated predator and prey population and demographic indices before and after treatment in the Control Program area; b) estimated predator and prey population and demographic indices in treatment and other areas; c) any other data sets pertinent to the analysis and interpretation of the Control Program (i.e. sport harvest data, climate patterns, fire regime, nonnative floral and/or faunal influences on predator and prey populations and their habitats, etc); and (4) all itemized costs incurred during previous Fiscal Years;
 - (b) For a Management Activity, (1) all of the information set forth in Section 1, above; (2) a detailed description of results may include: a) a complete analysis of acreages treated and habitat enhancement responses to date; b) estimated predator and prey population and demographic indices before and after treatment in the Management Activity area; c) estimated predator and prey population and demographic indices in treatment and other areas; d) any other data sets pertinent to the analysis and interpretation of Management Activities (i.e. sport harvest data, climate patterns, fire regime, nonnative floral and/or faunal influences on predator and prey populations and their habitats, etc); and (4) all itemized costs incurred during previous Fiscal Years; and
 - (c) For a Research Program, (1) all of the information set forth in Section 1, above; (2) a detailed description of results may include: a) a complete analysis of research results and conclusions to date; b) estimated predator and prey population and demographic indices before and after treatment (if applicable) in the Research Program area; c) estimated

predator and prey population and demographic indices in treatment and other areas within designated project areas (if applicable); d) any other data sets pertinent to the analysis and interpretation of the Research Program (i.e. sport harvest data, climate patterns, fire regime, nonnative floral and/or faunal influences on predator and prey dynamics and their habitats, etc); and (4) all itemized costs incurred during previous Fiscal Years.

10. The Department shall prepare an annual Predation Management Status Report (Status Report) detailing results of the previous Fiscal Year's projects. This report will include a summary of all lethal removal reports, excluding any sensitive data, proprietary information, or time-sensitive locational information. This Status Report shall be presented at the last Commission meeting of each calendar year.

11. This Status Report will be used in Department and Commission deliberations in subsequent years and in future Predation Management planning efforts.

This policy shall remain in effect until amended, repealed or superseded by the Commission.

BY ORDER OF THE BOARD OF WILDLIFE COMMISSIONERS REGULAR SESSION,.

**Chairman
Board of Wildlife Commissioners**