

## Nevada Board of Wildlife Commissioners' Meeting Draft Minutes

*\*Legislative Committee Agenda Item Revised*

### Meeting Location

Washoe County Administrative Building A  
Commission Chambers  
1001 E. Ninth Street  
Reno, NV 89512

The meeting will be broadcast live at the NDOW Commission YouTube page:

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCrFHgHLM0MZA2Hx7og8pFcQ>

If you wish to make public comment, please use this link for Friday, May 5, 2023.

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84016437373?pwd=WXIXRXIsUVVoTmRWcEdVWHVHd0FUQT09>

Passcode: 780429

If you wish to make public comment, please use this link for Saturday, May 6, 2023

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84091660712?pwd=MTdvSW9rbS9FTXA4dHlrHVyRnozZz09>

Passcode: 535049

Meeting materials are available at: <https://www.ndow.org/events/may-2023-commission-meeting/>

Public comment will be taken on each action item following Commission discussion and before any action is taken. **Persons attending virtually wishing to comment are invited to raise their virtual hands in the virtual meeting forum during the appropriate time; each person offering public comment during this period will be limited to not more than three minutes. If you are a CABMW member participating in the virtual option, please provide your county and CABMW after your name. If you are a member of the public representing yourself, include self after your name.** The Chair may allow persons representing groups to speak for six minutes. Persons may not allocate unused time to other speakers. Persons are invited to submit written comments on items prior to the meeting at [wildlifecommission@ndow.org](mailto:wildlifecommission@ndow.org) or make comment during the meeting and are asked to complete a speaker card and present it to the Recording Secretary. Public comment will not be restricted based on viewpoint. To ensure the public has notice of all matters the Commission will consider, Commissioners may choose not to respond to public comments to avoid the appearance of deliberation on topics not listed for action on the agenda. Minutes of the meeting will be produced in summary format.

**FORUM RESTRICTIONS AND ORDERLY BUSINESS:** The viewpoint of a speaker will not be restricted, but reasonable restrictions may be imposed upon the time, place, and manner of speech. Irrelevant and unduly repetitious statements and personal attacks which antagonize or incite others are examples of public comment that may be reasonably limited.

Nevada Board of Wildlife Commissioners present for the meeting:

Chairman Tommy Caviglia  
Commissioner Eddie Booth  
Commissioner Casey Kiel  
Commissioner Mario Walther

Vice Chairman Shane Rogers  
Commissioner Tiffany East  
Commissioner David McNinch  
Commissioner Alana Wise

Senior Deputy Attorney General Craig Burkett

Secretary Alan Jenne

Nevada Department of Wildlife personnel in attendance:

Administrative Assistant Cameron Tull	Executive Assistant Meghan Beyer
Management Analyst Megan Manfredi	Field Biologist Ed Partee
Wildlife Staff Specialist Mike Cox	Field Biologist Carl Lackey
Wildlife Staff Specialist Pat Jackson	Wildlife Staff Specialist Cody McKee
Conservation Educator Bobby Jones	Game Administrator Shawn Espinosa
Management Analyst Kailey Musso	Game Supervisor Tom Donham
Habitat Division Administrator Mark Freese	Field Biologist Joe Bennett
Fisheries Division Administrator Chris Crookshanks	Deputy Director Jordan Goshert
Wildlife Diversity Administrator Jennifer Newmark	Deputy Director Mike Scott
Law Enforcement Division Administrator Kristy Knight	
Conservation Education Division Administrator Chris Vasey	
Data and Technology Services Division Administrator Kim Munoz	

Nevada Department of Wildlife personnel in attendance via Zoom:

Wildlife Staff Specialist Cody Schroeder

Public in Attendance:

Gene Green, Carson CABMW	Dave Talaga, Clark CABMW
Jim Cooney, Elko CABMW	Kevin Kjer, Douglas CABMW
Ted McElvain, Lander CABMW	Glenn Bunch, Mineral CABMW
Joe Crim, Pershing CABMW	Steve Robinson, Washoe CABMW
Marlene Bunch, Mineral CABMW	Mel Belding, private citizen
Dr. Seth Dettenmaier, US Geological Survey	Mitch Strobl, Gordan Darby
Kelly Dean, Nevada Bowhunters Association	Zach Lambert, Gordan Darby
Mike Ryan, Nevada Bighorns Unlimited	Sean Shea, private citizen
Dr. Sean Sultaire, University of Montana	Gerald Lent, private citizen

Attendance via Zoom:

Tony Gildone, Humboldt CABMW	Rob Boehmer, Carson CABMW
Joe Crawford, Lyon CABMW	Danny Thompson, Carson CABMW
Jana Wright, private citizen	Rex Flowers, private citizen
Rick Duenas, private citizen	Stephanie Myers, private citizen
Dre Arman, private citizen	Cathy Smith, private citizen
Rick Weeteling, private citizen	Greg Ott, private citizen

**Friday, May 5, 2023 – 9:00 a.m.**

***If you wish to make public comment via Zoom, please use this link:***

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84016437373?pwd=WXlXRlIsUVVVoTmRWcEdVWHVHd0FUQT09>

- 1. Call to Order, Pledge of Allegiance, Roll Call of Commission Members and County Advisory Board Members to Manage Wildlife (CABMW) – Chairman Tommy Caviglia**

Chairman Caviglia called the meeting to order at 9:00am. Commissioner Walther led the Commission in the Pledge of Allegiance. Executive Assistant Meghan Beyer called the roll of the Commission. Commissioner Barnes was absent. Chairman Caviglia made note of the CABMW members in attendance.

**2. Approval of Agenda – Chairman Tommy Caviglia – For Possible Action**

The Commission will review the agenda and may take action to approve the agenda. The Commission may remove items from the agenda, continue items for consideration or take items out of order.

Chairman Caviglia introduced Item #2. He requested to move the Department Activity Report to the end of Agenda Item #6.

*No CABMW comment.*

Jana Wright, private citizen, stated that the video for the Zoom meeting was not working.

**VICE CHAIRMAN ROGERS MADE A MOTION TO APPROVE THE AGENDA AS PRESENTED WITH THE NOTED CHANGE. COMMISSIONER EAST SECONDED THE MOTION. MOTION PASSED 8-0. COMMISSIONER BARNES WAS ABSENT.**

**3. Approval of Minutes – Chairman Tommy Caviglia – For Possible Action**

Commission minutes may be approved from the March 10 and 11, 2023 and April 11, 2023 meetings.

Chairman Caviglia introduced Item #3.

**A.\* March 10 and 11, 2023 Commission Meeting Minutes- Chairman Tommy Caviglia – For Possible Action**

The Commission will review and may approve Commission meeting minutes.

Commissioner East noted that she was absent on Friday, March 10 and that under Agenda Item # 8 – Commission General Regulation 506, page 22, it didn't recognize that she or Commissioner Barnes were absent.

Chairman Caviglia stated that on page 105, when the Commission took the vote on AB 102, he was one of three Commissioners that dissented, not Commissioner Booth.

Commissioner McNinch stated that on page 29, second comment from the bottom, what he said was incorrect. He was making the point that the limitations on Trumpeter Swans was an unfortunate result of conservation success, not because of population levels being low.

Commissioner Walther stated that he would abstain from voting on meeting minutes due to his absence from the March Commission meeting.

*No CABMW comment.*

*No public comment.*

**COMMISSIONER EAST MADE A MOTION TO APPROVE THE MARCH MEETING MINUTES AS PRESENTED WITH THE NOTED CHANGES. COMMISSIONER MCNINCH SECONDED THE MOTION. MOTION PASSED 7-0. COMMISSIONER BARNES WAS ABSENT AND COMMISSIONER WALTHER ABSTAINED.**

**B.\* April 11, 2023 Commission Meeting Minutes - Chairman Tommy Caviglia – For Possible Action**

The Commission will review and may approve Commission meeting minutes.

Commissioner East noted several grammatical and spacing errors.

Commissioner McNinch noted that on page 14, there were two motions made and that the second motion was a clarification of the first motion, which had been interrupted. He wanted to put on record that a vote was not left incomplete.

*No CABMW comment.*

*No public comment.*

**VICE CHAIRMAN ROGERS MADE A MOTION TO APPROVE THE APRIL MEETING MINUTES AS PRESENTED WITH THE NOTED CHANGES. COMMISSIONER EAST SECONDED THE MOTION. MOTION PASSED 7-0. COMMISSIONER BARNES WAS ABSENT AND COMMISSIONER WALTHER ABSTAINED.**

**4. Member Items/Announcements and Correspondence – Chairman Tommy Caviglia – Informational**

Commissioners may present emergent items. No action may be taken by the Commission. Any item requiring Commission action may be scheduled on a future Commission agenda. The Commission will review and may discuss correspondence sent or received by the Commission since the last regular meeting and may provide copies for the exhibit file (Commissioners may provide hard copies of their correspondence for the written record). Correspondence sent or received by Secretary Alan Jenne may also be discussed.

Chairman Caviglia introduced Item #4. No items were presented.

**5. County Advisory Boards to Manage Wildlife (CABMW) Member Items – Informational**

CABMW members may present emergent items. No action may be taken by the Commission. Any item requiring Commission action will be scheduled on a future Commission agenda.

Chairman Caviglia introduced Item #5.

Jim Kooney, representing Elko CABMW, raised the subject of Elk Management Sub-Plans with regard to Elko County and that he was unsure of how to initiate the process. He had been told several different things, making it unclear exactly whose responsibility it was, but that the Elko CABMW was ready to begin the review process.

**6. Reports**

**B.\* Litigation Report – Deputy Attorney General Craig Burkett - Informational**

A report will be provided on Nevada Department of Wildlife litigation.

Chairman Caviglia introduced Item #6B.

Deputy Attorney General Craig Burkett stated that for the first item, a decades long case, they were very close to settlement and that the Governor's Office had gotten involved recently, which was helpful. The second item pertained to Mr. Collard's case (suspension of his guide license). Oral argument had been moved to the following month and there would be a ruling from the district court of Clark County about a month after the hearing.

**C.\* Edible Portions Report – Black Bears and Mountain Lions – Deputy Attorney General Craig Burkett - Informational**

A report will be provided on Nevada's requirements for edible portions of harvested black bears and mountain lions.

Chairman Caviglia introduced Item #6C. He noted that the Commission had a discussion in a previous Commission meeting and that DAG Burkett would research this subject and provide a report. He stated that it was very detailed and placed it on the agenda for this Commission to have a discussion about it.

DAG Burkett explained that he had previously provided incorrect information on this subject and that he and Caitlin Pagni, the paralegal in attendance, went over every Western state and Nevada's wanton waste statutes to produce a memorandum that perfectly reflected their findings after quite a few versions. He noted that they included mountain lions in the report as requested by a member of the public.

Caitlin Pagni presented on their findings. You can view the presentation at the link below:

<https://www.ndow.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/05/Harvesting-Edible-Portions-05.04.2023.pdf>

Chairman Caviglia thanked Ms. Pagni for the presentation and expressed appreciation for how extensive it was.

Commissioner East asked if we knew how many people remove the edible portion of these animals.

DAG Burkett replied that we did and that he recalled a summary on Black bear retention in one of the Predator Management meetings that stated there was roughly 85%. He believed that was self-reported by sportsmen in Nevada. He contacted several mountain lion guides in the state and depending on the guide, there was a wide range of what was retained. After careful consideration and discussion with bear biologist Carl Lackey on whether a black bear was considered a carnivore, it was decided that the Commission could not change this particular issue on its own. A new bill draft request (BDR) would be required. In regard to drafting language, he suggested that Montana and Arizona laws consisted of good, clear language as examples. He stated he believed the language in current Nevada statute was prehistoric, specifically the destroyer/capture language and that other states have done a much better job providing clear language pertaining to their wanton waste statutes.

Chairman Caviglia expressed his appreciation for the presentation.

**D. Gordon Darby Presentation – Gordon Darby Representative Mitch Strobl and Data and Technology Services Administrator Kim Munoz - Informational**

A representative of the Department's new contracted licensing vendor will provide an overview of the company and their plans on supporting the Department for the remainder of the contract.

Chairman Caviglia introduced Item #6D.

Data and Technology Services Administrator Kim Munoz stated that Nevada's Kalkomey contract was assigned to Gordon Darby in March and introduced Mitch Strobl and Zach Lambert.

Mitch Strobl and Zach Lambert gave a joint presentation on Gordon Darby. Mr. Strobl stated that as of March 15, 2023 Kalkomey Enterprises entered into an agreement with Gordon Darby for the purchase of the AMS assets. This means that the AMS system used over the past few years will stay the same in Nevada and the employees that have worked on the system will stay with Nevada.

The presentation may be viewed at the link below:

<https://www.ndow.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/05/GDI-AMS-Presentation.pdf>

Commissioner East asked what the length of the contract with NDOW currently is.

Administrator Munoz stated that the current contract expires in August, but that they are working on extending it for a two-year period. It will go to July Board of Examiners for an extension.

Commissioner East asked if Gordon Darby has considered renewing the contract.

Mr. Strobl stated that Gordon Darby has already communicated interest in any extensions that are approved. Currently, two two-year extensions are being considered, for a total of four years.

Commissioner East stated that her interest was on the continuity, considering the first transition was hard for some people, especially sportsmen.

Vice Chairman Rogers asked how confident Gordon Darby was that the upcoming draw process would be seamless considering it was changing hands.

Mr. Lambert stated that his confidence in the process was very high, considering he is known as a worry wart. Several test runs had already been run with dummy data, which scaled well to the volume of applications they were set to receive. Additionally, they have benefitted from several performance improvements on the new infrastructure.

Mitch Strobl stated that as part of the discussion between organizations and states, protecting the draw and ensuring its success was the primary focus. With the combined commitment from Kalkomey, Gordon Darby and state partners, the hosting transition had been thoroughly tested and was ahead of schedule. We are confident that it will be business as usual.

Vice Chairman Rogers asked whether Gordon Darby had their own proprietary system separate from Kalkomey or was the intent to continue with Kalkomey into the future.

Mitch Strobl replied that Gordon Darby built a system for the state of Texas and with the addition of AMS it offers downstream opportunity as approved by the Department to cross promote some of that functionality, however they are treated as two different systems. We will be staying on the AMS system, but be looking for opportunities to innovate on both of those systems. As a custom development shop we anticipate more opportunities to expand the system to Nevada's favor.

Secretary Alan Jenne expressed his appreciation for the transfer process with Zach and Mitch as a part of the team. As a new director, this was a major concern, but the continuity with both staff members and the system relieved much anxiety and reassured me that the integrity of the draw would be solid. NDOW representatives will continue to be part of the draw process and after seeing positive outcomes from the test draws we are confident in this process. He thanked Mitch and Zach.

Chairman Caviglia stated that he believed this system was the best draw system in the western states. He puts in in most of them and Nevada's website is the easiest in his opinion. He thanked Mitch and Zach for their presentation.

*Chairman Caviglia recessed at 9:53 am.*

*Chairman Caviglia reconvened at 10:05 am.*

**E.\* Legislative Committee Report – Committee Chairwoman Tiffany East – For Possible Action**

A report will be presented on the committee's recent meetings. The Commission may review bills of interest and any associated amendments, consider Legislative Committee recommendations and may take official positions on those bills. The Commission may also choose to develop platforms on bills by supporting or opposing general concepts. Bill and BDR language may be viewed online at:

<https://www.leg.state.nv.us/App/NELIS/REL/82nd2023/Bills/List>.

Chairman Caviglia introduced Item #6E.

Commissioner East asked Management Analyst Kailey Musso to go over the tracking list provided at the link below:

<https://www.ndow.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/01/6E-April-19-Leg-Committee-Tracking-List-Updates-from-Commission-and-Deadline-SB294-Language.pdf>

SB 269 – The Legislative Committee took a neutral position prior to learning of the amendment. The Commission agreed to stay neutral, having exemptions in place pertaining to hunting.

*No CABMW comment.*

*No public comment.*

**COMMISSIONER EAST MADE A MOTION TO REMAIN NEUTRAL ON SB 269, PROVIDED THE EXEMPTIONS PREVIOUSLY CONTAINED IN THE LANGUAGE REMAIN IN THE NEW BILL. COMMISSIONER WALTHER SECONDED THE MOTION. MOTION PASSED 8-0. COMMISSIONER BARNES WAS ABSENT.**

AB 70 – Predator Fee – The Legislative Committee decided that they would reach out to the bill's sponsor for clarification on a provision added to the bill since the last time it was discussed, that could be interpreted to allow for lethal removal. Their position to oppose this bill initially was due to there not being two options, one for habitat projects and one for lethal removal. This amendment allows for the purchaser of a license to designate their three-dollar fee to either habitat projects or predator management. Two concerns were raised at the Legislative Committee meeting: 1.) Will there be a significant reduction in funds that can be utilized for predator management 2.) Will funds go over the 80 percent mandate. The change creates a large unknown.

DAG Burkett agreed that the language was not clear, especially for those who would have to enforce the law. He suggested that it would be easy for the legislature to revise subsection b to have the second box read "for habitat improvements for non-predatory game species" instead of "wildlife management activities relating to the protection of non-predatory game species and the habitat of such non-predatory game species."

Dave Talaga representing Clark CABMW, stated that his CABMW voted 5-2 in opposition. The CABMW interpreted this to be an either/or situation. Either support the 80 percent or let someone decide the best way to distribute those funds. After having listened to the discussion today, it is clear that the focus is “what’s best for the non-predatory animals in Nevada.” He assumed NDOW would decide where the funds would be distributed. After five years of being on the CABMW, the sentiment is that NDOW doesn’t have a “stellar reputation for distributing money properly or doing the right things.” The CABMW concern is that when this comes up for a vote in the Legislature, the sentiment will be against predator removal and it won’t even be an option. In regard to habitat restoration, during a drought, funds used towards that would be wasted. If the 80 percent mandate was removed, predator removal could be gone completely, which the 80 percent mandate ensured when it was approved. In regard to either/or, ultimately it’s the best idea if there is trust in those that would manage funds properly. Additionally, it is believed that a “vote” through the tag system would be skewed regardless of outcome, due to the fact that many are not fully informed, lacking background information and lack of participation in this discussion being had right now. He suggested that the Commission clarify its concerns and send it back to the CABMWs so that they may have a better discussion on what’s taking place. This would allow them to provide a better recommendation to the Commission.

*No public comment.*

**CHAIRMAN CAVIGLIA MADE A MOTION TO OPPOSE THE NEW AMENDMENT IN AB 70 AND DIRECTED COMMISSIONER EAST TO RELAY THE COMMISSIONS CONCERNS ABOUT THE AMENDMENT. COMMISSIONER KIEL SECONDED THE MOTION. MOTION PASSED 8-0. COMMISSIONER BARNES WAS ABSENT.**

AB 294 – Safe Storage – The focus of this bill is safe storage, more about prevention rather than prohibition. It doesn’t preclude anything in hunting. The Committee took no position on this bill.

AB 355 – Prohibits individuals under the age of 21 from possessing a semi-automatic shotgun or center fire rifle. The Committee opposed this bill. It was noted that The Coalition and Ducks Unlimited sent letters to the members of the Committee and the Governor’s Office in regard to the effects this will have on Junior hunters.

AB 349 – Nevada Wildlife Conservation Fund Program – Currently, an amendment to this bill requires the Commission to provide guidance over expenditures from this fund. The Committee decided that the advisory board should include other industries or individuals that might have different interests than the “hook and bullet” crowd. The Committee would support an amendment to augment the advisory board, providing an opportunity to appeal to a broader range of interested participants, that might see value in contributing to wildlife.

Secretary Jenne stated that this conversation started around Recovering Americas Wildlife Act (RAWA) and the Department trying to find adequate match to take advantage of what could be coming with RAWA funds, as well as creating an opportunity for industry folks to contribute in a more neutral sense. Other states, like Oregon, have these foundations and have been successful in providing separation, enabling large corporations to contribute to conservation without being associated with activities or groups that may not align with their values or goals. He agreed with the direction the Committee was going in regard to the advisory board and that it would be helpful in keeping with the original intent of the foundation.

