STATE OF NEVADA
BOARD OF WILDLIFE COMMISSIONERS

Number: P-23
Title: Predation Management
Commission Policy Number 23
Effective Date: August 3, 2013 (Tentative)

PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to inform the public and guide the Department of Wildlife (Department) in actions relating to Predation Management. This Policy specifically seeks to establish an informed wildlife conservation program which incorporates the tools of public education, habitat restoration, the study of predator-prey relationships, and the use of emerging, state-of-the-art, science-based techniques of predator population control.

DEFINITION OF “PREDATION MANAGEMENT”

Predation Management is herein defined as selective reduction and/or management of carnivore 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 carnivore populations, maintaining and/or managing viable carnivore populations and studying select predator-prey relationships to better understand ecosystem function. It may also include the restoration of various wildlife habitats as they relate to predator-prey relationships. Finally, it may include providing educational opportunities to all public stakeholders to encourage wise, informed and responsible management of predators and their habitats in Nevada.

AUTHORITY FOR PREDATION MANAGEMENT

Pursuant to 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 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) Programs for the management and control of predatory wildlife;
(b) Wildlife management activities relating to the protection of nonpredatory game animals, sensitive wildlife species and related wildlife habitat;
(c) Conducting research, as needed, to determine successful techniques for managing and controlling predatory wildlife, including studies necessary to insure effective programs for the management and control of predatory wildlife; and

(d) Programs for the education of the general public concerning the management and control of predatory wildlife.

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.

PREDATION MANAGEMENT POLICIES

A. POLICY FOR PROGRAMS FOR THE MANAGEMENT AND CONTROL OF PREDATORY WILDLIFE FOR THE BENEFIT OF OTHER SPECIES OF 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 minimize specific wildlife-related losses to wildlife populations without endangering long-term health, vigor and/or ecological services provided by carnivore 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.

3. Control activities will be conducted only where game populations are at risk, experiencing chronic low carrying capacity and/or catastrophic decline.

4. Statewide and project area estimates of carnivore and corvid populations or densities will be based on an objective analysis.

5. The Department shall prepare an annual Predation Management Status Report detailing results of the previous fiscal year’s predator population control activities as they relate to the predation management plan. This status report shall be presented at the December Commission meeting.

6. The Commission recognizes the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, Wildlife Services (USDA-APHIS-WS), as a primary (not exclusive) contractor in lethal predatory wildlife control. The Commission also recognizes other contractors and cooperators may be available for non-lethal predator population management, habitat management, predator prey research, conservation education, and carnivore population monitoring efforts.

7. In terms of lethal control, USDA-APHIS-WS personnel or other contractors shall salvage (when practicable) and give the hide and skull of any mountain lion,
black bear, bobcat and coyote removed under authority of an NDOW contract to the Department within 72 hours of the removal.

B. POLICY FOR WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT ACTIVITIES FOR THE PROTECTION OF NONPREDATORY ANIMALS AND RELATED WILDLIFE HABITAT

1. Wildlife management activities will be undertaken in a targeted fashion to minimize specific wildlife losses related to wildlife populations including, but not limited to, restoring desirable habitat conditions that provide adequate forage, water, or cover to reduce susceptibility to predation by prey species.
2. Geographical locations for Project Areas will be determined based on an objective analysis and on the needs of wildlife populations and wildlife habitats in the area.
3. Conduct projects 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 project area estimates of carnivore and corvid populations will be based on an objective analysis.
5. Habitat restoration efforts such as piñon-juniper conversion to sagebrush steppe, riparian habitat improvement, habitat rehabilitation after fire, etc. 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 alluding predators.
6. The Department shall prepare an annual Predation Management Status Report detailing results of the previous fiscal year’s wildlife management activities as they relate to predation management. This status report shall be presented at the December Commission meeting.

C. POLICY FOR CONDUCTING RESEARCH FOR MANAGING AND CONTROLLING PREDATORY WILDLIFE IN AN EFFICIENT AND COST EFFECTIVE MANNER WHILE GAINING A BETTER UNDERSTANDING OF PREDATOR-PREY RELATIONSHIPS AND ECOSYSTEM FUNCTION

1. Wildlife research activities will be undertaken in a targeted fashion to address questions regarding predator-prey relationships including improved control techniques, predator-prey responses to habitat restoration activities, and influences of large and medium-sized carnivores 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.
3. Wildlife research efforts will be promoted that: a) provide wildlife managers with objective scientific analysis for making sound decisions regarding future wildlife population/habitat management; and b) provide insights into the role predators play in maintaining vigorous and healthy ecosystems.
4. Statewide and project area estimates of carnivore and corvid populations will be based on an objective analysis.
5. The Department shall prepare an annual Predation Management Status Report
detailing results of the previous fiscal year’s wildlife research activities as they relate to predation management. This status report shall be presented at the December Commission meeting.

D. POLICY FOR PROGRAMS FOR THE EDUCATION OF THE PUBLIC CONCERNING THE MANAGEMENT AND CONTROL OF PREDATORY WILDLIFE

1. Conservation education efforts will be encouraged to: a) educate the public on the purpose of predation management; and b) produce an informed citizenry as to the essential role that predators play in a well-functioning ecosystem.

