

STAFF SUMMARY FOR APRIL 13-14, 2016

33. CONSERVATION PLAN FOR GRAY WOLVES**Today's Item**Information Action

Receive Department presentation on the Conservation Plan for Gray Wolves in California.

Summary of Previous/Future Actions (N/A)**Background**

In Dec 2015 FGC adopted proposed changes to endangered or threatened animals regulations to add gray wolf (*Canis lupus*) to the list of endangered species (Section 670.5, Title 14, CCR). At that meeting, FGC requested a presentation from DFW on its draft wolf conservation plan under development since 2013, including strategies for co-existence and potential partnerships between public and private organizations to best help prepare the rural landscape over the next ten years. Today, DFW will present an update on the draft Conservation Plan for Gray Wolves in California.

DFW convened a Stakeholder Working Group in Feb 2013 to assist with the development of a California wolf plan. In Dec 2015 DFW released the draft Conservation Plan for Gray Wolves in California for public review. The public comment period closed in Feb 2016. This plan covers key issues and potential actions that are important to the understanding and future conservation of wolves, and includes the following goals:

- If, and when, wolves establish in California, seek to conserve biologically sustainable populations of wolves in the State.
- Manage the distribution of wolves within the State where there is adequate habitat, consistent with the identified sideboards.
- Manage native ungulate populations in the State to provide abundant prey for wolves and other predators, intrinsic enjoyment by the public and hunting opportunities for hunters.
- Manage wolf-livestock conflicts to minimize livestock losses.
- Communicate to the public that natural dispersal of wolves into and through California is reasonably foreseeable given the expanding populations in the Pacific Northwest.
- Inform the public with science-based information on gray wolves and the conservation and management needs for wolves in California, as well as the effects of having wolves in the State.

Significant Public Comments

1. One letter received in opposition to allowing wolves to migrate uncontrolled into California and the need to take action soon to stop the declining deer and elk populations in our State.
2. One letter received in support of delisting the wolf and an option for ranchers to use lethal force to suppress depredation of livestock by wolves based on review of draft wolf plan.

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Recommendations (N/A)

Exhibits

1. [Letter from Nancy Karner-Lewis, expressing opposition to wolves in California, received Mar 4, 2016](#)
2. [Letter from Wade Woodman, Chairman, Lassen Fish and Game Commission, review of draft wolf plan and support for delisting wolf, received Feb 23, 2016](#)

Motion/Direction (N/A)

1 March 2016

Fish and Game Commission
1416 9th Street, Suite 1320
Sacramento, CA 95814

To: -President Eric Sklar
-Vice President Jacque Hostler-Carmesin
-Commissioner Anthony Williams

RE: ALLOWING WOLVES TO MIGRATE UNCONTROLLED INTO CALIFORNIA.

Please enter my letter into the Official Public Record.

Dear Commission Members:

Enclosed is a copy of an article from Western Outdoor News of 2/26/2016.

This same scenario will happen in California to OUR deer and elk herds if you don't take some action SOON and practice predator control measures.

Conservation groups are fighting a losing battle, when our Commission fails to acknowledge the decimation of our deer and elk herds in favor of predators such as lions, coyotes, and NOW WOLVES!!

Really Commission Members?

I would like to think our California Fish & Wildlife Agency could be as scientifically judicious & proactive in preserving our state's wildlife, as the State of Idaho.

Please, take some action soon to stop the declining deer & elk populations of our state.

Thank You.

Sincerely,

Nancy Karner-Lewis

Nancy Karner-Lewis


cc: Governor Jerry Brown
DFG Director Charlton H. Bonham
Western Outdoor News

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2/26/2016

Western Outdoor News

Elk herd plummeted from 16,000 to 1,000 *Idaho wolves killed so elk can survive*

BOISE, Idaho — Idaho Fish and Game, with assistance from USDA Wildlife Services, has completed wolf control actions in northern Idaho's Lolo elk zone to improve elk survival in the area. The "control actions" involved killing 20 wolves to save an elk herd that once numbered 16,000 animals, but is now under 1,000 due to wolf predation.

Predation impacts to elk calf and cow survival is the primary factor limiting recovery of the Lolo elk population, which was once a healthy herd until wolves came on the scene.

Using a helicopter, Wildlife Services agents killed 20 wolves during the operation, which

started last week. This is in addition to 20 other wolves taken by hunters and trappers in the area. The operation is consistent with Fish and Game's Elk Management Plan and Lolo Predation Management Plan.

The control operation was paid for using Fish and Game license dollars transferred to the Idaho Wolf Depredation Control Board, created by the Idaho Legislature in 2014.

Fish and Game authorizes control actions where wolves are causing conflicts with people or domestic animals, or are a significant, measured factor in deer and elk population declines. Such control actions are

consistent with Idaho's 2002 Wolf Conservation and Management Plan approved by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the Idaho Legislature.

Fish and Game prefers to manage wolf populations using hunters and trappers and only authorizes control actions where regulated harvest has been insufficient to meet management goals. The Lolo zone is steep, rugged country that is difficult to access, especially in winter. To date, hunters and trappers have taken 20 wolves in the Lolo zone during the 2015-2016 season. The trapping season ends March 31 and the hunting season ends June 30.

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LASSEN COUNTY FISH AND GAME COMMISSION

707 NEVADA STREET, SUSANVILLE, CA 96130

February 5, 2016

Mr. Jack Baylis, President
California Fish and Game Commission
1416 Ninth Street, Suite 1320
Sacramento, CA 95814

Dear Mr. Baylis:

At the request of the Lassen County Board of Supervisors (Board), the Lassen County Fish and Game Commission (Commission) undertook a review of the Draft Wolf Conservation Plan (Plan). This review focused on the impact to wild game populations (deer and elk), livestock populations, hunting opportunity and ranching concerns.

Our review found the following:

1. There is no sound scientific data for California to apply to the management of the wolf;
2. As top tier pack predators, the wolves will focus on the prey that provides the least amount of energy to pursue, namely fenced in livestock;
3. Money obtained from hunting license sales must be used, as directed by law, to obtain baseline and ongoing data of ungulate herds in California;
4. Delisting of the wolf, supported by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, is the first step to properly managing wolves; and,
5. This attempt to formulate a Plan is clearly a political action driven by emotion rather than science and sound judgment.

The Commission supports the delisting of the wolf and the option for ranchers to use lethal force to suppress depredation of the livestock by wolves.

Sincerely,

Wade Workman, Chairman
Lassen County Fish & Game Commission

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