*No CABMW comment.*

*No public comment.*



**COMMISSIONER EAST MADE A MOTION TO GRANT PERMISSION TO DISCUSS BROADENING THE ADVISORY BOARD AND REMOVING COMMISSION OVERSIGHT WITH THE SPONSOR OF AB 349. COMMISSIONER MCNINCH SECONDED THE MOTION. MOTION PASSED 8-0. COMMISSIONER BARNES WAS ABSENT.**

- F. Wildlife Heritage Committee – Committee Member Tommy Caviglia – Informational**  
A report will be provided on the recent Wildlife Heritage Committee meeting.

Chairman Caviglia introduced Item #6F. He noted that the Wildlife Heritage meeting the previous evening was very productive. Actions taken included:

1. Making recommendations for the vendor proposals for the 2024 Heritage tags, which will come to the Commission in June.
2. Reviewing the Grants Manual changes. (addressed in the following agenda item)
3. Reviewing funding available for the 2024 Heritage Projects, in excess of \$1.5M.
4. Reviewing Wildlife Heritage Project Proposals, funding every project presented to them, which will also come to Commission in June.

Chairman Caviglia noted that the proposals were packaged very well, funding every proposal to the penny, relieving the Committee of having to do so.

- G.\* Wildlife Heritage Grants Manual – Habitat Division Administrator Mark Freese – For Possible Action**  
The Commission will review recommendations made by the Heritage Committee to cap principal balance projects at 50% of the available balance per year.

Chairman Caviglia introduced Item #6G.

The memorandum can be found at the link below.

<https://www.ndow.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/01/6G-Heritage-Memo.pdf>

Habitat Division Administrator Mark Freese explained that NRS 501.3575 was updated in 2021 to include the following language, “in addition the department may at anytime expend from the account any portion of the amount of money in the account which exceeds \$5M.” At the June 2022 Wildlife Heritage Committee meeting, they recommended to cap principal projects at 50 percent of the amount of available funds per year. NDOW presented revisions it had made to the Grants Manual at the Committee meeting the previous evening and was provided recommendations by the Committee. Those recommendations pertaining to the principal projects are contained within the page of the Grants Manual available at the link below:

[https://www.ndow.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/01/Heritage-Grant-Manual\\_05032023-Additional-Page-Presentation.pdf](https://www.ndow.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/01/Heritage-Grant-Manual_05032023-Additional-Page-Presentation.pdf)

Commissioner East asked if there was any reason to remove the 50 percent cap.

Administrator Freese stated that it provided the sideboards to how much could be allocated towards principal projects. He reiterated that the Committee recommended this at the June 2022 meeting, which provides direction to the Department and limits what can be used.

Commissioner East clarified that, if necessary, there were other funding sources that could be utilized should they need more than what is allocated on the principal project.

Secretary Jenne stated there were multiple other funding sources, for example the AB 84 Nevada Conservation Bond. He provided an example to represent the new language. The current balance is at \$12M and there is \$7M exceeding \$5M. 50 percent of that \$7M would be \$3.5M available in funds to spend on principal projects. This results in a fair amount of money if you consider that the award to Heritage Projects totals about \$1.5M this year.

*No CABMW comment.*

*No public comment.*

**COMMISSIONER EAST MADE A MOTION TO APPROVE THE RECOMMENDATIONS MADE BY THE WILDLIFE HERITAGE COMMITTEE TO CAP PRINCIPAL BALANCE PROJECTS AT 50 PERCENT OF THE AVAILABLE BALANCE PER YEAR. SECONDED BY COMMISSIONER KIEL. MOTION PASSED 8-0. COMMISSIONER BARNES WAS ABSENT.**

**H. Mule Deer Presentation – Wildlife Staff Specialist Cody Schroeder and Dr. David Stoner (Utah State University) - Informational**

A presentation will be provided - "Mapping mule deer and feral horse overlap across Nevada."

Chairman Caviglia introduced Item #6H.

Wildlife Staff Specialist Cody Schroeder introduced Dr. David Stoner, a research assistant professor with a background in spatial ecology of wildlife resources and management. The presentation will focus on research being done on wild horses and ungulates in Nevada and across the Great Basin. Dr. David Stoner's presentation can be viewed at the link below:

[https://www.ndow.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/01/NWC\\_stonerschroeder\\_05-2023.pdf](https://www.ndow.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/01/NWC_stonerschroeder_05-2023.pdf)

Commissioner McNinch noted that this presentation provided a lot of good information and helped to quantify how horses may be impacting our native wildlife, which is something that has been missing from the conversation. He suggested that the ability to quantify the impacts and present this to the public could be helpful when there are, for example, round-ups being performed. It is very important that this work is being done, scientific basis evidence, solid evidence adding value to the conversation in the future providing knowledge understanding to .

Commissioner Kiel stated his appreciation for the presentation and asked if they had taken a cursory look at what some of the data collected might be indicating, whether fawn counts were taken pre or post horse removal and if there had been a rebound as a result in other western states.

Staff Specialist Schroeder stated that they had taken a preliminary look and realized that the data gets messy pretty quickly. There are events like large fires and ineffective horse gathers that make it difficult to evaluate pre and post. They have been working with the Bureau of Land Management to create a strategy for what has already been proposed. If funding allows, the next stage of research could include a more experimental design as Dr. Stoner mentioned.

Vice Chairman Rogers asked if there was anything within the data collected that was surprising about Mule deer.

Staff Specialist Schroeder stated that one of the most surprising to him was the spatial overlap with Bighorn sheep, which was the highest amongst all species. A second item to note was after taking a look at the RSF maps produced by Dr. Stoner, was the limited amount of fawning habitat that Nevada has. It's understandable considering the Great Basin and how arid the state is, but it was still striking.

Dr. David Stoner agreed and stated that the best fawning habitats were not continuous, but fairly isolated and limited to high elevation wet meadows and aspen forests.

Vice Chairman Rogers noted that given the isolated areas and the efforts of the Mule deer enhancement program, there might be an opportunity to utilize this data and from a habitat standpoint be able to focus on these smaller concentrated areas if it was determined that there was a need.

Staff Specialist Schroeder stated that as a management application, once available these maps could be used for management plans, projects and spring protection. In conjunction with the BLM, there had been discussions to use a prioritization tool to identify wildlife gathers.

Chairman Caviglia asked whether there had been any movement with the BLM and prioritizing gathers in light of what had been discussed.

Staff Specialist Schroeder noted that he was not necessarily involved in that, but that they have made the argument even in the Big Game Status Books, where there is high M/L units. He didn't know exactly how the BLM prioritizes gathers. Forage and environmental conditions and funding factor in to where they perform gathers, not necessarily wildlife. Hopefully, these tools allow us to do some in targeted areas in the future.

Commissioner Walther asked if they could provide the published paper to the Commission.

Staff Specialist Schroeder answered that they would and that the current work would be published in the near future and he would also provide that.

Chairman Caviglia thanked them for their presentation.

*Chairman Caviglia recessed for lunch at 11:48am.*

*Chairman Caviglia reconvened at 1:05pm.*

**I.\* Fiscal Year 2024 Predation Management Plan – Wildlife Staff Specialist Pat Jackson – For Possible Action**

The Commission will review the final draft of the Fiscal Year 2024 Draft Predation Management Plan with the Department. The Commission may take action to modify or endorse the plan.

Chairman Caviglia introduced Item #6l.

Staff Specialist Pat Jackson presented on the final version of the 2024 Predator Management Plan. This can be viewed at the link below:

<https://www.ndow.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/01/predator-plan-presentation-commission-draft-final.pdf>

Dr. Seth Dettenmaier presented on “Raven Science, Ecology and Management: Targeting Solutions with Applied Science.” (Project 41) His presentation can be viewed at the link below:

[https://www.ndow.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/01/Coates\\_NV\\_Commissioners\\_2023\\_May\\_v1.5.pdf](https://www.ndow.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/01/Coates_NV_Commissioners_2023_May_v1.5.pdf)

Commissioner East asked what the population of Ravens in the Great Basin were.

Dr. Dettenmaier answered north of 400,000.

Commissioner East asked what the raven AML was.

Dr. Dettenmaier stated that he didn't have that number, but that the density of impact on sage grouse nest survival is around .4 right now. On average, it is .54. Sites that are further from human development or activities are lower in density, but there are some that are incredibly high.

Commissioner East asked if there was any other legal method to remove ravens.

Staff Specialist Jackson stated that Wildlife Services' primary method is Corvidicide, which is species specific, placed in a hard-boiled chicken eggs. Some meso-predators like coyotes and foxes will consume those eggs, however they do not consume enough of the Corvidicide to die from it. Ravens can be shot. NDOW's permit allowing take, from the Fish and Wildlife Service, did not increase this year, however they did issue an additional miscellaneous use permit from the same office allowing Wildlife Services to shoot mating pairs on sage grouse leks. This will not affect population levels, however it does create a temporary void around nests and leks. Oiling eggs is an option that is effective, however there is far more effort and money that must go into that. The work with Dr. Pete Coates will hopefully allow us to capture take per unit of effort on one tool versus the other. To recap, shooting, toxicants, oiling of eggs and tearing down nests are other options.

Vice Chairman Rogers asked how many ravens we are actually removing today.

Staff Specialist Jackson stated that NDOW's depredation permit is for 2,500 ravens and Wildlife Services has matching permit for livestock protection and some small utility companies have smaller permits mainly for nest removal for health and human safety reasons. Utilizing depredation permits again will not create a population consequence, which is a requirement of the permit. The FWS are working on creating an additional method of management within the Migratory Bird Treaty Act, but where that is at exactly is unknown. Our permit will have a noticeable increase in the upcoming year. Currently, we are focused on creating temporary voids around leks and nests, but in the future hope to see population consequences by focusing on the three tier system Dr. Dettenmaier discussed, specifically the second tier where there is subsidy removal and preventing ravens access to food, nesting and perching structures.

Vice Chairman Rogers clarified that as a department, we are permitted 2500.

Staff Specialist Jackson answered yes.

Vice Chairman Rogers asked how many of the 2500 were actually taking.

Staff Specialist Jackson stated that we should be at the 2500 cap this year.

Commissioner Booth referenced the AB 70 bill previously discussed during the Legislative Committee Report, pointing out that we opposed it. He asked whether it would have a negative impact on the Predator Management Plan financially if we instead approved and passed it.

Staff Specialist Jackson answered that he wasn't sure how they would or would not be able to use those funds.

Dr. Dettenmaier offered information having to do with what Commissioner McNinch was discussing earlier about impacts of feral horses on other species. He referenced a 2019 paper in the Journal of Wildlife Management released by Dr. Pete Coates that shows that as horses exceed AML, they are having impacts, or at least there is a correlation between reductions and sage grouse leks.

Commissioner McNinch stated that he was aware there were impacts and asked if he was referring to residual grasses in nesting areas and the trampling of nests.

Dr. Dettenmaier stated that he was not aware if trampling was specifically discussed, but that Dr. Coates had modeled out different leks and populations and current rates of exceeding AML and horse trends.

Commissioner McNinch added that this would make them more susceptible to raven predation as well.

Staff Specialist Jackson continued his overview of projects included in the Predation Management Plan.

Dr. Sean Sultaire presented on "Project 46 draft update: Using remote data collection techniques to estimate mule deer abundance in NW Nevada." His presentation can be viewed at the link below:

<https://www.ndow.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/01/Project-46-Mule-Deer.pdf>

Vice Chairman Rogers asked how to differentiate and count different deer viewed through the trail cameras.

Dr. Sultaire explained that the models aren't sensitive to that. They take the frequency detected on cameras and analyze the typical movement rate across the landscape. This model has been well validated by different simulations by those who have done computer simulations of populations and then sampled them with hypothetical grids of cameras. He noted that the video that can be accessed through the QR code in the presentation provides a more in-depth explanation of how this process works. The key is knowing how fast they move around the landscape and how often they are being detected, which allowed us to arrive at a density estimate, which then can be scaled up to abundance across a whole area.

Vice Chairman Rogers asked if the data that had been collected correlates to the data taken from aerial surveys.

Dr. Sultaire stated that they were closer than he expected, which is a positive, especially when completely different survey techniques are arriving at a similar solution for the population.

Vice Chairman Rogers asked whether any data collaboration could be done with the research on wild horses we just had a presentation on.

Dr. Sultaire stated yes, that the secondary objective of the study is to understand factors that are limiting this population and feral horses are a focus of that when looking at the relationship between the two on a fine spatial scale. There is definitely potential for some collaboration in the future.

Chairman Caviglia asked if anything in the data has been a surprise.

Dr. Sultaire it was interesting that there was evidence of mountain lions feeding on feral horses, having not seen much of a relationship where those species were detected on the cameras. There was a

stronger relationship between Mule deer and Mountain lions. It was also interesting to see that there were Black bears in the far Northwest, Vya area.

Staff Specialist Jackson noted that the eight-minute video mentioned does a great job of explaining how to use trail cameras in a grid test for wildlife populations. He completed his final portion of his presentation.

Vice Chairman Rogers asked Staff Specialist Jackson to explain what he meant when he compared lethal removal of Coyotes and Mountain lions to using a rotary phone.

Staff Specialist Jackson stated that there had been multiple studies that hadn't found a notable benefit of lethal removal of those two species. He acknowledged that there was a time and place for it, however they lack a model that states exactly when this should be done. Mountain lions occupy the same areas as Mule deer 100 percent of the time. There is nothing at a surgical level that can tell us when to perform and not perform lethal removal. While we don't have coyote estimates, we have no reason to believe those aren't stable. We do have a Mountain lion estimates and it is stable. On the other hand we know the raven population is growing almost exponentially.

Vice Chairman Rogers asked if he was aware of any other states that have models that are effective and work.

Staff Specialist Jackson stated no, that Texas is considering changing their management of Mountain lions and a colleague of his reviewed hunter take statewide, not lethal control techniques, which resulted in further discussions. The point was that he couldn't direct the Commission to any manuscript or colleague in the west that can definitively say that when hunter take is increased or perform certain management actions, it will put more Mule deer on the landscape.

Commissioner East asked whether he would want to shift focus from any of the projects discussed to help with Project 37 and 38, given the winter we've had.

Staff Specialist stated no, that in Policy 23 the Department is given autonomy to respond promptly and can also go to the Wildlife Damage Management Committee or the Commission if they would like to move money to other projects. He stated that he believed there was currently enough funds going to projects 37, 38 and 47.

Chairman Caviglia asked for clarification on whether they were going to fund the four Mule deer Enhancement Program projects under under Projects 37, 38 and 47.

Staff Specialist Jackson answered yes, that there were several things that he took from previous discussions. One was that no project was approved for three years and they would need approval annually and in that wouldn't need to be funded through the full dollar amount. It is at the discretion of the Commission how much funding would go towards these. Based off my calculations, these programs could be funded under Projects 37 and 38, however after performing these he stated that he couldn't ensure that he would be able to come back to the Commission and say that this is what definitively did or didn't happen.

Chairman Caviglia asked if the Commission would need to provide direction on the Mule Deer Enhancement Programs as far as what we would like to fund for plan we are looking at today.

Staff Specialist Jackson answered yes, that this program was new and there wasn't necessarily a precedent for this. I would defer to Secretary Jenne or Deputy director Mike Scott.

Chairman Caviglia asked whether the current slide was posted online prior to the Commission meeting. None of what we are discussing is in the plan itself and if we act on it, he'd like to make sure it was on the agenda correctly.

Executive Assistant Meghan Beyer stated that this presentation was not provided prior to the Commission meeting, however the Predator Plan was.

Chairman Caviglia asked clarified that the four Mule deer items were not specifically included on the agenda and didn't want to proceed if it was incorrect.

Deputy Director Mike Scott stated that he was unsure if they were specifically called out in the Predator Plan, however we could use Projects 37 and 38 can be used to fulfill these requests by the Mule Deer Enhancement Program.

Chairman Caviglia stated that the Wildlife Damage Management Committee made a decision on how they wanted to proceed with them. He wanted to make sure that the correct procedures were being followed.

DAG Burkett stated that as long as they are part of an existing management program and the Commission is just directing it within that plan how they would like to spend funds, it's okay to do that. That has definitely been noticed to the public.

Chairman Caviglia stated that the Committee did provide direction and they fall within the plan, he'd like to make sure the Commission follows with what the Committee recommended.

Deputy Director Mike Scott agreed and stated that they directed to use 47 to create a matrix to decide when projects will be performed, to try to develop the science allowing us to make better decisions on when we use predator control and when we don't.

Commissioner McNinch pointed out that there were other projects that weren't given a number that are being performed, but that Staff Specialist Jackson presented 37 and 38, which are broad projects and statewide. He stated that he wasn't uncomfortable in regards to if the correct process was being followed.

*No CABMW comment.*

Gerald Lent, private citizen, stated that the Commission needed to look carefully at good projects, especially to bring back deer. He opposes AB 70, the current bill affecting the current Predator Fee. He originally put the 80 percent mandate in the bill due to funds not being used on what the Predator Fee was originally for. He provided two examples to illustrate. One project was where coyotes den, finding only one den and the other was what lions eat, stating that they already knew what lions eat. He believed that the presentations given on deer and horses were good presentations and noted that deer congregate during droughts and so do predators. He suggested that the Predator Plan needed the flexibility to create a project when this occurs. He added that he didn't believe that predators were the only factor and that he wasn't saying all the lions should be killed, but keep them in control. He said the Predator Biologist didn't know anything about deer and that he had it on tape. He noted that language in the bill referring to the State Predatory Animal and Rodent Committee by Senator Goicoechea was useless because all recommendations from that committee and the Commission were ignored by NDOW. He continued to say that it was important to have effective projects for predation control because it was an efficient management tool.

**COMMISSIONER KIEL MADE A MOTION TO APPROVE THE FISCAL YEAR 2024 PREDATOR MANAGEMENT PLAN AS PRESENTED AND TO THE EXTENT POSSIBLE TO USE PROJECTS 37,**

**38 AND 47 TO PRIORITIZE THE MULE DEER ENHANCEMENT PROJECTS. COMMISSIONER EAST SECONDED THE MOTION. MOTION PASSED 8-0. COMMISSIONER BARNES WAS ABSENT.**

**J.\* Regulation Simplification Report – Management Analyst Megan Manfredi – Informational**

A report will be provided on the submission of proposed regulations or sections of regulations that were simplified, clarified, or removed per Governor Lombardo’s Executive Order 2023-003 directive.

Chairman Caviglia introduced Item #6J.

Management Analyst Megan Manfredi gave a short presentation on the proposed regulations or sections of regulations that were simplified, clarified or removed per Governor Lombardo’s Executive Order 2023-003 directive. All support material can be found at the link below:

<https://www.ndow.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/01/6J-Executive-Order-2023-03-Report.pdf>

Secretary Jenne reminded the Commission that as promised at the April Commission meeting, a final report would be provided to the public and that the report was forwarded to the Governor. He hadn’t had not yet been provided next steps, but expected to receive a response later in the summer.

Chairman Caviglia expressed appreciation for the report. It was well put together and easy to follow.

*Chairman Caviglia recessed at 2:29pm.*

*Chairman Caviglia reconvened at 2:40pm.*

**A. Department Activity Report – Secretary Alan Jenne and Division Administrators - Informational**

A report will be provided on Nevada Department of Wildlife activities.

Chairman Caviglia introduced Item #6A.

**DIRECTOR’S OFFICE**

Secretary Jenne presented the Director’s Office Division Activity Report.

The Director’s Office has been busy keeping up with several legislative hearings and meetings which will be reported on in the Legislative Committee Report. The Department also gave a presentation to the Senate Natural Resources Committee on March 28<sup>th</sup>. The First Committee passage deadline was on April 14<sup>th</sup> and the First House Passage Deadline was on April 25<sup>th</sup>.

The Leadership Team has completely staffed every chief position. We are excited to announce that Mark Freese accepted the role of Habitat Division Administrator. Kristy Knight accepted the Chief Game Warden position and Shawn Espinosa accepted the role of Game Division Administrator.

Director Jenne and Deputy Director Mike Scott attended the North American Conference in Phoenix, Arizona participating in a number of discussions including Landscape Conservation, Conservation NGOs Coordination, and Energy and Wildlife Policy, amongst other topics.

Deputy Director Goshert and newly appointed Habitat Division Administrator Mark Freese attended IFC on April 6<sup>th</sup> for work programs and donations.

