

13 May, 2014



California Fish and Game Commission
1416 Ninth Avenue
Sacramento, CA 95814
Attn: Sonke Mastrup, Executive Director

Dear Mr. Mastrup and Commissioners,

It has been stated by the Commission at many meetings I have attended that the regulations developed by the Commission are based on sound science. Recently, the Commission has been inundated with correspondence and public testimony about the cruelty of predator hunting, primarily (or at least initially) coyotes. These inputs are based on emotional appeals (coyotes mourn when they lose their mates, etc.). We urge the Commission to depend on sound science before making decisions on many important issues related to predator hunting. We maintain that anthropomorphism is neither sound science nor rational wildlife management policy.

We therefore recommend that the Commission task the Department of Fish and Wildlife to conduct a literature survey to assess the available science regarding the wildlife management of predators. The results of this assessment should be delivered as a report available to the public.

A list of specific issues would be exhaustive, but some of the issues include:

- What is the coyote population in California, and has hunting reduced this population below an acceptable level?
- What impacts do coyotes have on other wildlife, livestock, humans and pets?
- What tools are expected to be effective to minimize these impacts?
- Does coyote hunting result in a larger population of coyotes than if they were not hunted?

Only once these and several related questions are addressed will it be possible to develop a vision of how coyotes fit into the larger ecosystem of California. Based on this survey, DFW should recommend any changes, if any, in their current wildlife management policy for predators to make them more consistent with the best available scientific data. We urge the Commission to defer making regulatory changes until these results are available.

Respectfully,

Robert R. Smith
President, San Diego County Wildlife Federation
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