

**STATE OF NEVADA
BOARD OF WILDLIFE COMMISSIONERS**

Commission Policy Number 23

Number: P-23

Title: Predation Management

Reference: NRS 501.100, 501.105,
501.181, 502.253

Effective Date: December 7, 2013

Amended Date:

The Nevada Department of Wildlife (Department) and the Nevada Board of Wildlife Commissioners (Commission) recognize the need to effectively manage predators in Nevada. Predation Management actions are a viable and legitimate wildlife management tool that must be available to wildlife professionals when necessary. The Predation Management Program will incorporate the tools of predation management for the protection of nonpredatory game animals and sensitive wildlife species and conducting research necessary to determine successful techniques for managing and controlling predatory wildlife, including the use of proven and emerging science-based techniques of predator population management.

PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to inform the public and guide the Department in actions related to Predation Management. Should the Department make the decision to implement predation management actions, the management actions will be directed by the Predation Management Plan.

NEED

Where wildlife populations are failing to reach Department population management objectives, public expectations, or where evidence suggests that predation may be a significant factor inhibiting the ability of a prey population to reach expected population levels, the Department may consider implementing predation management actions. The Department will consider acting if declining population trends cannot be explained by habitat conditions, weather or climatic events, disease, or other factors. The Commission is aware of the diverse public opinions concerning predation issues and recognizes the need to increase public education to facilitate a better understanding of predation management, including the effects of not managing predators.

AUTHORITY FOR PREDATION MANAGEMENT

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

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

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

- (a) Programs for the management and control of predatory wildlife.
- (b) Wildlife management activities relating to the protection of non-predatory game animals, sensitive wildlife species and related wildlife habitat.
- (c) Conducting research, as needed, to determine successful techniques for managing and controlling predatory wildlife, including studies necessary to insure effective programs for the management and control of predatory wildlife; and
- (d) Programs for the education of the general public concerning the management and control of predatory wildlife.

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

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

Pursuant to NRS 502.253(1) the revenue from the \$3 fee must be accounted for separately and deposited in the Wildlife Fund Account.

PREDATION MANAGEMENT POLICIES

A. POLICY FOR THE MANAGEMENT AND CONTROL OF PREDATORY WILDLIFE

1. Management decisions will be based on the best available scientific information.
2. Projects will be conducted in the most efficient and cost-effective manner possible. Clear goals, measurable objectives and limited timelines will be defined at the onset, with an emphasis of identifying and refining prescriptive measures of Predation Management for use in the future.
3. Lethal and/or nonlethal predator control efforts will be undertaken in a targeted fashion to minimize specific predator-caused losses to wildlife populations.
4. The U.S. Department of Agriculture, Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, Wildlife Services (Wildlife Services), is the cooperating agency in lethal predatory

wildlife control. Contractors may be used for predator population management, habitat management, predator prey research, conservation education and carnivore population monitoring efforts.

5. Wildlife Services personnel and contractors shall salvage (when practical) the hide and skull of any mountain lion, black bear and bobcat removed under authority of the contract and present them to the Department within 96 hours of the removal.
6. Control activities will be conducted where game and sensitive wildlife populations are at risk of being disproportionately affected by predation.
7. Priority will be given to act in areas where other conservation efforts are completed, underway, or planned that will also benefit wildlife populations.
8. Geographic locations for Project areas will be determined based on an objective analysis and on the needs of wildlife populations in the area.
9. If needed, statewide and Project area estimates of terrestrial and avian predator populations or densities will be based on an objective analysis.

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

1. Wildlife research activities will be undertaken in a targeted fashion to address questions regarding the effects of predator control on game populations, predator-prey relationships including improved control techniques, predator-prey responses to habitat restoration activities and specific influences of large and medium-sized carnivores on Nevada ecosystems.
2. Geographic locations for Project areas will be determined based on an objective analysis and on the needs of wildlife populations and habitats in the area, as well as the need for objective science on subjects related to Predation Management. Priority will be given in areas where other conservation efforts are being implemented.
3. Wildlife research efforts will be promoted that: a) provide wildlife managers with objective scientific analysis for making sound decisions regarding future wildlife population and habitat management; and b) provide insights into the role predators play in maintaining vigorous and healthy ecosystems.