Director Jenne, Deputy Director Jordan Goshert and Management Analyst Kailey Musso are currently at the Legislature for the Department’s Budget Closing.



The Director's Office officially submitted the reports for Executive Orders 003 and 004 on behalf of the Commission. The Governor's Office acknowledged receipt of those reports on April 25<sup>th</sup> and will be in touch with us if they identify any questions upon review.

## **GAME DIVISION**

Wildlife Staff Specialist Jackson presented the Game Division Activity Report.

Game Division Staff participated in a Big Game Tag Application Seminar hosted by Backcountry Hunters and Anglers (BHA) Nevada Chapter in Reno. BHA held a "Pint Night" at a local brewery and Cody McKee, Mike Cox, and Cody Schroeder gave presentations covering all big game species. There was some great dialog and questions from over 40 BHA members who were in attendance.

Game Division staff finalized the end of year survey results, quota recommendations, and have compiled annual reports for the status book.

Staff Specialist Mike Cox wrote an article for the NBU journal on "Nevada Bighorn Sheep Status, Challenges, and Future" including a 2022 Season Overview and Long-term Trends, What's Happening to our Bighorn Sheep, and What does the Future Hold? Mike also developed Nevada's report for the Desert Bighorn Council and presented it at the 57th DBC meeting in Alpine, Texas in April.

Mule deer have shown a substantial decline in some areas of the state. The worst hit areas were in the Eastern Region, such as Area 10 and Area 11, where observed fawn ratios were well below average and winter conditions lasted well into spring. Overall, the Department's quota recommendations represent an approximate 40% decrease compared to last year's approved quotas.

Department staff captured 26 mule deer on Morey Bench in Unit 163. The impetus of this project originated from the Mule Deer Enhancement Program. These collaring efforts will assist biologists in assessing critical mule deer winter range use, identify key stopover areas for transitioning deer in Area 16, and assess demographic parameters for this declining population. It is important to note that over half of these captures were fawns from the previous year and all deer were in better-than-expected body condition. The subgrant process has also been completed to allow Tonopah biologist Hunter Burkett to acquire his master's degree with the data collected through these efforts.

Pronghorn have fared much better than mule deer in many parts of the state, although biologists observed some elevated adult mortality and record low fawn counts in southern Elko County and portions of White Pine County. On a positive note, the Department counted record samples of pronghorn and high fawn recruitment in several herds including Hunt Units 043-046 in Pershing County, 141, 143, 151-156 in Lander and Eureka County, and Management Area 6 in Elko County. Sportsmen should experience good hunting opportunities and healthy animals in those units in the upcoming year.

Upland Game: Sage-grouse counts are winding down across Nevada but are showing some promising results in various areas of the state. In the Bi-State area of Nevada and California, preliminary results from USGS monitoring efforts suggest that overwinter survival for sage-grouse was high, exhibiting the resiliency of these birds even under harsh conditions. Forward Looking Infrared flights to count sage-grouse on leks were recently completed. Ten areas of the state were surveyed to help augment ground surveys, which were very difficult this year due to snow, mud, and road washouts.

The Department, along with Eastern Sierra Land Trust and Nevada State Lands is very close to completing a key conservation easement in the Desert Creek area of Lyon County. The easement would benefit multiple wildlife species but will be extremely beneficial to the Bi-State sage-grouse.

The Department elected not to move forward with a Columbian sharp-tailed grouse capture effort in Colorado to augment the Bull Run Basin population due to weather and access conditions in northwestern Colorado. We will look to the spring of 2024 to initiate these efforts.

News from the Western Region: We are pleased to announce that Becca Carniello will be taking over the position that was previously held by Heather Reich. The Western Region was able to overlap coverage of the Urban Wildlife Biologist position so that there was no lapse in coverage for the ongoing and increasing conflicts within the urban interface. The transition of the job will include on-site training and an in-depth look at how the responsibilities of this job are best prioritized. We are saddened to lose Heather and all her expertise but are very excited to have Becca starting in this new role.

In the Southern Region, Game Division Staff, in coordination with Habitat Staff, have received a signed decision to rebuild approximately 15 water developments in Lincoln County. Staff are in the final stages to fence multiple springs in central Nevada both on private and public lands. Game Division and Habitat staff went out into the field recently with a BLM archaeologist to clear three new guzzler sites in the Muddy Mountains.

## **HABITAT DIVISION**

Habitat Division Administrator Mark Freese presented the Habitat Division Activity Report.

**Technical Review Program:** The Program continues working with the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) and the United States Geological Survey (USGS) on potential for modifying Sage-Grouse habitat management categories for the BLM Sage-Grouse plan revision and began reviewing the BLM's Proposed Rule on Conservation and Landscape Health, with comments due on June 20, 2023. The Program continues to participate on various energy projects including the Greenlink North and Greenlink West Transmission line projects, as well as the Cross-Tie Transmission Line, Oil & Gas Lease Sales, Geothermal Lease Sales, Stagecoach Wind, Libra Solar, Esmeralda Solar Complex, and White Pine Pumped Storage projects. The energy review program under Technical Review has received a total of 18 applications since the first of the year, including 12 solar projects, four (4) transmission projects, one (1) fossil fuel project, and one (1) energy storage center.

**Sagebrush Ecosystem Technical Team:** The SETT will hold its bi-monthly SEC Meeting on May 12, 2023. The main focus of this meeting will be a revised update to the Habitat Quantification Tool (HQT) to include a Space Use Index using Sage-Grouse location data from across Nevada. The SEC requested the inclusion of the Space Use Index for both credit and debit projects.

**Rehabilitation and Restoration Program:** NDOW biologist and staff have been busy planning projects and applying for funding. The wet year has limited access for implementing projects so far through much of the state. Field biologists are now starting some project work in those drier portions of the state. Vegetation monitoring crews are being trained and expected to collect several hundred treatment effectiveness points at the Tamarack and Strawberry Fires, and multiple Forest Service Habitat Assessment Framework sites. Our vegetation monitoring program is also piloting 'Rapid Assessment for Treatment Success' plots on roughly 50,000 acres of existing treated and untreated fires in collaboration with Ely BLM and multiple partners at USGS, Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) and BLM National Operation Center (NOC) to test the effectiveness of collecting more management focused data that can be turned over quickly and combined with remote sensing data to rapidly inform treatment effectiveness.

**Wildlife Management Areas:** Flooding will be a major concern this year at Mason Valley and Carson Lake WMAs. Both the Walker and Carson River systems were above 300% of normal snow water equivalent as of April 1<sup>st</sup>. Irrigation Districts from both rivers have been continuing with precautionary drawdowns of upstream reservoirs since early February. At Carson Lake WMA we have the potential to

see water levels 2'-3' higher than experienced in 2017 which has prompted Truckee-Carson Irrigation District to construct a 6' berm along the north side of the WMA to protect adjacent landowners from flooding.

Commissioner McNinch asked if the massive ditch they dug would move enough water to prevent flooding at Carson Lake.

Administrator Freese stated that it would be in use, but not enough to prevent some of the flooding. On the North side of the Wildlife Management Area (WMA), Truckee-Carson Irrigation District (TCID) is building a six-foot berm, which we might tour at the August Commission meeting in Fallon.

Commissioner McNinch noted how impressive it was because that ditch held so much water. He couldn't believe how much water they expected if they were also needing to build the six foot berm.

Secretary Jenne added that it was estimated to rise three feet above what it was in 2017.

Commissioner McNinch noted that there would be no access to the roads at the WMA.

Administrator Freese confirmed that roads at the WMA would be closed.

Secretary Jenne added that at Lahontan Reservoir, there is enough snow-pack on the mountain to fill it three or four times.

Administrator Freese noted that there would be video of the current flooding within the NDOW external newsletter that would be sent out the following week.

## **WILDLIFE DIVERSITY DIVISION**

Wildlife Diversity Division Administrator Jennifer Newmark presented the Wildlife Diversity Division Activity Report.

**Bats and White Nose Sampling:** Wildlife Diversity reported in our last update that staff had completed winter hibernacula surveys, swabbing bats to search for evidence that White Nose Syndrome or the fungus Pd that causes this disease is present in NV. We are pleased to report all samples were negative. Winter hibernation surveys are limited as sites are difficult to access in remote areas due to snow, and the targeted group of bats in the Myotis genus are hard to find. Our knowledge of hibernation sites are limited, and even at mines and caves where we know they are hibernating, individuals can be really hard to find as they prefer to hibernate hidden in extremely small crevices. New this spring, Diversity staff will be supplementing winter surveys with spring emergence surveys, sampling bats as they emerge from hibernation. Staff have recently finished sampling in southern Nevada at Grapevine Spring in the Spring Mountains, and at the Joyce big-game Guzzler in the Specter Range. Just this week, staff sampled Ferguson Springs in northeastern NV, and will also target sites in the Ely area next week. Several partners are working with NDOW in sampling, including Southern Nevada Water Authority working in the Las Vegas Wash and National Park Service working at sites near Lake Mead (Rodgers Spring and Reid Adit) and Death Valley National Park (Curry Well, and Birdie Spring).

**Shorebird Monitoring:** The last week of April found most Wildlife Diversity staff conducting shorebird surveys throughout the state. These surveys are part of a west-wide Pacific Flyway coordinated project and will continue for the next several years with one survey in the spring and another in the fall. NDOW has actively worked with agency partners (BLM, NPS, and USWS), as well as volunteers from local Audubon societies to maximize counting efforts at upwards of 40 sites statewide. Increased water levels

this spring have added some logistical complexity to the project, although from a bird perspective, the increased water will greatly increase available habitat.

**Amargosa Valley BioBlitz:** The BLM and NDOW recently partnered on a large data collection event known as a bioblitz. This is where a large number of biologists from various disciplines gather to take a complete inventory of all species present in a set area, in this case the Amargosa Valley north of Las Vegas. This area is highly diverse, containing large intact Mojave Desert scrublands, sand dunes, and the large riparian area Ash Meadows. This area is also facing a number of threats from development of solar farms and ground water pumping. The bioblitz was attended by more than 25 volunteers as well as other agency partners. Targeted focal species included desert kangaroo rat, Mojave fringe-toed lizard, Ash Meadows pupfish, Mojave poppy bee, scorpion, sidewinder, bats and western toads. Sampling methods included visual encounters for lizard species, road cruising for reptiles, small mammal trapping at two dune systems, mist net trapping at two water sources coupled with acoustic trapping for bats, bee bowls to measure bee diversity, scorpion visual encounter surveys, as well as botanical identification efforts. We managed to locate and sample genetics for two Mojave fringe-toed lizard individuals, and we were able to trap several desert kangaroo rats at both dune systems sampled. We were also able to trap and identify 11 bat species.

**Tahoe EIP and Western Pond Turtle:** Here in the north, Wildlife Diversity staff in the Tahoe area have been working on bald eagle surveys, osprey monitoring at the Memorial point active nest in conjunction with the US Forest Service, and removal of hazard trees along trails with the Nevada Division of Forestry. Five marten camera stations were deployed earlier this winter and those will be checked as soon as the snow melts. Additionally, northern goshawk surveys continue with no detection as this time. Finally, pond turtle telemetry was conducted on both the Carson River and the Truckee River to locate 10 turtles fixed with transmitters. All 10 turtles were located and are still in hibernation spots. These sites will be revisited in late May.

## **FISHERIES DIVISION**

Fisheries Division Administrator Jennifer Newmark presented the Fisheries Division Activity Report.

Biologists statewide are still reeling from record-breaking precipitation levels due to a very memorable winter. Most reservoirs throughout the state are at or near capacity and the springtime runoff is unlike anything seen in most of our careers. Spring stocking is well underway throughout Nevada with many waters already receiving their spring allotment of trout. Selected stocking of some streams and rivers will be delayed until runoff subsides. Similarly, stream survey work throughout most of the state will be delayed due to prolonged high flows. Fisheries Division personnel are wrapping up annual reports and annual planning meetings and turning their attention to field activities. Summertime seasonal positions for the Fisheries Division have been selected with employees starting shortly.

A division-wide Fisheries Coordination meeting at the Rafter 7 Ranch at Walker River State Recreation Area in late March. This represents the first time the entire Fisheries Division has met in 13 years. Pertinent division-related topics were discussed, and a tour of our Mason Valley Hatchery was given. We also hosted Scott Bonar from the University of Arizona to discuss fisheries standardization techniques as well as Sudeep Chandra from the University of Nevada Reno who presented on current fisheries work being done on the Mekong River in Cambodia.

**Fish Hatcheries:** After an extended vacancy, Gallagher Hatchery welcomed the arrival of Jeff Williams as the new hatchery manager. Jeff comes to us from West Virginia and got his first taste of a real Ruby Valley winter. Work is progressing on getting bids for the Mason Valley Hatchery cooling tower and purchasing the pump / motor replacement at Gallagher Hatchery. In addition, a new well is currently being drilled at Spring Creek Rearing Station. All of these projects are crucial to meet continued demands for hatchery fish.

**Sportfish & Native Aquatic Species:** All Fisheries Headquarters staff spent a considerable amount of time preparing and revising annual grant submissions. Due to continued uncertainty in federal funding, the Fisheries Division has made, and will continue to make, a concerted effort to seek non-traditional sources of funding to achieve work program goals and objectives.

**Aquatic Invasive Species Program:** The eradication effort targeting Australian Red Claw Crayfish in ponds at the Clark County Wetlands Park was not successful. AIS and Southern Region staff are coordinating with Clark County officials and Desert Research Institute Faculty to identify future eradication or control plans. eDNA techniques will be used to monitor success.

**Eastern Region Fisheries:** The Eastern Region received above normal snowpack in all basins this year. As of late-April, most reservoirs were still iced over with only Wilson Sink Reservoir and South Fork Reservoir being ice free. Springtime fishing at Eastern Region reservoirs is anticipated to be great with most reservoirs anticipated to spill. Fishing in local streams and rivers will be delayed until mid-summer when flows recede. Fieldwork will also be delayed with the above normal snowpack. Many thanks go out to White Pine County for their assistance in funding a much-needed outboard motor for the Eastern Region electrofishing boat.

**Southern Region Fisheries:** The National Park Service conducted a much-needed prescribed burn to eradicate tamarisk and palms along the discharge channel at the Lake Mead Hatchery in late March. Many thanks to NDOW law enforcement personnel for helping with on-site project logistics. The spring Devils Hole Pupfish dive was completed and resulted in 175 fish which is identical to last spring's survey and the highest spring count since 2000. Barring anything catastrophic, huge fish numbers (relative) should be expected this fall. Substantial flooding occurred at Eagle Valley and Echo Canyon Reservoirs in late March due to a rain-on-snow event in Lincoln County. Fisheries personnel assisted NDOW Engineering staff and State Parks with dam protection measures at both reservoirs. Southern Region biologists assisted the Conservation Education Division and hosted a booth and casting pond at the Clark County Fair in early April.

**Western Region Fisheries:** The outlet valves were opened at Marlette Lake in March to reduce the lake level prior to the springtime runoff period to prevent overtopping the dam. To date, one of the two outlet valves remains open, and the lake has dropped over five vertical feet in elevation. At this juncture, it appears that annual spawning activities at Marlette will be cancelled due to inaccessibility caused by a heavy snow load. Annual fish collection and monitoring activities at Third Creek (Incline Village) are underway with several lake-resident fish already captured. Due to high flows, the weir at Third Creek was not installed this year.

Vice Chairman Rogers asked if there was any damage at Eagle Valley or Echo Canyon Reservoirs.

Administrator Crookshanks stated that there was no damage at either. The spillway at Echo Canyon worked fantastically.

Vice Chairman Rogers asked if there was any delay in planned fish stocking of different reservoirs throughout the state due to the weather this year.

Administrator Crookshanks answered absolutely. With all the ice on the reservoirs, fisheries staff have been strained trying to get fish off station to locations that were free of ice. He noted that Wild Horse Reservoir was still covered in ice as of the previous weekend.

Chairman Caviglia asked if there is potential for die-offs with the late ice and rapidly rising temperatures.

Administrator Crookshanks stated that there was potential especially with the ice being on the reservoir for so long and the anerobic decay occurring underneath the ice. A larger concern is the high mountain lakes and when that ice will melt. Generally, when severe winters occur, there will be serious fish loss in high mountain lakes.

## **DATA AND TECHNOLOGY SERVICES DIVISION**

DATS Division Administrator Kim Munoz presented the DATS Division Activity Report.

**2023 Big Game Applications:** The Data and Technology Services Licensing & Hunt staff are in the final week of the 2023 Big Game Application. The application numbers are currently up 4% over last year. After week 5, there were over 166,000 applications submitted by 33,000 customers. Historically,  $\frac{3}{4}$  of the customers wait until the last 3 days to submit their applications. We are gearing up for another 50,000 customers to apply next week. There has been an increase in the average number of applications per customer to 5.08. The Big Game Validation Team is busy running test draws and refining their validation processes which will allow us to catch any data anomalies prior to the final draw. The last day to apply for tags is Wednesday, May 10<sup>th</sup> at 11pm. This year, the draw will be conducted at Gordan Darby's head quarters in Louisville, KY this year on Wednesday, May 17<sup>th</sup> with results being released to clients by 9pm on Friday, May 19<sup>th</sup>.

**2024 Heritage Tag Proposals:** The Department received proposals from 11 vendors for the 2024 Heritage Tags that were presented at the May 5<sup>th</sup> Heritage Committee meeting.

**Geographic Information System:** We are currently in the middle of hiring the vacancies in our Geographic Information System unit. Shout out to Diversity Biologist Jon Young, Habitat staff specialist Lee Davis and Jasmine Kleiber, and Game staff specialist Cody McKee for assisting with the processing on-going data requests in the absence of having any GIS staff.

**Information Technology:** Finally, the Information Technology staff finishing up computer replacements in our regional offices and doing physical inventory. They are working on getting the voice and data communications in place for the new Fallon office, as well as upgrading the internet for the main regional offices to 1GB. We're pleased to announce that we hired a IT Professional in the Vegas office, which will be the first time the Department has had a permanent IT position in Vegas.

Commissioner East asked Administrator Munoz to repeat the numbers she provided.

Chairman Caviglia asked where the application numbers were compared to last year.

Administrator Munoz answered that they were on par, almost equal.

## **LAW ENFORCEMENT DIVISION**

Law Enforcement Division Administrator Kristy Knight presented the LE Division Activity Report.

Since the last commission meeting, the law enforcement division has a new game warden chief. That would be me, Kristy Knight. I am a Native Nevadan and have been a Game Warden for the Department since 2004. I began my journey in the southern region and then transferred to Fallon, Reno, a Captains Position, a Lt. Position and now honored to have been chosen as the Chief of Law Enforcement. I have held meetings with all law enforcement personnel, including field wardens, Lt's, Captains, administrative assistants, dispatch and communications to help guide me in the direction the division needs to go.

Two Game Wardens completed field training and are now patrolling on their own. One is out of Overton and one out of Panaca. The Game Warden Lt.'s and one Captain conducted new hire interviews. Out of those that interviewed, 4 were offered a conditional offer of employment, 3 accepted. Those accepted conditional offers are two for Las Vegas and 1 for Eureka. The three candidates are now in pre-hire testing. Once they pass that, they will be hired and attend the POST academy in Carson City starting in July.

Game wardens have devoted a lot of patrol time for shed antler closures in Eastern Nevada. They have also responded to many wildlife concerns, including feeding big game, injured big game, dogs chasing big game, mountain lion sightings at several residences, removal of dead big game, bobcats in chicken coops and residential neighborhoods, coyote sightings in residential neighborhoods, and bears in crawl spaces.

Game wardens have investigated a deer attack on a person that was unfounded, self-defense claim for killing a bobcat, 3 juveniles shooting deer with BB guns who were turned over to their guardians, young deer dying in neighborhoods on doorsteps, a bear in the Spring Mountain Range (outside of LV), self-report of wrong characteristics of a deer taken last November (the hunter felt guilty and needed to admit it to get it off his chest), a big horn sheep possibly taken in the wrong unit, stolen traps, the use of illegal gill nets, mountain lions taken without a tag prior to harvest and a possible unsealed sheep from years ago that was unfounded. The sheep had been sealed.