2. Geographical locations for Conservation Education Projects Areas will be determined based on statewide and individual community needs for public education relative to predators and predation management.

3. The Department shall prepare an annual Predation Management Status Report detailing results of the previous fiscal year’s conservation education activities as they relate to predation management. This status report shall be presented at the December Commission meeting.

PREDATION MANAGEMENT PLAN

Pursuant to the above Commission policies, the Department, in cooperation with and under the guidance of the Predation Management Committee of the Commission (“Predation Management Committee”), 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 nonpredatory animals and related wildlife habitat (“Management Activity”), (c) research relating to predatory wildlife and research to determine successful techniques and effective programs for managing and controlling predatory wildlife and related habitats (“Research Program”), and (d) programs for education of the public concerning the management and control of predatory wildlife and the role predators play in a well-functioning ecosystem (“Education Program”), all to be conducted for the fiscal period beginning July 1 and ending June 30 of each year.

Whenever possible, control projects, habitat, research, and conservation education should be integrated on the landscape to provide the best possible outcome in terms of healthy functioning ecosystems and the furthering of wildlife 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 outlining proposed actions needed for the protection, preservation, management and restoration of wildlife populations and their habitats. Descriptions of the Control, Management, Research and/or Conservation Education Programs shall include specific project goals, a detailed description of anticipated results, predator and
prey wildlife species that may be impacted, whether or not the program will span more than one fiscal year, and if the proposal 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 whether 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.

2. A draft plan shall be submitted to the Wildlife Commission during the February Commission meeting. In so doing, the plan will be made available to all Stakeholders, Contractors (including Wildlife Services), CABMWs, Conservation Organizations, and the General Public. This draft shall serve as a vehicle to elicit suggestions for changes, adjustments, new ideas, and input from all Stakeholders.

3. The Predation Management Committee 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 Programs, recommendations of Wildlife Services and other Contractors, as well as all comments and recommendations received, the Chairman of the Predation Management Committee 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 Predation Management Committee and shall 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.

4. The Department shall prepare a Final Draft Predation Management Plan and present it to the Predation Management Committee and Wildlife Commission at their May Meeting. The Final Draft Predation Management Plan shall be posted on the Department’s website and made available to the public and distributed to County Advisory Boards. The Commission shall review the Draft Predation Management Plan and shall take further comments from the Department, County Advisory Boards, citizen organizations, and members of the public, 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 Draft Predation Management Plan.

5. 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 County Advisory Boards and to all Contractors and Cooperators.

6. If, at any other time of the year, the Department, in consultation with the Predation Management Committee, identifies additional or changing predation management needs and determines that money is available to fund additional Programs, the
Department may approve projects which are urgent in nature or which present unique opportunities.

7. Contracts or grants will be finalized and/or amended as soon as possible after the finalization of the Predation Management Plan.

8. Any time after June 30 but no later than August 1, each contractor or grantee of a control program, management activity, research program, or conservation education program 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 Predation Management Committee. Such reports shall include, without limitation:

(a) For a Control Program, (1) all of the information set forth in Section 1, above; (2) in respect to lethal removal efforts, quarterly removal reports as required by the MOU between NDOW and Wildlife Services, (3) in respect to lethal and nonlethal control efforts, a detailed description of results including but not limited to: a) predator and prey population and demographic indices before and after treatment; b) predator and prey population and demographic indices in treatment and adjacent control areas within designated project areas; c) any other data sets pertinent to the analysis and interpretation of the control project (i.e. 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 the previous fiscal(s);

(b) For a Management Activity, (1) all of the information set forth in Section 1, above; (2) a detailed description of results including but not limited to: a) a complete analysis of acreages treated and habitat restoration responses to date; b) predator and prey population and demographic indices before and after treatment; c) predator and prey population and demographic indices in treatment and adjacent control areas within designated project areas; d) any other data sets pertinent to the analysis and interpretation of habitat projects (i.e. 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 the previous fiscal(s);

(c) For a Conservation Education Program, (1) all of the information set forth in Section 1, above; (2) a complete analysis of conservation education efforts to date including but not limited to how many citizens, schools and/or civic groups benefited directly to date; and (3) all itemized costs incurred during the previous fiscal(s);

(d) For a Research Program, (1) all of the information set forth in Section 1, above; (2) a detailed description of results including but not limited to: a) a complete analysis of research results and conclusions to date; b) predator and prey population and demographic indices before and after treatment (if applicable); c) predator and prey population and demographic indices in treatment and adjacent control areas within designated project areas (if applicable); d) any other data sets pertinent to the analysis and interpretation of research projects (i.e. 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 the previous fiscal(s).

9. The Department shall review reports submitted by all Contractors for Control Programs, Management Activities, Research Programs, and Conservation Education Programs, and shall submit comments to the Predation Management Committee on or before September 1. The extent to which the Control Program, Management Activity, Research Program, or Conservation Education Program achieved goals and required results will be the focus of these comments.

10. The Department shall prepare an annual Predation Management Status Report detailing results of the previous fiscal year’s wildlife management activities as they relate to predation management. This status report shall be presented at the December Commission meeting.

11. This information 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 Board of Wildlife Commissioners.

Chairman Jack Robb
Board of Wildlife Commissioners