PREDATION MANAGEMENT PLAN AND REPORT PROCEDURES

The Department shall prepare an annual Predation Management Plan. The Predation Management Plan shall identify, (a) projects for the management and control of predatory wildlife for the benefit of other species of wildlife, and (b) research projects related to predatory wildlife, successful techniques, and effective programs for managing and/or controlling predatory wildlife and related habitats.

If Habitat or Conservation Education projects are proposed, they should identify wildlife habitat management activities for the protection of non-predatory animals and programs for education of the public concerning the management and control of predatory wildlife and the role predators play in a well-functioning ecosystem.

Predation Management Plan Fiscal Year procedure and timeline:

1. The Department shall prepare a Draft Predation Management Plan (Draft Plan) outlining proposed actions needed for the protection, preservation, management, and restoration of wildlife populations. Descriptions of Control Projects, Research Projects, Habitat Management Activities and/or Education Programs shall include:
 - A. Project Number and Title.
 - B. Justification (detailed description of the proposed project, including a statement of why the Department believes that the predatory wildlife is a limiting factor in the growth and or maintenance of a target prey population).
 - C. Project Purpose (Wildlife Control, Research Project, Habitat Management, or Education).
 - D. Project Manager.
 - E. Project Type (Implementation, Experimental Management, or Experimentation).
 - F. Monitoring Level (Standard, Intermediate, or Rigorous).
 - G. Potentially Affected Species.
 - H. Duration.
 - I. Project Area (Unit(s), County, or Statewide).
 - J. Limiting Factor Statement, including why potential non-lethal methods would not be effective.
 - K. Response Variable (further actions to be taken depending on project success or type).
 - L. Project Goals and measurable objectives, including the criteria to determine when the project will be discontinued due to either success or failure.
 - M. Habitat Conditions (whether such habitat is a migratory corridor, summer range, winter range, fawning, calving, nesting or brood-rearing habitat or a combination of any of the above).
 - N. Comments From Previous Year's Predator Report.
 - O. Methods and Timing.
 - P. Prey Population Estimate (if a specific population objective is desired).
 - Q. Anticipated Results.
 - R. Staff Comment.
 - S. Project Direction (Department Recommendation).
 - T. Project Budget (\$3 Predator Fee, Pittman Robertson monies, private donations, etc.).
 - U. A status update of the previous year's Plan
2. The Draft Plan shall be submitted to the Commission prior to the January Commission meeting. The Draft Plan will be made available to all Stakeholders, including Wildlife Services, contractors, County Advisory Boards to Manage Wildlife (CABMWs), conservation organizations, and interested publics and shall serve as a vehicle to elicit suggestions for changes, adjustments, new ideas and input from all Stakeholders.
3. The Predatory Animal and Rodent Committee (PARC) and Wildlife Damage Management Committee (WDMC) shall set meetings in conjunction with the March Commission Meeting to review all comments received on the Draft Plan. After

consideration of findings and recommendations of the Department, and with respect to lethal Control Programs, recommendations of Wildlife Services and other contractors, as well as all comments and recommendations received, the Chairman of the WDMC Committee shall make a preliminary report to the Commission on which Projects should be funded in the subsequent Fiscal Year.

4. The Department shall prepare a Final Draft Predation Management Plan and present it to the WDMC and the Commission prior to the May meeting. The Final Draft Plan shall be posted on the Department's website and made available to the public and distributed to CABMWs. After consideration of all comments, the Commission shall make final recommendations to the Department on the Final Draft Plan.
5. On or before June 30, the Final Predation Management Plan shall be posted on the Department's website.
6. If, at any other time of the year, the Department, in consultation with the Committee, identifies additional or changing Predation Management needs and determines that money is available to fund additional Projects, the Department may approve Projects which are urgent in nature or which present unique opportunities.
7. In July of each year, contractors, or grantees of Projects from the previous Fiscal Year shall submit a report to the Department which should include a summary of work completed, including predators removed, habitat work conducted (if applicable), and viability of the project moving forward.
8. The Department shall prepare an annual Predation Management Status Report detailing results of the previous Fiscal Year's Projects. This report will include a summary of all lethal removal reports, excluding any sensitive data, proprietary information, or time-sensitive locational information. This Status Report shall be presented at the last Commission meeting of each calendar year.
9. This Status Report will be used in Department and Commission deliberations in subsequent years and in future Predation Management planning efforts. A summary of the status report will be included in the following years' Draft Predation Management Plan to make deliberations easier for the Committees and Commission.