Game Wardens coordinated with wildlife services on depredation/public safety issues with mt. lions and coyotes.

Game wardens assisted or were first on scene of a rollover accident, a head on collision, and assisted a semi-truck driver stuck on the side of the road of a two-lane highway. While at Lake Mead on boat patrol, 2 wardens noticed a subject in a pick-up truck doing brodies in an open area by pedestrians and vehicles. The two wardens contacted the subject who was driving impaired. The wardens arrested the subject for DUI.

This year will be a great boating season and the wardens are already out patrolling the southern Nevada waterways. They have already arrested one person for operating a motorboat while intoxicated. Game wardens assisted the game division with mule deer capturing and collaring, assisted game with flight surveys, and Sage Grouse Lek Surveys.

Game wardens have assisted in multiple community relations events in the past 2 months. Game Wardens taught hunters education and attended Wells High School Career Fair, the Outdoor Expo, and local bass club meetings.

Commissioner McNinch congratulated Administrator Knight. He noted that he worked with her previously and that she did an awesome job.

Commissioner East inquired about the bear in the tree the previous week and why it people believed it couldn't get out of the tree.

Administrator Knight stated that the issue was actually that it had been in the neighborhood for a while and they believed it had moved from the airport and that it would be a public safety issue. They were also receiving a high number of calls about it.

Chairman Caviglia asked about the bear reported in the Spring Mountains.

Administrator Knight stated that it had been reported but wasn't confirmed.

Chairman Caviglia noted that he thought tit was odd when he heard it. He then asked if there were any shed antler citations issued this year.

Administrator Knight stated that she wanted to say yes, but wasn't sure and would provide the answer.

## **CONSERVATION EDUCATION**

Conservation Education Division Administrator Chris Vasey presented the Conservation Education Division Activity Report.

**Events:** Eastern Region hosted its Sage Grouse Experience Event April 22 for members of the public to have a unique wildlife viewing experience to visit a Sage Grouse Lek. Conservation Education staff and Game staff were present to answer questions.

Clark County Fair reached record numbers with over 108,000 people attending this year NDOW provided educational opportunities at the fair covering 12,400 square feet of exhibit space. Nearly 3,000 youth visitors completed their Wildlife Passport activity, in which they visited at least 10 of 12 unique displays. Educational stations included nest building, fishing, fly-tying, safe boating, living with wildlife, just to name a few.

**Volunteer:** The recent Sagehen Guzzler build volunteer event was advertised to attract more families to get younger folks interested in helping on these projects. The event was attended by 115 volunteers, including three boy scout troops. Conservation Education staff provided educational opportunities for the scouts to earn their mammal badge. Food was provided by Nevada Bighorns Unlimited and Pershing County Chukars Unlimited.

**Outreach:** Urban Wildlife Coordinators are starting to see an increase in call volume due to spring 'baby' season with lots of reports about baby birds, mostly goslings. Posts have been going up on NextDoor, Facebook, and Instagram to highlight 'What to do if you find a baby bird'.

April is Volunteer Appreciation month and volunteer coordinators have been highlighting volunteers and volunteer projects on our social media all month. A podcast was recorded with coordinators to share how people can get involved in the various volunteer opportunities NDOW has to offer.

NDOW participated in a multi-agency social media campaign at the end of March, through the leadership of SageWest. The campaign was called #swipesagebrush and involved social media posts that mimicked online dating profiles but featured species from the sagebrush. The campaign was successful and gained high performing posts and considerable discussion on sagebrush species to our social media.

**Education:** Nevada State Project WILD Coordinator wrapped up a month's long small grant project through the EPA to create a Diversity Equity Inclusion outreach project using the Project WILD curriculum. The project involved changing the structure of educator workshops, testing it out, and implementing it with our staff. This project has led to a partnership with the NVTeach program through UNR where students will work with NDOW and the Project WILD team to continue to create more inclusive and accessible outdoor education programming.

**Media Highlight:** Public Information Officers have done interviews with various news agencies on topics including rattlesnakes, the big game tag application period, wildlife in neighborhoods, NDOW's fish stocking program, bear awareness and more. Department staff conducted at least seven interviews on bears awareness alone over the last month.



Over the last 30 days, NDOW was mentioned in broadcast and printed news 210 times, averaging 6 mentions per day.

**Welcome New Staff:** The Conservation Education Division hired Hannah VonTour as the new publication's coordinator. A graduate of UNR, she spent the past five years working as the marketing manager for Rowdy, LLC, a local nutrition company. Before taking over at Rowdy, she was a teacher in the Washoe County School District for nearly eight years.

Outdoor Connection Coordinator Bobby Jones presented on the Nevada Youth License Fund. More information can be found at the link below:

<https://www.ndow.org/blog/nevada-youth-license-fund/>

Commissioner East expressed her appreciation for the program and noted that it was very important to her father. She asked how the children would be selected to receive the licenses.

Educator Jones stated that they were not at that stage yet and that because this was a new program there were some things that would be developed as the agency begins to get feedback. He believed this was an opportunity to build relationships with community groups that the agency hasn't engaged with previously, for example The Boys and Girls Club. He added that they would like to engage those communities in close proximity to events or activities happening in their areas. Ideally, we would like to acquire enough funding that allows them the fewest restrictions when distributing licenses.

Commissioner East asked if there had been much response yet.

Educator Jones stated yes and that he anticipated to be able to provide more than a thousand licenses without having to advertise. The agency is sensitive to requesting funds from the same donors who typically give all the time. We would like to appeal to other sources and broaden the source of donations if possible.

Administrator Vasey stated that currently, they would be able to provide 1400 licenses and that number is climbing.

Vice Chairman Rogers stated that he believed this fund was a great idea and cause and looked forward to seeing what would come of the program. He noted that he was able to go to the Clark County Fair and walk through the exhibits and was amazed at the number of people and kids participating in the activities. He expressed appreciation for the role NDOW employees played in that.

Chairman Caviglia asked if the plan was to implement this the following year.

Educator Jones answered that the plan was to roll it out this summer.

Chairman Caviglia asked if the funds collected would stay in an account solely earmarked for this purpose.

Educator Jones said yes, creating a donation account specifically for this fund was one of the items the agency needed to work through prior to launching. We would like to eventually make formal requests to different groups, but we are working through that as we go along. This is one of the most fun things I have worked on in my career.

Secretary Jenne stated that when staff came forward with this he wondered why we hadn't thought of it sooner. He gave kudos to Conservation Education was very enthusiastic about the future success of this program.

Chairman Caviglia thanked Educator Jones and the Department. He asked them last minute to provide a report on this fund and appreciated them doing so.

**7.\* Elk Damage Payment Exceeding \$10,000 – Wildlife Staff Specialist Cody McKee – For Possible Action**

Per NAC 504.421, the Commission is required to approve an elk damage payment above \$10,000. An elk damage assessment on the Granite Peak Ranch in White Pine County, totaling \$28,346, was completed by Department personnel and submitted for reimbursement by Bruce Hubbard, agent for the property.

Chairman Caviglia introduced Item #7.

Wildlife Staff Specialist Cody McKee provided a brief presentation on the request. He noted that in 2021, they requested reimbursement for the same property. To view support material please click on the link below:

<https://www.ndow.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/01/7-Elk-Damage-Payment-for-Granite-Peak-Ranch-FY24-Memo-and-Support-Materials.pdf>

Vice Chairman Rogers asked if the ranch had been given Landowner Compensation Tags as well or have they only been provided damage payments.

Staff Specialist McKee stated that those tags only apply to damage done by Antelope and Mule deer. The Department doesn't issue Compensation tags for Elk, but they do issue Elk Incentive Tags which is a different program. The Department doesn't issue those tags for cultivated agricultural lands like Center Pivots. Rangeland and Riparian Meadows are eligible for Elk Incentive Tags. We can issue Private Lands Antlerless Elk Tags, which are essentially depredation style hunts where the landowner may choose the hunters of their liking who they are comfortable with.

Vice Chairman Rogers stated that the paperwork was showing \$385/ton and out of curiosity asked if that was reasonable.

Staff Specialist McKee stated that he had the same thought in 2021 when it was \$300/ton. The market is absurd right now and it is very hard to find cheap hay. He contacted Commissioner Barnes to verify that this evaluation was fair.

Commissioner East noted that there was a comment in one report that the property wasn't fenced and asked Staff Specialist McKee to respond.

Staff Specialist McKee stated that it was a delicate conversation. This property would require 12 miles of fencing, which would cost roughly \$1.2M. With a \$30,000 payout annually, the fence would pay for itself in about 33 years. Within NAC, if a landowner is offered a fence, materials or payment to address depredation issues and they decline the offer they are no longer eligible for any other depredation programs.

Commissioner McNinch stated that they were tolerance programs and Staff Specialist McKee's thought process makes sense. He stated that he had no problem with this request.

Chairman Caviglia stated that he was very familiar with the area and these Elk are crossing a lot of flat to get to these fields. One wouldn't think they would want to go down there, but Alfalfa is highly desirable. He noted that he read CABMW comments and that he didn't think they quite understood fully how the Elk Incentive program was set up. He stated that he had no problem with this request. He agreed that the fencing would be costly, noting that they had big pivots in the flat.

Dave Talaga, representing Clark CABMW stated that they supported the reimbursement to the land owner, but they were curious of what was going on. After having listened to Specialist McKee's testimony and having a few discussions, it was clear that everything that could be done was being done. He asked that in the future it would be appreciated if the Department would supply more background information so that they could better understand exactly what was happening in these situations. He noted that they had quite a bit of participation from the public on this agenda item at the CABMW meeting. Many attended specifically for this discussion and reiterated that more information would be very much appreciated.

*No public comment.*

**VICE CHAIRMAN ROGERS MADE A MOTION TO APPROVE THE ELK DAMAGE PAYMENT OF \$28,346. COMMISSIONER EAST SECONDED THE MOTION. MOTION PASSED 8-0. COMMISSIONER BARNES WAS ABSENT.**

**8. Administrative Procedures, Regulations and Policy (APRP) Committee – Committee Chairman David McNinch – For Possible Action**

The APRP Committee has concluded with committee meetings and will focus on the last policy through the Commission.

**A.\* Commission Policy 23 – Predation Management – Fourth Reading – APRP Committee Chairman David McNinch and Deputy Director Mike Scott– For Possible Action**

The Commission will review Commission Policy 23 and may make any necessary changes and may decide to repeal, revise, or adopt the policy.

Chairman Caviglia introduced Item #8A.

Commissioner McNinch stated that he, Deputy Director Scott and Management Analyst Musso discussed this policy extensively and are comfortable with where it is at. He noted that support material included the 2016 version and the current version up for approval. That support material can be viewed at the link below:

<https://www.ndow.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/01/8A-Commission-Policy-23-May-2023-and-May-2016-Versions-2.pdf>

Management Analyst Musso noted the necessary changes and requests from the previous Commission meeting.

Deputy Director Scott agreed with what Management Analyst Musso noted.

Commissioner McNinch noted that the current version aligned with changes made in 2016. The Department replaced paraphrased language from the 2016 version with language taken verbatim from NRS. He noted one other change on page six, number nine. A report would be made to the "Department" rather than the "Commission".

Staff Specialist Jackson requested to strike “1F Monitoring Level (Standard, Intermediate or Rigorous)” under the Predator Management Plan section and simply include it in “1E Project Type (Implementation, Experimental Management or Experimentation).” He asked for clarification on 1U, that “amount left” referred to dollars left over and that it would be changed to “dollars remaining.”

Commissioner East asked if the Commission wanted to wait to approve this policy until after the current Predator Fee bill in the legislature is passed.

Commissioner McNinch stated that he didn’t have a problem with waiting.

Chairman Caviglia agreed.

Commissioner McNinch reiterated that if June Commission arrives and nothing has happened to AB 70, then Policy 23 is ready to be approved.

Vice Chair Rogers agreed with waiting and asked out of curiosity if the policy was approved now and a modified version of AB 70 passed, how that would affect Policy 23.

Commissioner McNinch stated that they would need to bring it back to Commission in September or August and change it to match the language of the bill passed.

Chairman Caviglia noted a few editorial changes.

Commissioner East also noted an editorial change.

Commissioner McNinch stated that they would clean up all editorial issues.

*No CABMW comment.*

Jana Wright, private citizen, stated that at the March Commission she spoke against the policy, but after the versions provided and Staff Specialist Jackson’s corrections, she was in support of it.

## **9. Public Comment Period**

Public comment will be limited to three minutes. No action can be taken by the Commission at this time; any item requiring Commission action may be scheduled on a future Commission agenda.

Gerald Lent, private citizen, noted a few items and questions he had about the new licensing contractor Gordon Darby.

- 1.) They don’t have an office in Nevada, but a state contractor should so that people could respond to them.
- 2.) The testimonials on their website were provided by multiple companies, but Gordon Darby was a new company.
- 3.) The new website states that there are no refunds on purchases and that they have suitable security system in place and he didn’t understand what that meant.
- 4.) After asking if sportsmen and interested public could watch the draw process , Kalkomey responded no and he believed that it was an injustice to sportsmen and the public.

- 5.) He didn't agree with what their website stated about customer service.
- 6.) He wanted to know how one company took over for another company without going to bid.  
The public should be able to see the contract.
- 7.) He asked whether the price was renegotiated and what the cost was to the sportsmen.
- 8.) He asked what the financial ramifications of the transition from Kalkomey to Gordon Darby were.  
*His three minutes of time ended.*

Jim Cooney, private citizen, stated that he provided testimony during the January meeting requesting that CABMWs have access to the survey information from report cards before January 31<sup>st</sup>. The information would have been very valuable when CABMWs set seasons and make other decisions. He spoke to Deputy Director Scott and sent an email to Chairman Caviglia, Director Jenne and DATS Administrator Kim Munoz inquiring about having access to this information. After a conversation with Mitch Strobl from Kalkomey, it seemed that it would be done. I am requesting this again at this Commission.

Jana wright, private citizen, stated that she accidentally had her hand raised.

*Chairman Caviglia adjourned at 4:13pm.*

**Saturday, May 6, 2023 – 8:00 a.m.**

***If you wish to make public comment via Zoom, please use this link:***

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84091660712?pwd=MTdvSW9rbS9FTXA4dHlrbHVyRnozZz09>

**10. Call to Order, Pledge of Allegiance, Roll Call of Commission Members and County Advisory Board Members to Manage Wildlife (CABMW) – Chairman Tommy Caviglia**

Chairman Caviglia called the meeting to order at 8:00am. Commissioner Wise led the Commission in the Pledge of Allegiance. Administrative Assistant Cameron Tull called the roll of the Commission. Commissioner Barnes was absent. Chairman Caviglia made note of the CABMW members in attendance.

**11. Approval of Agenda – Chairman Tommy Caviglia– For Possible Action**

The Commission will review the agenda and may take action to approve the agenda. The Commission may remove items from the agenda, continue items for consideration or take items out of order.

Chairman Caviglia introduced Item #11.

*No CABMW comment.*

*No public comment.*

**VICE CHAIRMAN ROGERS MADE A MOTION TO APPROVE THE AGENDA AS PRESENTED. COMMISSIONER KIEL SECONDED THE MOTION. MOTION PASSED 8-0. COMMISSIONER BARNES WAS ABSENT.**

**12. Member Items/Announcements and Correspondence – Chairman Tommy Caviglia – Informational**

Commissioners may present emergent items. No action may be taken by the Commission. Any item requiring Commission action may be scheduled on a future Commission agenda. The Commission will review and may discuss correspondence sent or received by the Commission since the last regular meeting and may provide copies for the exhibit file (Commissioners may provide hard copies of their correspondence for the written record). Correspondence sent or received by Secretary Alan Jenne may also be discussed.

Chairman Caviglia introduced Item #12. He made note of an email that was sent and distributed to the Commission the day before on the bear hunt.

Commissioner East stated that AB 355 passed and would be headed to the floor of the legislature.

**13. County Advisory Boards to Manage Wildlife (CABMW) Member Items – Informational**

CABMW members may present emergent items. No action may be taken by the Commission. Any item requiring Commission action will be scheduled on a future Commission agenda.

Chairman Caviglia introduced Item #13.

Jim Cooney, representing Elko CABMW stated that he had two items to bring forward. One was that sportsmen had asked why the shed antler certificate needed to be renewed every year and what the thought process was behind that. His second item was that there were five to six solar fields to be erected in the Northeast corner of Elko County and that there were significant concerns about what effects that will have on the wildlife corridors in Area seven and eight, as well as the impacts of transmission lines and Sage grouse, etc. Additionally, there is a Congressional Land Transfer, encompassing approximately 1.7M acres on the Winecup Ranch. The Elko CABMW has been in touch with the Western Lands group and has received a commitment from them to give a presentation at the next CABMW meeting in June. The implications of this transfer appear to be mostly negative, including changes in access and management practices.

**14. Commission General Regulations – For Possible Action - Public Comment Allowed**

**A.\* Commission General Regulation 506, Possession of Golden Eagles Under Certain Circumstances – Wildlife Diversity Administrator Jennifer Newmark – For Possible Action**

The Commission will hold an adoption hearing to consider amending Nevada Administrative Code (NAC) 503 to allow for possession of a golden eagle under certain circumstances.

Chairman Caviglia proceeded to agenda item 14, Commission General Regulations, specifically discussing Regulation 506 regarding the possession of golden eagles under certain circumstances.

Jennifer Newmark Wildlife Diversity Division Administrator provided an overview of the regulation and its background. The regulation would allow licensed master falconers who meet specific federal conditions to possess a golden eagle obtained from the wild under a new Eagle permit. The possession would be

permitted for rehabilitation purposes, as well as for those moving to Nevada with a golden eagle legally possessed in another state or receiving a transfer from another falconer as authorized by the regulation.

Chairman Caviglia asked the commission for their preference on discussing the regulation.

Commissioner McNinch expressed that he did not feel the need for a detailed discussion.

Chairman Caviglia then called for public and CAB (County Advisory Board) comments in Reno, but none were received.

**COMMISSIONER MCNINCH MADE A MOTION TO APPROVE COMMISSION GENERAL REGULATION 506 POSSESSION OF GOLDEN EAGLES UNDER CERTAIN CIRCUMSTANCES AS PRESENTED. SECONDED BY COMMISSIONER KIEL. THE MOTION PASSED 8-0. COMMISSIONER BARNES WAS ABSENT.**

**15. Habitat Status and Trend– Habitat Division Administrator Mark Freese – Informational**

A presentation will be provided on the status and trend of Nevada’s wildlife habitats.

Chairman Caviglia introduced Item #15.

Habitat Division Administrator Mark Freese presented on the status and trend of Nevada’s wildlife habitats. His presentation can be viewed at the link below:

<https://www.ndow.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/05/Nevada-Habitat-Status-Trend.pdf>

Commissioner Kiel asked how we can overcome some of the challenges we face in the Wilderness Study Areas.

**16. Commission Regulations – For Possible Action – Public Comment Allowed**

**A.\* Commission Regulation 23-05, Amendment #1, 2023 Black Bear Quotas and Harvest Limits – Wildlife Staff Specialist Pat Jackson – For Possible Action**

The Commission will consider adopting the 2023 hunting season quotas and harvest limits for black bear.

Chairman Caviglia called the meeting to order and introduced agenda item number 16A, Commission Regulation for possible action.

Staff Specialist Jackson presented Commission Regulation 23-05 Amendment Number One, regarding the 2023 black bear quotas and harvest limits. He provided a brief presentation on CR23-05, discussing the black bear season and quota recommendations. He recommended maintaining the same quotas as last year: 45 resident tags, 5 non-resident tags, and a total harvest limit of 20. Additionally, he proposed specific female harvest limits of 3, 2, and 3. The season would begin one half hour before sunrise and end a half hour after sunset. Hunters were advised to call a designated 1-800 number prior to hunting to ensure harvest limits had not been reached. Attendees who received a tag, along with their guides, were required to attend an indoctrination course. The courses would be conducted in person on August 5th and 19th at the valley office, with the option to join via Zoom from 1 to 4 pm. The presentation would be recorded for first-come, first-serve tag holders, if available.

