

**STATE OF NEVADA
BOARD OF WILDLIFE COMMISSIONERS**

Commission Policy 26

Number: P-26

Title: Managing Rocky Mountain Elk Populations in Nevada

Reference: NRS 501.181

Effective Date: December 9, 1988

Amended Date: December 2, 1995, and January 26, 2018, August 20, 2022.

Reviewed: 2022

PURPOSE

The Nevada Department of Wildlife will manage elk populations for the benefit of the public by maintaining healthy elk herds and habitats on which they depend. Management decisions will consider specific wildlife health concerns like chronic wasting disease. Pioneering elk populations will be managed in consideration of established land use plans, private land impacts, public review, and concurrence by the Nevada Board of Wildlife Commissioners (the Commission).

BACKGROUND

Historical records document that elk are a wildlife species native to Nevada. These elk were not numerous and appear to have become extirpated coincidentally with the settling of the State. Elk were first reintroduced into Nevada during the early 1930s.

Since the 1930s, wandering elk have been sighted throughout Nevada. Elk population growth in adjoining states contributed to elk sightings in Nevada, and population growth and expansion from within Nevada also contribute to established populations in several areas where releases have not occurred.

Elk are highly adaptable ungulates which can pioneer or colonize available habitats in Nevada. The potential for elk to expand into new habitats increases when established populations expand. Population expansion should be anticipated, and appropriate planning should be undertaken when new populations pioneer new habitat. That planning should include consideration of public and private interests.

DEFINITIONS

Pioneering: The act of wildlife species colonizing new habitat voluntarily, whether planned or not by the appropriate resource managers.

Established Elk Populations: All elk populations that occupy habitats incorporated within or managed in accordance with elk subplans are considered established populations for the purposes of this policy.

All other appropriate definitions are contained in Commission Policy 22 "Introduction, Reintroduction, Transplants, and Exportation of Wildlife."

POLICY

This policy is established to guide the Department and inform the land management agencies, private land interests, and the public on the management of elk and pioneering populations.

The Department will conform to existing Commission Policies and the Nevada State Elk Species Management Plan.

The Department will comply with pertinent Nevada State laws and Federal regulations concerning importation and release of wildlife, including elk.

The Department will include all reasonably anticipated potential elk pioneering sites located immediately adjacent to planned elk releases in future planning processes. The public and private industry recommendations for these potential pioneering sites will be considered.

The Department will monitor potential habitat for pioneering elk populations.

If, in the best professional judgement of the Department, an elk population successfully colonizes previously unoccupied habitat, the Department will apprise the Commission and recommend an appropriate course of action giving due consideration to private land interests and public access.

Actions recommended may include:

Approval of the colonization with acceptance from the land management agencies and public being sought by the Department.

Disapproval with elimination of the pioneering elk population being initiated through actions deemed appropriate by the Department and Commission.

The Commission will retain ultimate authority on the course of action to be taken following identification of successful elk colonization.

This policy shall remain in effect until amended, repealed, or superseded by the Nevada Board of Wildlife Commissioners.

BY ORDER OF THE BOARD OF WILDLIFE COMMISSIONERS IN REGULAR SESSION, AUGUST 20, 2022.

Chairman Tommy Caviglia
Nevada Board of Wildlife Commissioners