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

**BY ORDER OF THE BOARD OF WILDLIFE COMMISSIONERS REGULAR SESSION,
December 7, 2013.**



**Chairman Jack Robb
Board of Wildlife Commissioners**

DEFINITIONS

Experimental Management: The primary objectives are management of predators through lethal or non-lethal means and to learn the effects of a novel management technique. NDOW will collaborate with USDA Wildlife Services, private contractors, and other wildlife professionals to conduct lethal or non-lethal management of predators and will put forethought into project design. Response variables will be identified, and data will be collected to determine project effectiveness. Expected outcomes will include project effectiveness, agency reports, and possible peer-reviewed publications.

Experimentation: The primary objective is for increasing knowledge of predators in Nevada. NDOW may collaborate with other wildlife professionals to study and learn about predators of Nevada. Expected outcomes will include agency reports, peer-reviewed publications, and information on how to better manage Nevada's predators.

Implementation: The primary objective is to implement management of predators through lethal or non-lethal means. NDOW will collaborate with USDA Wildlife Services and private contractors to conduct lethal and non-lethal management of predators. Identifying and monitoring a response variable is not a primary objective for implementation.

Intermediate Monitoring: The primary objective of intermediate monitoring is to apply a specific monitoring plan designed to evaluate the response of game species or sensitive wildlife to lethal or non-lethal management of predators. NDOW may collaborate with other wildlife professionals to identify reference and treatment areas or evaluate productivity of game species or sensitive wildlife before, during, and after implementation to determine effectiveness of predator management. Composition surveys may be modified to thoroughly evaluate productivity in the reference and treatment areas and to better accommodate annual variation in survey conditions. Expected outcomes will include an indication of project effectiveness, agency reports, and possible peer-reviewed publications.

Nonpredatory Game Animals: For the purposes of this policy includes mule deer, pronghorn antelope, bighorn sheep, Rocky Mountain elk, mountain goat, moose, upland game birds, upland game mammals, and migratory game birds.

Predation: The act of an individual animal or group of animals killing another live animal.

Predation Management: Selective reduction and/or management of terrestrial, avian, or aquatic predator populations when and where predation is identified by the Department as a limiting factor negatively affecting another wildlife population.

Predator: Any wild animal species subsisting, wholly or in part, on other living animals captured through its own efforts.

Predator Removal: The physical removal of an animal from an area where its presence is undesirable for wildlife management purposes, generally requiring lethal actions.

Prey: Any animal hunted or killed as food by a predator.

Rigorous Monitoring: The primary objective of rigorous monitoring is to evaluate several response variables known to affect productivity of game species or sensitive wildlife and to determine the relative influence of those variables when measuring the response to lethal or non-lethal management of predators. NDOW may collaborate with other wildlife professionals to identify the requirements of rigorous monitoring and to further evaluate factors influencing productivity of game species or sensitive wildlife such as survival of juveniles, body condition of adults, or habitat productivity. Rigorous monitoring efforts will help to disentangle biotic and abiotic conditions that may influence productivity of game species or sensitive wildlife from the effects of lethal or non-lethal management of predators. Expected outcomes will include agency reports, peer-reviewed publications, and information on how to better manage Nevada's wildlife.

Sensitive Wildlife Species: For the purposes of this policy includes nonpredatory reptiles, mammals, birds, fish, and amphibians.

Standard Monitoring: The primary objective of standard monitoring is to use existing survey protocols to evaluate the response of game species or sensitive wildlife to lethal or non-lethal management of predators. NDOW conducts annual and biannual surveys to evaluate trend and composition of game species or sensitive wildlife and to inform the season and quota-setting process. Composition surveys will yield response variables such as recruitment of juveniles into the adult population and will be compared to published benchmarks of productivity in the management area of interest, to neighboring areas not receiving predator management, or in the same area before treatment began. Standard

monitoring represents no change to existing monitoring efforts. Expected outcomes include an indication of project effectiveness and agency reports.