Staff Specialist Jackson then presented data on the three-year average, indicating a 30% female presence in the harvest and a stable proportion of females in relation to age. Furthermore, research demonstrated that Nevada and California shared a bear population, with California estimating a bear population between 30,000 and 40,000. Project 46 findings showed a sliding cascade of density, with higher bear densities near California and decreasing densities within Nevada. Recent estimates, including a study by Dr. Perry Williams at UNR, suggested a bear population of 537, with sightings indicating a rise in bear populations in previously unobserved areas.

Commissioner East inquired about the Nevada bear population estimate of 537.

Staff Specialist Jackson explained a recent estimate based on tangible bear encounters and capture-recapture mark estimates conducted by Dr. Perry Williams.

Commissioner McNinch sought clarification on the year of the most recent mark estimate.

Staff Specialist Jackson confirmed as 2023.

Chairman Caviglia asked Staff Specialist Jackson to provide an overview of last year's hunts, as they closed earlier than ever.

Staff Specialist Jackson acknowledged the closures and explained that the female harvest limit was reached within a few days into the hunt, leading to the overall harvest limit being reached within 24 days and the subsequent closure of the entire bear season.

Chairman Caviglia raised a concern brought up by a CAB regarding the high quota compared to the harvest limit, questioning the logic behind it.

Staff Specialist Jackson explained that the quota of 45 resident tags and 5 non-resident tags was set to accommodate a dream tag opportunity, aiming for a total of 50 tags.

Chairman Caviglia expressed the issue of overselling tags and the exacerbation of problems faced in the previous year.

Commissioner Kiel sought clarification on the use of the female harvest limit and its significance.

Staff Specialist Jackson explained that the female harvest limit was implemented for cultural reasons, while the overall harvest limit served biological purposes.

Commissioner Kiel expressed agreement with the low percentage of female harvest in relation to the overall bear population and emphasized the negligible biological consequences of removing the female harvest.

Staff Specialist Jackson agreed.

Vice Chair Rogers asked if in previous years female harvest limits had been reached in specific areas, leading to the closure of those regions.

Staff Specialist Jackson confirmed that such closures had occurred in the past. However, he noted that the closures had not affected all three units, and that the speed at which events unfolded in the previous year was unprecedented.



Commissioner East inquired about the scientific or biological consequences of removing the female harvest.

Staff Specialist Jackson responded that there would be no significant biological consequences.

Commissioner East further inquired about potential biological consequences if the unit group harvest limits were increased, referring to proposals made by some CABs to set the limits at eight, eight, and ten.

Staff Specialist Jackson reiterated that no substantial biological consequences would result from such an increase in unit group harvest limits.

Commissioner McNinch reflected on the complexities of the bear hunt and the need to adapt and adjust parameters based on past experiences. Commissioner McNinch highlighted the importance of the conservation community, including all participants in the meeting and the general public, coming to terms with the purpose of the hunt. He pondered whether the primary objective was to conserve bears or take advantage of their presence. Commissioner McNinch noted the natural ebb and flow of the bear population and questioned the long-term goals of the hunt. Commissioner McNinch expressed concerns about the challenges posed by the hunt, particularly in terms of hunters not getting an opportunity and the recent incident involving the dream tag holder not getting a chance to hunt. He acknowledged the ongoing debate about tag allocation and emphasized the need to consider the overarching purpose of the hunt, whether it be conservation-oriented or solely opportunistic. He expressed appreciation for the efforts made in conducting a new mark estimate. He concluded by mentioning concerns regarding the potential delayed effects on the population and stressed the importance of considering the long-term consequences of the hunt.

Commissioner East expressed concerns regarding the age and condition of bears harvested in recent years. Specifically, they questioned whether younger bears were being taken due to the rush to fill tags before the season closed. She also inquired about the overall body condition of the bears and whether they were healthy or unhealthy.

Staff Specialist Jackson responded to the questions, acknowledging the potential rush caused by female harvest limits and the desire to fill tags. He mentioned the closure of the first unit group and deferred to Carl Lackey to address the bears' body conditions. Staff Specialist Jackson emphasized the importance of considering a three-year average and noted that the age data indicated a light harvest for both males and females.

Field Biologist Carl Lackey from the Department of Wildlife provided a response, stating that although some younger bears, including a yearling, were harvested last year, it was not an anomaly and has occurred occasionally throughout the history of the hunt. He attributed the relatively poorer body conditions of the bears to two years of drought and unfavorable natural food conditions. Field Biologist Carl Lackey also shared interesting metrics, such as the average days hunted by successful hunters, which decreased when female harvest limits were in place. He mentioned an increase in the number of bears pursued with hounds during years with female harvest limits.

Commissioner McNinch sought clarification from Lackey regarding the bear's body condition.

Field Biologist Carl Lackey confirmed that last year, they observed bears with thinner body conditions compared to previous years, particularly in the Pine Nut Mountains region.

Commissioner McNinch raised the issue of challenging habitat conditions and drought during October, expressing hope for improved conditions in the future. They emphasized the need to consider the potential body conditions of bears as they are moved across the landscape. Commissioner McNinch

expressed concerns about hounding as a hunting strategy during a critical time when bears are trying to gain weight for winter hibernation. They found it difficult to process the complexities of the hunt and expressed a desire for suggestions and discussions regarding Nevada's stance on bears.

Chairman Caviglia asked Field Biologist Carl Lackey about the percentage of bears harvested with hounds in the early female harvest unit groups last year.

Field Biologist Carl Lackey provided the data, stating that out of the 16 bears harvested, 11 were taken with hounds. He also mentioned the historical range of 10 to 12 bears harvested with hounds in previous years, making up 73 percent of all bear harvests since 2011.

Commissioner McNinch raised the concern that the data didn't account for bears that were pushed around but not harvested during hounding.

Field Biologist Carl Lackey clarified that 209 bears were pursued but not harvested.

Commissioner McNinch acknowledged that the intention of hounding was to avoid taking sows, but some hunters prioritize filling their tags before the opportunity closes. He recognized the difficulty of addressing this issue and anticipated it worsening in the upcoming year.

Field Biologist Carl Lackey shared his personal experiences of receiving calls from frustrated hunters who had drawn bear tags but were unable to participate in the hunt for long due to the closure. This contradicted the initial guidance to avoid rushing and contributed to the perception that being out on the first day is necessary for a successful harvest.

Commissioner McNinch acknowledged the challenge of breaking this cycle and expressed the struggle of finding a solution, suggesting it is inherent to the current situation.

Commissioner East brought up the topic of body condition and its importance, citing reports from sportsmen about poor body condition in some older bears. She shared a personal story of a friend who encountered two sows during a bear hunt but chose not to harvest them to avoid the closure of the hunt. However, in hindsight, their friend regretted not taking one of the sows because the male boar they pursued on the last day eluded them. This story raised concerns about the condition of older bears and the effectiveness of trophy hunting as a control measure. Commissioner East questioned whether it was a disservice to leave bears in poor shape and wanted to hear Field Biologist Carl Lackey's perspective on the matter.

Field Biologist Carl Lackey responded that it is subjective to the hunter, as some have chosen to take older and thin bears as an act of mercy. In terms of the number of bears left in the population, the harvest rate in Nevada is low, with about 2% of bears being harvested (2.1% for males and 1.8% for females). Comparatively, states that manage their bear hunts based on population numbers have harvest rates between 12% and 20%. Field Biologist Carl Lackey emphasized that there is ample space and a sufficient bear population in Nevada.

Commissioner East inquired about the number of females harvested with the use of hounds. Field Biologist Carl Lackey shared that when hounds are used, approximately 27% of the harvested bears are females. In contrast, when other hunting methods such as spot and stock or calling are employed, around 41% of the harvested bears are females. Field Biologist Carl Lackey mentioned that using hounds offers a better chance of determining the sex of the bear, which is taught during the indoctrination process.

Commissioner Walther expressed curiosity about whether the race to finish the hunt was driven by the 50-20 issue or by the fear of meeting the sow quota and the subsequent closure of units.

Field Biologist Carl Lackey responded that based on conversations with hunters, it appears to be more perpetuated by the fear of meeting the sow quota and the resulting closure of units.

Chairman Caviglia acknowledged that the issuance of almost double the tags for the quota creates a race among hunters to harvest their bears. He also raised a concern about a detailed report prepared by Field Biologist Carl Lackey every year, which is not seen by the commission. A CAB member had to file a FOIA request to obtain the report, and Chairman Caviglia suggested that it would be prudent for everyone to have access to these reports in the future.

Dave Talaga representing Clark County CABMW shared that their board voted 7-0 in favor of the quota but wanted to bring attention to the discussion that took place. The board recognized the expansion of the bear population from California into Nevada and viewed it as an opportunity hunt. They discussed non-hunting mortality, primarily bears being hit by vehicles, and the ratio of that mortality to the hunting tags. There was public debate against the quota, questioning its purpose and considering it a trophy hunt. CABMW Talaga emphasized the trust placed in the NDOW experts to set the quotas based on various conditions that may not be known to the public. He highlighted that passing up on a sow to pursue a boar is a decision that hunters make, and it is common in hunting for individuals to regret not taking the opportunity they had. He suggested that unique situations, such as someone losing a dream tag due to the season closing, should be considered separately. CABMW Talaga requested more information to be provided to the CAB to better prepare their position on exceptions to the rule.

Gene Green representing Carson CABMW, mentioned that their board voted unanimously to remove the female limit in the bear hunt. He believes there is no biological reason for the limit since the females haven't entered their lactating period, and the cubs are not born until February. They expressed concerns about hunters losing their tags due to the season ending before they had a chance to go out and hunt, and he felt that the female limit exacerbates this issue.

Steve Robinson representing Washoe CABMW, mentioned that their board unanimously supported the bear hunt, along with 100% of the public attendees. He highlighted the increasing human-bear conflict in Nevada, noting a significant rise in reported incidents compared to a previous five-year period. He emphasized the need for information transparency and expressed frustration about having to file a FOIA request to obtain Carl Lackey's comprehensive report. CAB Robinson shared some highlights from the report, including the high interest in the bear hunt, the low harvest rate compared to sustainable limits in other states, and the recommendation to eliminate the sow harvest limit. Washoe CABMW also recommended modest increases in the resident and non-resident quotas for certain areas, which they believe are still well below sustainable harvest limits.

Jim Cooney representing Elko CABMW, expressed the CAB's support for the bear hunt and noted that during their CAB meeting, an individual recommended eliminating the sow limit and maintaining the current season structure.

Chairman Caviglia called for additional comments from the public in Reno and on Zoom.

Shawn Sean a private citizen, voiced his approval for eliminating the female quota, emphasizing that it has been a topic of discussion for a long time. He also highlighted the low harvest rate in Nevada (approximately 2%), compared to other states that aim for 12 to 20% harvest rates to manage bear populations effectively. Shawn commended the CABs for their testimony, particularly praising Clark County for their informative presentation.

Jana Wright representing Clark County, expressed her appreciation for placing the bear quota item on the agenda before discussing quotas for other big game species. She raised concerns about the cover

memorandum mentioning a recent sighting of a black bear in the Spring Mountains, noting that the sighting was unsubstantiated according to admissions made during the Clark County CAB meeting. Jana questioned the validity of other county sightings mentioned and suggested that the bear quota should be set at the lowest legally allowed number. She referenced the drought, recent record snowfalls up north, and the poor condition of bears harvested in the 2022 hunt as reasons to give bears greater consideration and significantly reduce the quota.

Rex Flowers a private citizen, expressed his support for Washoe County's recommendations regarding the bear hunt. He mentioned his involvement since the early stages of the hunt and described it as a conservative process. Rex urged the commission to increase tag numbers, actual harvest numbers, and eliminate restrictions on sow bears, stating that the bear population can handle the proposed changes. He emphasized the need to view the bear hunt as an opportunity and not just as an isolated case, drawing a parallel with other hunts, such as the antlerless mule deer hunt.

Kathy Smith a private citizen, advocated for maintaining the quota at the lowest possible level. Kathy speculated that the expanding bear population might be attributed to bears migrating from California due to serious fires in the state. She highlighted the estimated decline in the California bear population and expressed concerns about the poor condition of bears observed in Nevada, suggesting inadequate habitat. Kathy questioned the rationale behind killing animals based on age or appearance and proposed alternative approaches to spare them from suffering. She emphasized the significant population decrease in California and its relevance to the discussion.

Stephanie Myers expressed her opposition to the bear hunt, citing concerns about the potential threat to the survival of the species. She referred to the concept that when the death of 10% of a species in an area is reached, it becomes a threat to their survival. Stephanie mentioned the hunter quota, which Carl Lackey stated is around two percent, but also highlighted other sources of bear mortality, such as car accidents and nuisance-related incidents. She emphasized the impact of habitat damage caused by drought and wildfires, which puts additional pressure on bears to survive. Stephanie criticized the lack of a stated management objective for the hunt and referred to it as an "opportunity hunt," implying it is a trophy hunt. She raised concerns about the use of hounds, viewing it as destructive to the environment and lacking fair chase principles. Stephanie also referenced the 2018 Nevada values report, indicating that only 13 percent of the public supports the bear hunt, suggesting the commission may appear unresponsive if they continue with it. She urged the commission to either limit the take to one male or discontinue the hunt altogether.

Jonathan West, representing the Nevada Sporting Dog Alliance, expressed support for eliminating the individual sow quota from the overall quota. He justified this by stating that the growing and expanding bear population justifies an additional harvest, and the presence of the sow quota can lead to hasty decision-making instead of informed choices.

Chairman Caviglia closed the public comment session, turning the discussion back to the commission.

Vice Chair Rogers posed a question regarding the harvest success rate for different unit groups over the past few years.

Staff Specialist Jackson, admitted not having that information readily available but mentioned that Field Biologist Carl Lackey had it in his printed spreadsheet.

Field Biologist Carl Lackey confirmed having the information on his computer and offered to share overall success rates by year as well as success rates specific to unit groups upon Vice Chair Rogers' interest.

Vice Chair Rogers expressed interest in the harvest success rate over the past couple of years.

Field Biologist Carl Lackey provided the following information: the long-term average since 2011 is 35 percent, the previous three-year average is 36 percent, and the last year had a success rate of 52 percent.

Vice Chair Rogers then inquired about how often the seasons have been closed early due to reaching harvest limits and what occurred in those instances.

Field Biologist Carl Lackey did not recall the specific year off the top of his head.

Staff Specialist Jackson mentioned that in the first few years of the hunt, the seasons did not close early. However, there was one year where one unit group closed early, and another year where two unit groups closed early. Staff Specialist Jackson emphasized that there has been a significant change from slow harvest rates to the recent year's substantial increase.

Commissioner Wise asked Staff Specialist Jackson about the management goal or objective for the bear population in Nevada, considering the ongoing efforts to determine the population size.

Staff Specialist Jackson responded that they currently do not have a management objective. He mentioned a geographic challenge, where a 30-mile-wide dry swath separates bear populations, making it difficult for males and females to encounter each other and reproduce. While natural recolonization could occur, the main focus is to have a healthy bear population and minimize human-wildlife conflict.

Commissioner McNinch expressed his frustration with the discussion about taking sow bears, noting the different approach taken with other species such as mule deer, where hunting does is discouraged to allow for population growth. He highlighted the irony and hypocrisy of considering sow bear hunting as a social issue while asserting that there are plenty of bears and it won't negatively impact the population. He acknowledged the social challenges associated with the bear hunt and his concerns about accurately measuring the population's response and managing it appropriately to avoid harm. Commissioner McNinch anticipated a similar conversation regarding hunting does and stressed the need for consistency in managing these social challenges.

Commissioner Kiel expressed agreement with the sentiments shared by others and emphasized two distinctions. Firstly, there is a clear growth in the bear population while mule deer population is decreasing. Secondly, there has been a significant increase in human-wildlife conflict over the past 20 years, with bears being only a part of it. Commissioner Kiel pointed out that the increase in conflict is likely due to a greater number of people residing in areas where bears also live. Based on these distinctions, Commissioner Kiel expressed support for removing the restriction on female bear harvest.

Deputy Director Scott addressed the issue of female bear harvest, stating that biologically, the department supports female take in most species. They do not consider female take to be a concern for the overall bear population, and they encourage hunting for various species. The presence of bears in more areas of the state has been observed, including locations such as Caliente, Ely, Elko, Winnemucca, and Fallon. Deputy Director Scott suggested the possibility of developing a better bear management plan to address this expansion. He mentioned that the California legislature allocated funds for bear-proof containers on the west side of the lake, which might result in more bears crossing into Nevada. The bear hunt is not intended as a means to reduce conflicts with bears but rather has other justifications. Deputy Director Scott also commented on the population trend, stating that the department has not recommended any increases in the bear population. They view the population as healthy, stable, and increasing. If the department observed a decline in the population, they would recommend a lower quota or potentially close the season to protect the imperiled population. Regarding the bear report mentioned earlier, Deputy Director Scott clarified that the decision not to include certain information in the report was

made to avoid justifying the bear hunt based on conflict reduction. He expressed surprise that a public records request was needed for the information and mentioned that it could have been provided through a phone call. He offered to add the information to the report if desired, as it is public information.

Commissioner East raised questions about how hunters can determine if a female bear has cubs and how they know when bears mate.

Field Biologist Carl Lackey explained that hunters rely on factors such as cub tracks and hunter ethics to identify if a female bear has cubs. He also mentioned that bears mate in June or July, but the actual pregnancy occurs in late fall due to delayed implantation, where the fertilized egg floats freely within the uterus until the fall self-evaluation determines if the female bear is in good enough shape to get pregnant and sustain the cubs through hibernation.

Commissioner East asked about the timing of bear mating and pregnancy.

Field Biologist Carl Lackey explained that bears mate in June or July. However, the actual pregnancy doesn't occur until late fall due to delayed implantation. During delayed implantation, the fertilized egg floats freely within the uterus throughout the summer. In the fall, the female bear's body evaluates whether she is in good enough condition, with sufficient fat reserves, to sustain pregnancy, give birth to cubs, and nurse them during hibernation. If she meets the criteria, she will become pregnant in late fall, and the cubs will be born around February 1st during hibernation.

Chairman Caviglia expressed his confidence in the bear population and the harvest limit. However, he raised concerns about the allocation of over 50 percent more tags for the hunt than the desired number of bears to be harvested. This excess of tags creates a "land rush" and a race among hunters. He expressed discomfort with this situation, as it exceeds the norm for hunts where the number of tags issued matches the desired harvest.

Commissioner Wise echoed concerns about the rush to finish and the impact on dream tag holders who may not get the opportunity to hunt despite paying for a special tag.

Commissioner McNinch sought clarification on whether the discussed matrix would still apply if there were changes.

Staff Specialist Jackson confirmed that it would.

Commissioner McNinch expressed his frustration with the possibility of being in a deciding position if there's a split vote. He suggested exploring other options and having separate hounding and spot-and-stock seasons or considering different approaches to address concerns. He emphasized the importance of not making rash decisions and being open to alternative ideas that could alleviate concerns from different perspectives.

Commissioner Rogers shared his comfort with the presented harvest limits and population numbers. However, he expressed concerns about the 50-20 split between the quota and the harvest limit. He agreed with removing the sow harvest limit but still had reservations about the quota numbers and the experiences of hunters affected by the rule.

Chairman Caviglia expressed his view that the bear hunt is different from other hunts, and that the current approach may not be suitable. He suggested the need for more specific and targeted tag allocation, similar to other hunting areas, where hunters draw specific tags for their desired hunt. He believed that the 50-20 split is a significant part of the issue and recommended considering alternative approaches.

Commissioner East acknowledged that bear hunting is not their preference but expressed a willingness to consider raising both the unit group harvest and the female harvest limit for the current year. This would allow for further evaluation and discussions about the population and potential adjustments in the future. The goal would be to reduce the competitive nature of the hunt while addressing concerns about the overall health of the bear population.

Chairman Caviglia proposed an alternative idea of increasing the total unit group harvest while eliminating the female harvest limit. In this scenario, the quota would be set to match the available tags, potentially aligning with the suggestions made by the Washoe region.

Commissioner East inquired about the split between resident and non-resident tags if the female harvest limits were removed.

Chairman Caviglia suggested a split of 23 tags for residents and 3 tags for non-residents.

Commissioner East expressed approval.

Commissioner Booth expressed support for getting rid of the total sow harvest limits and shared agreement with Chairman Caviglia's suggestion. Commissioner Kiel mentioned the potential tag allocations based on the female harvest limit ratios and asked for the department's input.

Staff Specialist Jackson mentioned that hunter success rates for bear hunts in the state average around 35%.

Chairman Caviglia questioned whether this percentage included all hunters or only those who actually hunted.

Staff Specialist Jackson confirmed that it referred to hunters who participated.

Field Biologist Carl Lackey emphasized that even with reduced quotas, the success rate would likely remain around 35%, as many hunters choose not to harvest bears despite having the opportunity.

Chairman Caviglia expressed his reservations about setting the quota solely for the purpose of accommodating the dream tag program, which he felt might not be justified.

Commissioner East inquired about the criteria for heritage tags and whether a dream tag could be converted into a heritage tag.

Chairman Caviglia confirmed that the commission has the authority to convert a dream tag into a heritage tag, although he expressed his opinion that bear tags are not typically highly sought-after in other states.

Commissioner Walter asked Commissioner Kiel to reiterate his suggestions on the harvest limits.

Commissioner Kiel restated his proposal, which would increase the tags for specific unit groups while keeping the quotas the same. The suggested tag allocations were 10 tags for unit groups 192, 194, 195, and 196, 12 tags for unit groups 201, 202, 204, and 206, and 15 tags for unit groups 291 and 203, totaling 37 tags.

Chairman Caviglia asked if Commissioner Kiel intended to leave the quotas unchanged. Commissioner Kiel confirmed that was the intention.

Chairman Caviglia raised a concern about the increase in the total potential harvest to 37 from the current 20 and asked the department if it would pose a biological impact.

Staff Specialist Jackson responded that based on a cautious estimate of 418 bears, the proposed harvest of 37 tags would amount to just under 9% of the population and would not cause any biological impact.

Commissioner East clarified that the 37 tags would include both female and male bears.

Commissioner Kiel confirmed that once the harvest limit for a particular unit group is reached, that unit would close, regardless of the gender of the harvested bears.

Commissioner East expressed support for Chairman Caviglia's proposal to drop the female harvest limits and unit group harvest limits while reducing the total quota to match the number of tags, resulting in a total quota of 26.

Chairman Caviglia confirmed the proposal.

Commissioner Rogers expressed his concern about the optics of increasing the tags from 20 to 37 or 26 to 37, even though there may be no significant biological impact. He voiced support for Chairman Caviglia's recommendation of setting the quota at 26 and matching it with the number of tags.

Staff Specialist Jackson pointed out that with 26 viable bear tags and a 35% harvest success rate, the number of harvested bears would be around 9.1, which is already a small sample size. He emphasized the challenge of using these parameters with a reduced harvest compared to previous years.

Chairman Caviglia suggested the possibility of increasing the harvest limit but aligning the quota with the tag numbers, potentially using higher tag numbers such as 10, 10, and 12, and adjusting the quota accordingly.

Field Biologist Carl Lackey from the Department of Wildlife clarified that if the harvest limit is increased while the number of tags and opportunities to hunt are decreased, there will be a substantial reduction in the number of bears harvested annually. He acknowledged that if reducing the bear harvest is the goal, it could work.

Chairman Caviglia added that adjusting the tag numbers and quotas could potentially lead to a gradual increase in tag numbers until reaching the desired harvest level.

Commissioner McNinch highlighted the struggle in finding a satisfactory solution given the small percentage of the population involved in bear hunting. He referred to a survey showing that only 13% of respondents approved of the hunt, indicating a significant social concern. He emphasized the importance of considering the social aspects alongside the biological factors and expressed his ongoing focus on the social impact of hunting decisions.

Vice Chair Rogers expressed his agreement with Commissioner McNinch's viewpoint that the hunt is a social issue. He suggested that setting the quotas to mirror the harvest group limit could serve as a potential compromise, considering the reduced number of hunters and the possibility of not reaching the overall limit.

Commissioner McNinch shared his concerns about the perception and social aspects of the bear hunt. He mentioned hearing from people who feel unheard and emphasized his desire not to be someone who takes small steps until the hunt is entirely gone. He expressed his struggle in deciding whether to oppose the hunt due to its lack of popularity or be part of the process in shaping its direction.



Commissioner East presented the option of either setting the tags at 26 or 37 and noted the potential harvest numbers at a 35% success rate: 12 bears for 37 tags and 9 bears for 26 tags. Commissioner East expressed openness to either option if the goal is to reduce the number of bears harvested.

Chairman Caviglia expressed his willingness to consider the 37-tag option without a female harvest limit.

Commissioner Walther supported the original proposal by Commissioner East, followed by Commissioner Kiel's proposal, to increase the overall tags to 37. He highlighted the social concerns associated with the hunt and the previous efforts to address them through female quotas. He expressed reservations about completely eliminating the female harvest limit, considering the sensitivity of the hunt.

Commissioner McNinch sought clarification on Commissioner East's proposal.

Commissioner East clarified that she was not proposing a zero sow harvest but was exploring the appetite for either raising the sow harvest limit or removing the cap altogether.

Commissioner McNinch raised a question regarding a scenario with zero sow take and what would happen if a sow were taken despite the restriction.

Commissioner East confirmed she was not suggesting a zero sow take.

Vice Chair Rogers shared his thoughts on the biological insignificance of the difference between a 26 and 37 harvest limit in terms of bear numbers. However, he expressed concern about the optics and social implications of increasing the tags by 11.

**COMMISSIONER KIEL MADE A MOTION TO APPROVE COMMISSION REGULATION 23-05, THE 2023 BLACK BEAR QUOTAS AND HARVEST LIMITS AS PRESENTED WITH THE FOLLOWING CHANGES: FOR UNITS GROUPS 192, 194, 195, AND 196, A HARVEST LIMIT OF 10. FOR UNIT GROUP 201, 202, 204, AND 206, A HARVEST LIMIT OF 12. FOR UNIT GROUP 291, AND 203 A HARVEST LIMIT OF 15. KEEPING THE UNIT GROUP FEMALE HARVEST LIMITS IN THOSE THREE UNITS, INCREASE THOSE TO FIVE, FOUR, AND FIVE AND SET THE QUOTAS FOR RESIDENTS AT 30 AND NON-RESIDENTS AT 7. SECONDED BY CHAIRMAN CAVIGLIA. MOTION PASSED 7-1. COMMISSIONER BARNES WAS ABSENT.**

Commissioner McNinch expressed his appreciation for the opportunity to vote for the dream tag in the future.

*Chairman Caviglia recessed at 10:12 am.*

*Chairman Caviglia reconvened at 10:30 am.*

**B.\* Commission Regulation 23-14, Big Game Quotas for the 2023-2024 Season – Wildlife Staff Specialists Mike Cox, Cody Schroeder, and Cody McKee – For Possible Action**

The Commission will consider and may take action to approve regulations for the numbers of tags to be issued for mule deer, pronghorn antelope, elk, bighorn sheep, and mountain goats for the 2023 - 2024 season.

Chairman Caviglia introduced Commission Regulation 23-14, Big game Quotas for the 2023-2024 Season. He announced that they would discuss each species individually, starting with Antelope, and noted that Staff Specialist Schroeder would be joining the meeting remotely via Zoom.

Wildlife Staff Specialist Schroeder provided an overview of the Pronghorn herds, stating that overall, they were in relatively good condition. A link to the full presentation can be found below:

<https://www.ndow.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/01/2023-Nevada-Statewide-Mule-Deer-and-Antelope-Quota-Recs-COMMISSION-COPY.pdf>

Staff Specialist Schroeder proceeded to present the recommendations for Antelope quotas, categorized by weapon class and prioritized based on horn length. The quotas applied to resident hunters, with a 90-10 percentage breakdown for Antelope as closely as possible. He also brought attention to some typos found in the season dates provided in the support material, specifically related to Muzzleloader seasons for certain units. Staff Specialist Schroeder clarified the correct dates and apologized for the oversight, ensuring that the updated quota sheet reflected the necessary corrections. Following the presentation, Staff Specialist Schroeder invited questions from the commissioners.

Commissioner East raised questions regarding the quota rationale, specifically inquiring about the confidence level of winter survival from 2022 to 2023.

Staff Specialist Schroeder explained that Antelope populations are more resilient and adaptable compared to mule deer. He noted that Antelope exhibit nomadic behavior and tend to occupy low valleys with lower snow levels. Staff Specialist Schroeder also highlighted that although elevated mortality rates have been observed in regions heavily affected by cold temperatures and snow, no evidence of large-scale mortality or mass die-offs has been found. He further mentioned that higher mortality rates have been noticed in specific units, such as Huntington Valley (065) and Ruby Valley, leading to adjustments in population estimates for those units.

Commissioner East raised a question regarding the management approach for quotas compared to the population and carrying capacity. Staff Specialist Schroeder clarified that the quota recommendations primarily apply to bucks and are not directly linked to carrying capacity. However, he explained that doe harvests have increased in some areas due to high fawn counts and the need to maintain populations within reasonable limits relative to the available habitat. Managing doe populations also helps alleviate pressure on agricultural lands.

Vice Chair Rogers sought information on the total number of tags issued for 2022.

Staff Specialist Schroeder promptly provided the data, stating that there were 2,183 tags for "horns longer than years" and 973 tags for "shorter than years," resulting in a total of 3,156 tags issued for 2022.

Chairman Caviglia invited CAB representatives to share their recommendations.

Steve Robinson representing Washoe CABMW, expressed overall satisfaction with the recommendations but raised concerns regarding the Primitive Weapons category. He believed that the success-to-demand ratios artificially lowered the tag numbers and proposed increasing the tags for specific hunts and units. Robinson suggested specific adjustments to increase the tag numbers in muzzleloader hunt 2171 and archery hunt 2161 for various units. He emphasized that these changes would provide hunters with more opportunities without significantly impacting the population.

*No public comment*

Chairman Caviglia then directed the discussion back to Cody, seeking his thoughts on the Washoe CAB's recommendations and any concerns he might have.

Staff Specialist Schroeder noted that the Department's recommendations were based on standard demand success formulas. Additionally, he mentioned that there was another CAB recommendation from Esmeralda County, specifically regarding unit 2151, proposing an increase in the number of tags. Staff Specialist Schroeder indicated that he had no concerns regarding the CAB recommendations and clarified that the dates on the spreadsheet for units 041 and 043 were correct, despite a typo in the support material. He also stated that the Primitive Weapons tags' increase, as suggested by Mr. Robinson, would likely have minimal biological impact due to low success rates.

Chairman Caviglia sought further clarification from Cody regarding the specific hunt associated with the highlighted dates mentioned earlier.

Staff Specialist Schroeder confirmed that the highlighted dates referred to the resident Muzzleloader 2171 hunt. He also noted that there were two non-resident hunts, Muzzleloader 2271, which did not have any proposed changes to their quotas.

Chairman Caviglia inquired if there were any additional questions for Cody.

**COMMISSIONER KIEL MADE A MOTION TO APPROVE COMMISSION REGULATION 23-14, 2023 BIG GAME QUOTA RECOMMENDATIONS, RESPECTIVE TO ANTELOPE HUNTS:**

**RESIDENT ANTELOPE ANY LEGAL WEAPON HUNT 2151 IN UNIT 211-213 INCREASING THE QUOTA FROM FIVE TO SEVEN. NONRESIDENT ANTELOPE HORNS LONGER THAN EARS ANY LEGAL WEAPON 2251 AS PRESENTED. RESIDENT ANTELOPE HORNS LONGER THAN EARS MUZZLELOADER HUNT 2171, UNIT 012 AND 014 INCREASING THE QUOTAS FROM TWO TO FIVE, IN UNIT 015 INCREASING FROM SIX TO TEN, IN UNIT 021 AND 022 INCREASING FROM SIX TO TEN, AND IN UNIT 033 INCREASING FROM ONE TO TWO. WITH THE NOTED DATE CHANGES IN UNITS 041, 042, 043-046, 141, 143, AND 151-156 TO AUGUST 15<sup>TH</sup> – AUGUST 22<sup>ND</sup>. NONRESIDENT MUZZELLOADER HUNT 2271 AS PRESENTED WITH THE SAME DATE CHANGES FOR UNIT 043-046 AND UNIT 111-114. RESIDENT ANTELOPE ARCHERY HUNT 2161 AS PRESENTED WITH THE FOLLOWING CHANGES TO HUNT UNIT 011 THE QUOTA INCREASING FROM TWO TO FIVE AND UNIT 015 INCREASING FROM EIGHT TO FIFTEEN AND UNIT 021 AND 022 INCREASEING FROM TWO TO FIVE AND UNIT 033 INCREASING FROM THREE TO FOUR.**

**NON RESIDENT ANTELOPE HORNS LONGER THAN EARS HUNT 2261 AS PRESENTED.**

**RESIDENT ANTELOPE HORNS SHORTER THAN EARS ANY LEGAL WEAPON HUNT 2181 AS PRESENTED.**

**SECONDED BY VICE CHAIR ROGERS. THE MOTION PASSED 8-0. COMMISSIONER BARNES WAS ABSENT.**

Chairman Caviglia announced the transition to discuss Elk, introducing Wildlife Staff Specialist Cody McKee.

Staff Specialist McKee provided an overview of the Elk herd status, harvest trends, and the department's recommendations for Elk quotas in 2023.

A link to the full presentation can be found below:

Commissioner East inquired about the early, mid, and late hunt recommendation form for unit 161-164.

Staff Specialist McKee addressed Commissioner East's question about the discrepancy in Hunt units 161-164. He explained that the early season for the any legal weapon hunt was closed, so zero tags were indicated on the Harvest recommendation form. However, they included the early option to provide historical context, and the mid and late options now refer to the early and late rifle seasons for this year. The mid is the new early, and the late is the new late, effectively shifting the early season to the mid season.

Commissioner Rogers inquired about the condition of the elk herds going into the winter, considering the drought conditions, and asked for thoughts on the spring surveys.

Staff Specialist McKee responded that elk is actually a bright spot this year despite the poor range conditions and severe winter. He mentioned that the population objectives for elk are based on social carrying capacities, which keep the numbers down and result in fewer elk competing for resources on the landscape. Additionally, timely rains last summer and during the monsoon season provided elk with resources before winter, helping them enter the season on a higher nutritional plane. While some impacts may have occurred, the March survey data showed an elevated calf ratio, and there may be some higher mortality among ungulates coming out of hard winters in April and May. However, the department is not overly concerned and made adjustments in population models to account for survival and mitigate potential issues. Staff Specialist McKee highlighted that the department approached this quota season conservatively, making significant cuts in quotas for many species except for elk. These reductions were made under a worst-case scenario framework, and it's possible that the actual situation may not be as severe as anticipated. If it turns out that quotas were excessively reduced, they may need to consider increasing quotas next year. He expressed hope that the situation won't be as severe as predicted.

Chairman Caviglia asked if there were any additional questions for Staff Specialist McKee and if they should quickly go through the proposed quotas.

Vice Chair Rogers had a question about Unit Group 111-115, specifically regarding the reduced estimated population but an increase in spike tags and antlerless tags. He wanted to understand the thought process behind this, considering the population decline.

Staff Specialist McKee responded that for Unit Group 111-115, fewer bull tags were being offered this year due to a noted population decline, likely influenced by last year's low calf ratio. The antlerless and bull harvest quotas were decreased to align with population objectives, with slight reductions in bull quotas considering potential factors affecting survival and population tracking. McKee also highlighted positive indicators such as success rates, 50-inch main beams, and hunter satisfaction.

*No CABMW comment*

*No public comment*

Chairman Caviglia mentioned that they received some alternate recommendations from Lincoln County and White Pine County, suggesting discussing them.

Staff Specialist McKee addressed the White Pine County recommendations, noting that they traditionally shifted tags from rifle to muzzleloader hunts due to lower demand. This resulted in a decrease in tags. While he wasn't too concerned about tag swapping, he expressed a broader concern with White Pine

County's recommendations, which suggested a reduction of 128 tags (7 percent) between spike and bull hunts, which he considered significant.

Chairman Caviglia acknowledged the concerns expressed by Lincoln County and White Pine County regarding unit groups 221-223. Lincoln County wanted to shift tags from any legal weapon hunts to muzzleloader hunts, following White Pine's lead. However, White Pine County preferred reducing the number of tags without shifting as many. Both counties shared a general concern about these unit groups.

Staff Specialist McKee emphasized that the recommended increases in unit groups 111-115 were based on the harvest data, specifically high success rates and impressive metrics for 50-inch or greater main beams in rifle hunts. He appreciated the comments from Lincoln and White Pine counties regarding those herds.

Chairman Caviglia then asked the commission for their preference. Should they consider accommodating White Pine County's recommendations or stick with the department's proposed quotas?

Commissioner East suggested adding five tags to the muzzleloader hunt in unit groups 111-115 rather than shifting tags around.

Chairman Caviglia clarified that White Pine County's proposal involved cutting tags overall and transferring a portion of that reduction to the muzzleloader season.

Commissioner East reiterated her suggestion of simply adding five tags instead of moving them.

Staff Specialist McKee confirmed that adding five muzzleloader tags would not have a negative impact and would provide reasonable opportunities for hunters. He expressed optimism about the anticipated range conditions and expected antler growth for bulls this year, believing it would be a great year for hunters in the state. He believed the addition of a few muzzleloader tags to the quota would still remain within a biologically sustainable limit and result in excellent harvest metrics.

Chairman Caviglia shared his understanding of White Pine County's thought process, acknowledging that he couldn't speak for them directly. He mentioned that they believed shifting tags to the muzzleloader hunts with lower success rates could potentially save a few Bulls. However, based on the information he had gathered, it might no longer be the case. Chairman Caviglia expressed his partial support for their recommendations but suggested considering a tag swap instead. This would provide additional opportunity for primitive weapon hunts without reducing the quota as requested. He offered to walk through the details if needed.

Staff Specialist McKee referred to the spreadsheet provided by White Pine County CABMW and shared their recommendations for the resident early and late any legal weapon bull seasons. The following quotas were proposed: in unit groups 104, 108, and 121 early and late, a reduction from 50 to 40 tags for each season; in unit groups 108, 131, and 132 early season, a decrease from 35 to 30 tags; in unit groups 111-115 early and late, a reduction from 70 to 60 tags for the early season and from 75 to 60 tags for the late season, resulting in a total reduction of 25 tags; and in unit groups 221-223 early and late rifle seasons, a proposed decrease from 80 to 60 tags for both seasons. The five tags being reduced in the aforementioned unit groups would be added directly to the muzzleloader season.

Chairman Caviglia raised some questions based on the proposed changes. For unit groups 104, 108, and 121, where a 20-tag reduction was suggested, he questioned whether all 20 tags should be allocated to the muzzleloader season, increasing it to 30. Similarly, for unit groups 108, 131, and 132, with a proposed 25-tag reduction, he wondered if the muzzleloader season should be raised to 32. Unit groups 221-223 faced a significant reduction of 40 tags, and Chairman Caviglia noted that it seemed White Pine

County wanted to cut tags rather than shift them. He sought input on whether all the reduced tags should be moved to the muzzleloader season.

Commissioner East suggested a split allocation of the reduced tags.

Chairman Caviglia proposed adding 20 tags to each season in unit groups 104, 108, and 121, making it 70 for any legal weapon and 27 for muzzleloader. He also raised the concern of not neglecting the archery tags and suggested allocating some tags for archery hunters.

Vice Chair Rogers supported Chairman Caviglia's suggestion and proposed a 60-60 cut in unit group 221, adding 20 tags to both the muzzleloader and archery seasons, resulting in 27 tags for muzzleloader and 30 tags for archery.

Chairman Caviglia then turned to Cody, seeking his thoughts.

Staff Specialist McKee presented the issue of archery tags being overlooked in the process and expressed the desire to maintain the total number of tags. He suggested allocating 20 of the proposed 25-tag cut from the rifle seasons in Area 11 to the muzzleloader season and allocating five to the archery season.

Chairman Caviglia agreed with the proposal for unit groups 111-115 to have 27 tags for muzzleloader and 30 tags for archery.

Staff Specialist McKee discussed the significant increase in muzzleloader tags for unit groups 104, 108, and 121, suggesting the possibility of moving some of those tags to the archery season.

Chairman Caviglia suggested to allocate 25 tags for muzzleloader and add five more to the archery season. Next he discussed unit groups 221-223, allocating 22 tags for muzzleloader and 35 tags for archery, with five tags being moved from muzzleloader to archery. He moved on to the spike hunt 4651 expressing personal satisfaction with the current arrangement. No changes were proposed for that hunt.

Staff Specialist McKee mentioned a recommendation to reduce the tags for unit group 113 late, resident antlerless hunt, from 25 to 10 tags.

Chairman Caviglia asked for Staff Specialist McKee's thoughts.

Staff Specialist McKee stated he was not concerned with that recommendation. Next, he informed the commission about the implications for non-resident quotas and offered to make the necessary adjustments based on their direction.

Commissioner East inquired about Lincoln County's input.

Chairman Caviglia responded that their only comment pertained to unit groups 221-223.

Commissioner East sought clarification on whether any action was taken regarding Lincoln County's recommendation.

Chairman Caviglia explained that while they followed White Pine County's logic, Lincoln County had a similar rationale with different numbers. He invited further questions or comments for Staff Specialist McKee. Chairman Caviglia then summarized the proposed changes based on the discussion.

Staff Specialist McKee highlighted the need to address the non-resident quotas.

Chairman Caviglia sought the commission's preference on whether to go through the details or trust him to make the appropriate changes and present them later.

Commissioner Kiel expressed agreement with providing direction to Staff Specialist McKee.

Chairman Caviglia opened the floor for a motion.

**VICE CHAIR ROGERS MADE A MOTION TO APPROVE COMMISSION REGULATION 23-14, 2023 BIG GAME QUOTA RECOMMENDATIONS, RESPECTIVE TO ELK HUNTS:**

**RESIDENT ELK ANTLERED ANY LEGAL WEAPON DEPREDATION HUNT 4102 AS PRESENTED. RESIDENT ELK ANTLERED ANY LEGAL WEAPON HUNT 4151 WITH THE FOLLOWING CHANGES: UNIT GROUPS 104, 108, 121 EARLY FROM 50 TO 40 TAGS. UNIT 104, 108, 121 LATE, FROM 50 TO 40 TAGS. UNIT 108, 131, 132 EARLY FROM 35 TO 30 TAGS. UNIT 111-115 EARLY FROM 70 TO 60 TAGS. UNIT 111-115 LATE FROM 75 TO 60 TAGS. UNIT 221-223 EARLY FROM 80 TO 70 TAGS. UNIT 221-223 LATE FROM 80 TO 70 TAGS. NONRESIDENT ELK ANTLERED ANY LEGAL WEAPON HUNT 4251 AS PRESENTED. RESIDENT ELK ANTLERED MUZZLELOADER HUNT 4156 WITH THE FOLLOWING CHANGES: UNIT 104, 108, 121 FROM 10 TO 25 TAGS. UNIT 108, 131, 132 FROM FOUR TO NINE TAGS. UNIT 111-115 FROM SEVEN TO 27 TAGS. UNIT 221-223 FROM SEVEN TO 22 TAGS. NONRESIDENT ELK ANTLERED MUZZLELOADER HUNT 4256 AS PRESENTED. RESIDENT ELK ANTLERED ARCHERY HUNT 4161 WITH THE FOLLOWING CHANGES: UNIT 104, 108, 121 FROM 14 TO 19. UNIT 111-115 FROM 25 TO 30 TAGS. UNIT 221-223 FROM 30 TO 35 TAGS. NONRESIDENT ELK ARCHERY HUNT 4261 AS PRESENTED. RESIDENT ELK SPIKE ANY LEGAL WEAPON HUNT 4251 AS PRESENTED. RESIDENT ELK ANTLERLESS ANY LEGAL WEAPON HUNT 4181 WITH THE FOLLOWING CHANGES: UNIT 113 LATE FROM 25 TO 10 TAGS. NONRESIDENT ELK ANTLERLESS ANY LEGAL WEAPON HUNT 4281 AS PRESENTED. RESIDENT ELK ANTLERLESS MUZZLELOADER HUNT 4176 AS PRESENTED. NONRESIDENT ELK ANTLERLESS MUZZLELOADER HUNT 4276 AS PRESENTED. RESIDENT ELK ANTLERLESS ARCHERY HUNT 4111 AS PRESENTED. NONRESIDENT ELK ANTLERLESS ARCHERY HUNT 4211 AS PRESENTED. RESIDENT ELK ANTLERLESS ANY LEGAL WEAPON HUNT 4107 AS PRESENTED. WITH THE FOLLOWING NOTE: REGARDING NONRESIDENT HUNTS TO ALLOW STAFF SPECIALIST MCKEE TO MAKE CORRESPONDING CHANGES IN LINE WITH THE COMMISSION'S DIRECTION. SECONDED BY COMMISSIONER EAST. MOTION PASSED 8-0. COMMISSIONER BARNES WAS ABSENT.**

Mike Cox, Game Division Wildlife Staff Specialist, provided an in-depth overview of the current state of Bighorn Sheep populations and the concerning decline observed in recent years.

A link to the full presentation can be found below:

<https://www.ndow.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/01/2022-2023-Bighorn-and-Mtn-Goat-Harv-Pop-Status-Commish-Mtg-low-res.pdf>

Staff Specialist Cox proceeded to narrate a video involving the Rocky Mountain bighorn sheep herd in the Ruby Mountains. The video showcased a hunt in the Rubies, where the hunter was successful in harvesting a ram. Accompanied by a lifelong friend from Elko, the hunt was a memorable experience and a testament to the recovery of the herd and the opportunity provided to a dedicated military member. Returning to the discussion on quotas, attention was drawn to the summary of the county advisory boards, which did not present any alternative recommendations. Participants were invited to ask questions about the presentation or any specific unit group.

Chairman Caviglia posed a question to Staff Specialist Cox regarding the criteria for the management hunt in the Toiyabe range. He recalled previous discussions on the topic and inquired about the finalization of the criteria.

Staff Specialist Cox explained the recommendation was for a flat eight tags, with the possibility of supporting four rams. Staff Specialist Cox also emphasized the importance of hunters targeting mature rams and not harvesting young ones. He expressed hope that hunters would be better prepared for the hunt and give their best effort.

Chairman Caviglia noted a discrepancy between the eight tags mentioned by Mike and the document that indicated four tags.

Staff Specialist Cox apologized for the confusion and confirmed the recommendation for eight tags.

Chairman Caviglia asked if there were any further questions for Mike.

Vice Chair Rogers took the opportunity to inquire about the presence of a California Bighorn ewe hunt in the previous year.

Staff Specialist Cox clarified that there was no California Bighorn ewe hunt last year and mentioned that it had been a few years since such a hunt took place.

Vice Chair Rogers then shifted the focus to the desert bighorn and inquired about Staff Specialist Cox's thoughts on the possibility of an ewe hunt for this species, considering the challenges and significant declines observed.

Staff Specialist Cox noted that not all herds experienced significant losses due to factors such as winter kill, disease, and drought. The concern was raised regarding Unit 161, Mount Jefferson, as the population approached the current carrying capacity objective for the summer range. The herd in this unit remained unaffected by disease, it was determined that a few more animals needed to be removed to reach the population objective. The survey results for the Muddy Mountains were better than initially anticipated.

*No CABMW comment*

Kelly Dean representing the Nevada Bow Hunters Association expressed gratitude for the opportunity to participate in past archery hunts and highlighted the high success rate and enthusiasm among their group members for these exclusive tags.

Mel Belding addressed the issue of *Mycoplasma ovipneumoniae*, emphasizing personal experiences and losses associated with the disease. He advocated for closing Unit 014 due to the pressure on the herd and suggested increasing the quota for Unit 012 to two.

Chairman Caviglia inquired about any additional public comments in Reno specifically related to Bighorn sheep and mountain goats. With no further comments received, he redirected the discussion back to the commission.

Commissioner East sought clarification regarding the recommended quota for California Bighorn sheep in Units 012 and 014. Mr. Belding's statement regarding a deceased sheep raised confusion.

Staff Specialist Mike Cox confirmed that there is an estimated population of eight mature rams between Units 012 and 014. While this is not a definitive count, it suggests the opportunity to harvest mature rams in these units. However, the presence of lions has been a concern, and the last collared ram in the Granites was killed a few months ago, possibly alluding to Mr. Belding's comment.



Chairman Caviglia asked for further clarification regarding the distribution of the eight mature rams, whether they were primarily in Unit 012 or spread across both units.

Staff Specialist Cox responded that the majority of the rams are likely in Unit 012, but sightings can occur on either side of Leadville Canyon, the main thoroughfare in the area. He emphasized that the hunt in these units would be challenging and rugged. The decision to set the quota at one tag was based on the limited support the area could provide.

Chairman Caviglia inquired about efforts to address predator control when a mortality event occurs, specifically mentioning the eight-year-old ram.

Staff Specialist Cox acknowledged ongoing efforts to work with Wildlife Services, but the availability of houndsmen has been a limiting factor. Additionally, a permit is required for Wildlife Services contractors to operate in the Sheldon area. The department aims to demonstrate the need for predator management and hopes to establish reasonable measures, as previously done at Heart Mountain, to maintain Bighorn herds at a sustainable level. He mentioned the current population is not deemed capable of sustaining high lion predation.

Chairman Caviglia raised concerns about the snowstorms' impact on the Bighorn sheep and emphasized the criticality of preserving the healthy ewes. He inquired about active measures being taken to address predators in the area.

Staff Specialist Cox reported that coordinated efforts between Matt Jeffress, Ed Partee, Wildlife Services, and a contractor in the Santa Rosas have resulted in the removal of several lions. However, an essential step remaining in the test and remove efforts is to capture lambs and test them for mycoplasma ovipneumoniae. If the tested lambs come back negative they would be able to jump-start the herd's recovery.

Chairman Caviglia invited the attendees to ask any additional questions or provide comments.

Commissioner Walther inquired about the possibility of accommodating Mel's request, which involved issuing two tags in Unit 012 and closing Unit 014. He sought clarification on whether such action could be taken during the current hearing.

Chairman Caviglia stated that the only way to close the unit would be an emergency closure.

DAG Burkett noted that an emergency closure of Unit 014 would require consideration based on the best available scientific evidence, as mandated by the applicable statute.

Chairman Caviglia asked Staff Specialist Cox if an emergency closure would be warranted.

Staff Specialist Cox responded that he did not believe an emergency closure of Unit 014 was warranted at present.

Chairman Caviglia noted the lack of need for an emergency closure in Unit 014 at the current time, stating that the discussion regarding potential closure could be considered during next year's season setting process.

Commissioner McNinch expressed his understanding of the challenges associated with hunting in Unit 014, sharing his personal experience with a friend who had the tag in the past. He acknowledged that

people make choices when applying for hunts and emphasized that success is not guaranteed. He believed that leaving Unit 014 open was appropriate, as the difficulty of the hunt was widely known.

**VICE CHAIR ROGERS MADE A MOTION TO APPROVE COMMISSION REGULATION 23-14, 2023 BIG GAME QUOTA RECOMMENDATIONS, RESPECTIVE TO BIGHORN SHEEP AND MOUNTAIN GOAT HUNTS:**

**RESIDENT NELSON DESERT BIGHORN SHEEP ANY RAM ANY LEGAL WEAPON HUNT 3151 AS PRESENTED. NONRESIDENT NELSON DESERT BIGHORN SHEEP ANY RAM ANY LEGAL WEAPON HUNT 3251 AS PRESENTED. RESIDENT NELSON DESERT BIGHORN SHEEP ANY RAM ARCHERY HUNT 3161 AS PRESENTED. NONRESIDENT NELSON DESERT BIGHORN SHEEP ANY RAM ARCHERY HUNT 3261 AS PRESENTED. RESIDENT NELSON DESERT BIGHORN SHEEP MANAGEMENT RAM ONE HORN ANY LEGAL WEAPON HUNT 3171 AS PRESENTED. RESIDENT NELSON DESERT BIGHORN SHEEP ANY RAM MANAGEMENT RAM ACCESS LIMITED ANY LEGAL WEAPON HUNT 3172 AS PRESENTED. RESIDENT NELSON DESERT BIGHORN SHEEP ANY EWE ANY LEGAL WEAPON HUNT 3181 AS PRESENTED. NONRESIDENT NELSON DESERT BIGHORN SHEEP ANY EWE ANY LEGAL WEAPON HUNT 3281 AS PRESENTED. RESIDENT CALIFORNIA BIGHORN SHEEP ANY RAM ANY LEGAL WEAPON HUNT 8151 AS PRESENTED. NONRESIDENT CALIFORNIA BIGHORN SHEEP ANY RAM ANY LEGAL WEAPON HUNT 8251 AS PRESENTED. RESIDENT ROCKY MOUNTAIN BIGHORN SHEEP ANY RAM ANY LEGAL WEAPON HUNT 9151 AS PRESENTED. RESIDENT MOUNTAIN GOAT ANY GOAT ANY LEGAL WEAPON HUNT 7151 AS PRESENTED. NONRESIDENT MOUNTAIN GOAT ANY GOAT ANY LEGAL WEAPON HUNT 7251 AS PRESENTED. SECONDED BY COMMISSIONER EAST. MOTION PASSED 8-0. COMMISSIONER BARNES WAS ABSENT.**

*Chairman Caviglia recessed for lunch at 12:32pm.*

*Chairman Caviglia reconvened at 1:52pm.*

Chairman Caviglia began the discussion by introducing Commission Regulation 23-14, big game quotas for the 2023-2024 season, specifically concerning mule deer.

Staff Specialist Schroeder was present on Zoom to provide an overview of the harvest recommendations, population trends, and harvest metrics related to mule deer.

A link to the full presentation can be found below:

<https://www.ndow.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/01/2023-Nevada-Statewide-Mule-Deer-and-Antelope-Quota-Recs-COMMISSION-COPY.pdf>

Commissioner McNinch stated his concern about the reduction in youth tags.

Deputy Director Mike Scott informed the committee that the elimination of the ability for juniors to harvest either a doe or a buck resulted in a significant reduction of approximately 300 tags. This reduction includes the decision to maintain doe hunts in areas six, seven, and ten. If these areas were included, the reduction would have been around 260 tags.

Commissioner McNinch raised concerns about the 42.8% reduction in youth tags, emphasizing the importance of considering the impact on youth participation. He shared his experiences and insights from attending the WAFWA conference, highlighting the strong emphasis on R3 initiatives (recruitment,

retention, and reactivation) for recruiting kids. He expressed his belief that youth should not be disproportionately affected and stressed the importance of focusing on recruitment efforts.

Chairman Caviglia mentioned that the TAAC Committee had previously discussed the issue of demand and success rates, aligning them with the preferences of the public applying for tags. He suggested revisiting this discussion in light of the concerns raised.

Deputy Director Scott explained that the current allocation of tags is based on the first choice applicants. However, if all five choices are taken into account, the percentages slightly shift, with approximately 61% for any legal weapon, 6% for archery, and 8% for muzzleloader.

Chairman Caviglia acknowledged the 3% difference in the overall impact when considering all five choices of applicants. He expressed openness to revisiting the discussion on demand and success rates, particularly for archery hunters, whose tag allocation can be influenced by their success ratio.

Commissioner McNinch clarified that his concerns were not solely focused on demand and success factors. He expressed a broader perspective, noting that there was a time when priority was given to kids, and many tags were allocated to ensure that every child who applied received one. However, with a significant increase in applicants, solely allocating tags based on youth applications is no longer practical. He highlighted the removal of antlerless tags from youth hunts as a step in the opposite direction, reducing opportunities for youth. He emphasized the need to find a balance and ensure tags are available for everyone to avoid negative impacts on recruitment and the future number of sportsmen.

Chairman Caviglia called for questions regarding Staff Specialist Schroeder's presentation.

Commissioner Kiel sought clarification on how to proceed with the discussion, suggesting whether to address the quotas in separate segments or as a comprehensive whole.

Chairman Caviglia proposed approaching the discussion comprehensively, considering all the quotas together. He mentioned the possibility of moving tags from any legal weapon hunts to the junior category, suggesting a comprehensive discussion would be appropriate.

Staff Specialist Schroeder acknowledged the alternative recommendations provided by the CAB and noted the issue of deferred tags from the previous year. He explained efforts made to accommodate deferred tags due to medical or military reasons but mentioned one missed tag (the 021 muzzleloader tag) that was already dedicated to someone and not truly available. Cody also highlighted the case of the non-resident tag unit 121, where one additional tag was added to provide a reasonable chance in the draw.

Chairman Caviglia proposed hearing from the CABs before proceeding with Cody's presentation. He suggested first hearing comments from the CABs in Washoe and Reno and then going through their recommendations.

Jim Cooney representing Elko CABMW, shared the discussions held within their CAB. Their primary focus was on moving approximately 10% of available archery tags in areas 6, 7, and 10 to the muzzleloader hunt. He also mentioned a decrease in doe tags in Area 10 to 15 tags and highlighted that their previous recommendation to shut down doe seasons for two years had changed after discussions with biologists. Their current suggestion was to move 10% of the tags from archery to muzzleloader hunts in areas 6, 7, and 10.

Ted McElvain, representing Lander County CABMW, reported on their discussions regarding significant increases in tags. He requested a 5% increase across the board based on the 2022 numbers and

advocated for maintaining the current level of junior tags, as there was a suggestion to reduce them by 90 tags this year. Lander County proposed using the 2022 numbers and increasing them by 5% for any legal weapon tags, resulting in 215 tags instead of the Department recommendation of 280.

Steve Robinson, representing Washoe CAB, regarding primitive weapons he suggested keeping it similar to last year for the same reasons as the antelope. For the any legal weapon, they recommended reducing it from 10 to 8 tags, citing a low success rate and advocating for a more conservative approach.

Joe Crim, representing Pershing CAB, expressed his satisfaction with the department's response to their longstanding request for a reduction in tags on the eastern side of Pershing County. They were finally able to split unit 045 from the rest of the unit to achieve a better count, as it had the largest deer population impacting other units. Joe expressed contentment with the current situation and did not seek any changes.

Glenn Bunch, representing Mineral County CABMW, acknowledged the purpose behind combining the youth hunt to engage them as future hunters. However, he believed it was time to address the doe populations. He requested an increase of five tags, from 40 to 45, for hunt 1331 and an increase from five to seven tags for the Muzzleloader hunt in units 202, 205, 208. He also suggested considering a ten tag increase for the early season in units 202, 205, 208 and raising the late season tags from five to ten to utilize the remaining tags available. This approach aimed to maintain the existing numbers.

Tony Yeldon, representing Humboldt County CABMW, expressed support for the Department's recommendations for mule deer quotas, except for unit 035. He highlighted the unit's long-standing struggle with declining population and poor hunt quality. The success rate for the any legal weapon hunt has consistently dropped, reaching 28% in the past year, and the spring survey numbers are low. As a result, the CABMW recommended maintaining the quota at last year's level instead of increasing it as proposed. Yeldon emphasized that the local biologist also agreed with Humboldt County CAB's recommendation.

Kelly Dean, representing the Nevada Bow Hunters Association, expressed concern about the declining number of archery tags in Northwest Nevada. Dean argued against cutting archery tags without proper justification, as it would double the success rate from 20% to 40%. They opposed transferring the tags to muzzleloaders and requested careful consideration of the impact such changes would have.

Chairman Caviglia returned to the commission and requested Staff Specialist Schroeder to provide his thoughts on the CAB recommendations.

Staff Specialist Schroeder stated that he had notes on most of the CAB recommendations but was uncertain about a few and may have missed others. He specifically mentioned Storey County, Carson City, Clark, and Douglas County as the ones he had in his notes. Chairman Caviglia acknowledged that they received the Action Report from Douglas County and suggested referring to it for their input.

Staff Specialist Schroeder provided a summary of the recommendations from various counties. Carson City proposed increasing the late archery tag allocation in unit 192 for residents, as well as increasing the resident muzzleloader tag allocation for youth in units 194-196. They also suggested increasing the youth archery tag allocation and archery tag allocation in unit 195, along with increasing the muzzleloader tag allocation for unit 195. Clark County's recommendation was to set the doe hunt quotas in areas six, seven, and ten to be one. Douglas County's recommendation was to maintain the mule deer tag allocations in unit 291 the same as last season. Lincoln County proposed changes in hunt 1331 unit 231, including reducing the any legal weapon quota, increasing the junior quota, and maintaining the non-resident quota. Storey County's recommendation was specific to unit 195, urging the use of NDOW's recommendations. Staff Specialist Schroeder expressed that most of the recommendations could likely

be accepted without issues. However, he disagreed with Clark County's recommendation to reduce the doe hunts to one, as it seemed symbolic and the current recommendations were already conservative. He also disagreed with Lander CAB's recommendation, stating that the proposed increase was intended to meet buck ratio objectives and the desired effect was not observed. Staff Specialist Schroeder emphasized the need to maintain the current department recommendation for Lander County. Regarding the shifting of tags, Staff Specialist Schroeder stated that he didn't have a strong stance on it, as they were following their policy and the impact on the population was inconsequential. He invited questions or requests for further clarification on the differences in success rates between archery and muzzleloader hunts and the recommendations involving tag shifting.

Chairman Caviglia invited questions for Staff Specialist Schroeder.

Staff Specialist Schroeder shared his screen and displayed the spreadsheet with the recommendations.

Chairman Caviglia confirmed that the screen was visible to everyone.

Staff Specialist Schroeder then focused on the junior recommendations, explaining the interpreted recommendations and alternative suggestions for juniors. He suggested starting with these before discussing the other recommendations.

Chairman Caviglia agreed and proposed taking a motion on the youth recommendations.

Staff Specialist Schroeder expressed his support for the recommendations, stating that the increase in unit 195 would have minimal impact, and he had no objections to Lincoln County providing more opportunities for juniors by reallocating tags.

**COMMISSIONER EAST MADE A MOTION TO APPROVE THE RESIDENT JUNIOR MULE DEER ANTLERED ONLY ARCHERY, MUZZLELOADER, OR ANY LEGAL WEAPON HUNT 1107 AS PRESENTED, WITH AN INCREASE IN UNIT 195 FROM SEVEN TO TEN TAGS AND AN INCREASE IN UNIT 231 FROM 20 TO 40 TAGS. RESIDENT JUNIOR MULE DEER ANTLERED OR ANTLERLESS ARCHERY, MUZZLELOADER, OR ANY LEGAL WEAPON HUNT 1107 AS PRESENTED. SECONDED BY COMMISSIONER KIEL. MOTION PASSED 8-0. COMMISSIONER BARENS WAS ABSENT.**

Commissioner McNinch expressed his support for the motion but expressed a desire for broader discussions in the future.

Staff Specialist Schroeder then moved on to discuss the doe hunt in unit 1181 any legal weapon.

Chairman Caviglia asked for any further discussion, but there was none.

**COMMISSIONER KIEL MADE A MOTION TO APPROVE THE RESIDENT MULE DEER ANTLERLESS ANY LEGAL WEAPON HUNT 1181 ANY LEGAL WEAPON AS PRESENTED. COMMISSIONER EAST SECONDED THE MOTION. MOTION PASSED 8-0. COMMISSIONER BARNES WAS ABSENT.**

Staff Specialist Schroeder confirmed that he had all the recommendations except possibly Lander County's, which only mentioned a 5% change overall.

Chairman Caviglia double-checked the recommendations for various units.

Staff Specialist Schroeder confirmed the correct numbers.

Chairman Caviglia then raised the discussion regarding the commission's decision on whether to go with the Department's recommendation or Lander County's recommendation for the Area 15 hunts.

Commissioner McNinch expressed his appreciation for the thoughtful consideration given to the hunts but stated his preference for staying closer to the Department's recommendation. He mentioned that people should be willing to travel to where the deer are, even if it requires extra effort.

Chairman Caviglia suggested splitting the difference and finding a middle ground between the proposed 215 tags and Lander County's recommendation.

Commissioner McNinch acknowledged that the issue at hand was a social one, but he was open to finding a compromise that would satisfy both sides.

Chairman Caviglia suggested moving forward with a vote on this matter as they had been doing.

**VICE CHAIR ROGERS MADE A MOTION TO APPROVE COMMISSION REGULATION 23-14, 2023 BIG GAME QUOTA RECOMMENDATIONS, RESPECTIVE THE RESIDENT MULE DEER ANY LEGAL WEAPON HUNT 1331 AS PRESENTED WITH THE FOLLOWING CHANGES TO UNIT 014 FROM TEN TO EIGHT TAGS, UNIT 035 FROM 40 TO 30 TAGS, UNIT 111-113 LATE FROM 20 TO 10 TAGS, UNIT 121 EARLY FROM 45 TO 40 TAGS, UNIT 151-156 EARLY FORM 280 TO 247 TAGS, UNIT 151-156 LATE FROM 30 TO 25 TAGS, UNIT 202, 205-208 FROM 40 TO 45 TAGS, UNIT 231 FROM 60 TO 45 TAGS, UNIT 291 FROM 65 TO 55 TAGS. CHAIRMAN CAVIGLIA SECONDED THE MOTION. MOTION PASSED 8-0. COMMISSIONER BARNES WAS ABSENT.**

Commissioner McNinch raised the question of whether they should also address the non-resident hunts at the same time.

Chairman Caviglia suggested giving Staff Specialist Schroeder the flexibility to make the 90-10 match for non-resident hunts when they reach those discussions.

Staff Specialist Schroeder presented the recommended changes to muzzleloader. The changes included increasing tag allocations for various unit groups and reducing the allocation for one unit group.

Chairman Caviglia confirmed that the changes matched his records and asked if there were any questions regarding the muzzleloader hunts.

Staff Specialist Schroeder raised a comment regarding the future demand for muzzleloader tags and the need for guidance on where they want the demand to go. He mentioned the counter arguments they heard about taking away archery tags and reallocating them to muzzleloader hunts.

Commissioner McNinch agreed and suggested addressing the archery hunts before approving the changes to the muzzleloader hunts. He emphasized the importance of considering the archery community and leaving their allocations untouched.

Commissioner Kiel also expressed support for discussing the archery hunts as well.

Chairman Caviglia agreed to proceed with the discussion on the archery hunts.

Staff Specialist Schroeder presented the recommendations for the archery hunts, including increases and decreases in tag allocations for various unit groups.

Commissioner East proposed increasing the tag allocations for units 061, 071, and 101-109 early due to significant cuts.

Staff Specialist Schroeder mentioned that those tags were proposed to be moved from archery to muzzleloader hunts, which would lower the success rate in archery but not have a significant biological impact. He questioned the fairness in distributing tags among different weapon classes.

Commissioner East expressed openness to either leaving the tag allocations as recommended by the department or increasing them.

Commissioner McNinch expressed support for keeping the archery hunts as recommended and addressing the specific units under the muzzleloader hunts.

Commissioner Walther requested input from others regarding the units proposed for increases in archery hunts.

Commissioner McNinch stated that he didn't have any concerns with increasing unit 21 in archery, but his main concern was the transfer of tags from archery to muzzleloader hunts in units 6, 7, and 10. He suggested leaving the numbers as recommended by the department and discussing those specific areas under the muzzleloader hunts.

Commissioner East expressed his willingness to go with either option.

Staff Specialist Schroeder provided clarifications on the potential impact of the recommended quotas and emphasized that none of the proposed changes were expected to have a significant biological impact. The aim of the Washoe CABMW recommendations was to slightly increase primitive weapons tags, such as archery tags, without significantly increasing harvested deer. While some units, namely 6, 7, and 10, might experience a slight increase in buck harvest, it was unlikely to have a substantial biological impact as the current numbers were well above the usual biological limits.

Chairman Caviglia suggested an alternative approach by keeping the archery tags unchanged and seeking a compromise for the requested increases in the muzzleloader hunts. His proposal entailed specific changes to the tag quotas for various unit groups, including increases for unit groups 061, 062, 064, 066, 068, 071-079, 091, and 101-109.

Commissioner McNinch expressed his preference for not transferring tags from archery to muzzleloader hunts unless it posed biological concerns.

**COMMISSIONER EAST MADE A MOTION TO APPROVE COMMISSION REGULATION 23-14, 2023 BIG GAME QUOTA RECOMMENDATIONS, RESPECTIVE TO THE RESIDENT MULE DEER, ANTLERED MUZZLELOADER HUNT 1331 AS PRESENTED WITH THE FOLLOWING CHANGES, UNIT 014 FROM ONE TO TWO TAGS, UNIT 015 FROM ONE TO FIVE TAGS, UNIT 021 FROM ONE TO FIVE TAGS, UNIT 022 FROM THREE TO FIVE TAGS, UNIT 033 FROM ONE TO FIVE TAGS, UNIT 061, 062, 064, 066-068 TO 60 TAGS, UNIT 071-079, 091 FROM 40 TO 50 TAGS, UNIT 101-109 FROM 75 TO 98 TAGS, UNIT 111-113 FROM SIX TO 16 TAGS, UNIT 121 FROM TWO TO SEVEN TAGS, UNIT 194, 196 FROM ONE TO FIVE TAGS, UNIT 195 TO FIVE TAGS, UNIT 205-208 FROM FIVE TO SEVEN TAGS, UNIT 291 FROM FOUR TO THREE TAGS. INCLUDING THE RESIDENT MULE DEER ANTLERED ARCHERY HUNT 1331 AS PRESENTED WITH THE FOLLOWING CHANGES, UNIT 015 FROM ONE TO THREE TAGS, UNIT 021 FROM EIGHT TO 15 TAGS, UNIT 022 FROM FIVE TO SIX TAGS, 061, 062, 064, 066-068 LEAVE AT 210 TAGS, 071-079, 091 EARLY LEAVE AT 190 TAGS, UNIT 101-109 EARLY LEAVE AT 60 TAGS, UNIT 192 LATE FROM 15 TO 20 TAGS, UNIT 195 FROM**

**THREE TO FIVE TAGS. CHAIRMAN CAVIGLIA SECONDED THE MOTION. MOTION PASSED 8-0. COMMISSIONER BARNES WAS ABSENT.**

Chairman Caviglia proposed granting Staff Specialist Schroeder the authority to make necessary adjustments, mirroring the approach taken earlier.

Staff Specialist Schroeder confirmed his readiness to accommodate those adjustments. He then drew attention to the final item on page 33, the quota table for landowner deer and elk compensation tags. He noted that the current quota was well below the specified cap and explained that the approval being sought reflected the total percentage. The proposed cap would limit the department to issuing no more than 353 landowner compensation tags for deer and antelope combined.

Commissioner McNinch sought clarification on the current quota numbers in light of the changes made during the meeting.

Staff Specialist Schroeder confirmed that the numbers discussed thus far accounted for the changes made.

Commissioner McNinch expressed satisfaction with the outcome, remarking on the fortunate alignment of the numbers. He then inquired about the need for a motion regarding the non-resident quotas to ensure official approval.

Staff Specialist Schroeder explained that the non-resident changes were not included in the previous discussions. He suggested a motion to approve a two and a half percent increase, with the exact numbers to be provided after the meeting.

Commissioner McNinch proposed the idea of making a motion for the non-resident quotas, taking a break to allow time for the numbers to be crunched and presented before finalizing the decision. He sought confirmation from Staff Specialist Schroeder on the feasibility of this approach.

Staff Specialist Schroeder confirmed that it could be done either way.

Commissioner McNinch agreed with the plan and expressed the desire to have the numbers in front of them for review before concluding the meeting. He acknowledged the additional work it would entail but stressed the importance of having the information available.

Staff Specialist Schroeder assured that he was flexible with the approach.

**COMMISSIONER MCNINCH MADE A MOTION TO APPROVE COMMISSION REGULATION 23-14, 2023 BIG GAME QUOTA RECOMMENDATIONS, RESPECTIVE TO THE NONRESIDENT MULE DEER ANTLERED ANY LEGAL WEAPON HUNT AS PRESENTED, NONRESIDENT MULE DEER ANTLERED MUZZLELOADER HUNT 1332 AS PRESENTED, AND NONRESIDENT MULE DEER ANTLERED ARCHERY HUNT 1332 AS PRESENTED WITH THE FOLLOWING CHANGE TO UNIT 291 FROM ONE TO TWO TAGS AND THAT THE ADJUSTMENTS FROM PREVIOUS MOTIONS FOR THESE HUNTS WOULD BE MADE BY THE DEPARTMENT TO ACHIEVE A CLOSE APPROXIMATION OF THE 90-10 SPLIT. COMMISSIONER EAST SECONDED THE MOTION. MOTION PASSED 8-0. COMMISSIONER BARNES WAS ABSENT.**

*Chairman Caviglia recessed at 3:11 pm.*

*Chairman Caviglia reconvened at 3:26 pm.*



Chairman Caviglia requested Staff Specialist Schroeder to provide the updated calculations.

Staff Specialist Schroeder confirmed that he had a question regarding the motion made, specifically about the area 291.

Commissioner McNinch clarified that in the motion for the non-resident archery hunt 1332 in area 291, there was a recommendation to increase the quota from one to two tags. He reiterated that any necessary adjustments based on the resident quotas should also be included.

Staff Specialist Schroeder announced that he was ready to present the updated numbers. He highlighted the changes for non-resident quotas, which included an increase from 20 to 24 tags for unit 151 and unit 156 early, a decrease from five to four tags for unit 291 any legal weapon, and adjusted quotas of five for unit 061, 062, four for unit 071, 079, and 091, and six for unit 101-109 in the non-resident Muzzleloader hunt 1332. For the non-resident archery hunt 1332, the recommended changes were an increase from one to two tags for unit 192 early and unit 291.

Chairman Caviglia then requested the calculation for the landowner compensation tags.

Staff Specialist Schroeder explained that there was a slight increase to 353 for the total number of deer and antelope compensation tags.

Chairman Caviglia opened the floor for questions to Cody. After receiving none, he called for a motion.

**COMMISSIONER EAST MADE A MOTION TO APPROVE THE RESIDENT AND NON-RESIDENT MULE DEER AND ANTELOPE LANDOWNER COMPENSATION TAGS WITH NOTED CHANGE OF THE TOTAL NUMBER OF DEER AND ANTELOPE LANDOWNER COMPENSATION TAGS SET AT 353 AND THE TOTAL NUMBER OF 2023 MULE DEER AND PRONGHORN TAGS AT 14,117. THE CAP OF TWO AND A HALF PERCENT REMAINED UNCHANGED. SECONDED BY COMMISSIONER KIEL. MOTION PASSED 8-0. COMMISSIONER BARNES WAS ABSENT.**

**17. Future Commission Meetings and Commission Committee Assignments – Secretary Alan Jenne and Chairman Tommy Caviglia – For Possible Action**

The next Commission meeting is scheduled for June 23 and 24, 2023. The Commission will review and discuss potential agenda items for that meeting. The Commission may change the date, time, and meeting location at this time. The Commission will review and approve the Commission Meeting Schedule for 2024-2025. The chairman may designate and adjust committee assignments and add or dissolve committees, as necessary at this time. Any anticipated committee meetings that may occur prior to the next Commission meeting may be discussed.

Chairman Caviglia introduced Item #17.

Secretary Jenne listed the following items to be discussed at the June Commission meeting:

1. CABMW Budgets
2. Duck Stamp and Upland Game Stamp Projects
3. Upland Game & Furbearer Seasons and Limits (amended in odd-numbered years)
4. Wildlife Heritage Tags Vendors/Organizations
5. Upland Game Release Plan
6. Wildlife Heritage Committee Report
7. Final Legislative Committee Report

8. Finance Committee Report
9. Commissioner Appreciation Report
10. Comins Lake Boat Ramp
11. Cave Lake
12. Blue Diamond Land Acquisition
13. Possible Presentation on Winecup Gamble

Commissioner East stated that she would like to host a BBQ on Friday, June 23<sup>rd</sup>, in honor of her last Commission meeting.

Secretary Jenne presented the draft Commission Meeting schedule for 2024 and 2025. The schedule can be viewed at the link below:

<https://www.ndow.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/05/NBWC-2022-2023-2024-2025-Commission-Meeting-Schedules.pdf>

*No CABMW comment.*

*No public comment.*

**COMMISSIONER MCNINCH MADE A MOTION TO APPROVE THE 2024 and 2025 NEVADA BOARD OF WILDLIFE COMMISSIONERS MEETING SCHEDULES AS PRESENTED. VICE CHAIRMAN ROGERS SECONDED THE MOTION. MOTION PASSED 8-0. COMMISSIONER BARNES WAS ABSENT.**

**18. Public Comment Period**

Public comment will be limited to three minutes. No action can be taken by the Commission at this time; any item requiring Commission action may be scheduled on a future Commission agenda.

Chairman Caviglia introduced Item #18.

Kelly Dean, representing Nevada Bowhunters Association expressed appreciation to the Commission and the Department for their science based work they perform. He noted that sometimes they felt that when adjustments were made to quota numbers, they get the short end of the stick. He stated that he was a Hunter Education Instructor and he noted that they'll see participation as a youth and then a large number of people in their late twenties or early thirties come back to hunting. We do support the youth program because it provides the opportunity for them to participate in any of those hunts. We do see a lot of participation on our side.

Sean Shae, private citizen, stated that he had three items to discuss. He enjoyed seeing Staff Specialist Jackson and Bear Biologist Carl Lackey working together and providing answers to questions. He requested that the Commission really push the edible meat for lions and bears and that it was a smart thing to do. He noted that there were some issues with the Demand-Tag Success formula. He understands and has acquaintances that go all out with their first choice. He suggested that Policy 24 be revisited by the TAAHC Committee and that the Commission might consider setting percentages when they discuss quotas rather than going back and forth from hunt to hunt.

Joe Crim, representing Pershing CABMW, stated that he had requested Pershing County get an Elk Management Plan a few years ago, however there was little interest. He understood that it took Humboldt

county about three years to get theirs in place and believes that it would be easier to put a plan in place, when there isn't a problem, rather than waiting until we do.

Rex Flowers, private citizen, stated that he was in support of the bear hunt being based on demand and success, but that there was an error made and Policy 24 was not followed. The non-resident percentage from ten percent to twenty percent was something that wouldn't have been allowed in other hunts. He commended the Commission for the progress that was made on the bear hunt.

Rick Duenas, private citizen, stated that he had one concern for the way that the tags were allocated for the Antlered Elk Hunt. It seemed arbitrary the way the tags were moved from the Any Legal Weapon to Muzzleloader just based on a CABMW request from White Pine County. He noted that there was no representative from the CABMW at this Commission meeting to provide a rationale for the recommendation and there didn't seem to be any biological basis. To take twenty percent of highly demanded tags and move them for an arbitrary reason with no public comment afterwards.

Tony Gildone, private citizen, stated that he agreed with the previous speakers comments as a rifle hunter in Ely who had been waiting a long time to get tags. It seemed like an irrational way to throw rifle tags over to muzzleloader.

Stephanie Myers, private citizen, stated that she was incredibly disappointed with the vote in favor of the Black bear hunt. The Commission chose not to discontinue the hunt, lower quotas or leave them at the same levels as in the past as recommended by NDOW Biologists, but chose to actually raise all the quotas save one. She noted that the list of issues they raise is very small and that the Department does not hear from them often. She stated that they are reasonable and sometimes eloquent. Year after year, the Commission has pretended to listen, but then votes the other way in favor of the hunters and trappers, who number less than five percent of the Nevada population. The Commission always votes against the general public, which comprises more than 95 percent of Nevada's population. The Commission is losing many of us and we are becoming disillusioned by always being beaten down. The Commission may not have any members of the public speaking to it soon, which may be easier for you. She asked if that was what the Commission really wanted.

*Chairman Caviglia adjourned at 3:49pm.*

\*Support material will be posted to the NDOW website under the corresponding calendar event and support material will be provided at each in-person meeting. To view or download support material please visit <https://www.ndow.org/calendar/>. Support material for this meeting may be requested from the Recording Secretary at (775) 688-1599 or [wildlifecommission@ndow.org](mailto:wildlifecommission@ndow.org). In accordance with NRS 241.020 this agenda closes three days prior to the meeting date and has been posted on the NDOW website at <https://www.ndow.org/calendar/>.

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