

From: cliff mcdonald < >
To: Sonke Mastrup < >
CC: < >
Date: 1/24/2012 2:05 PM
Subject: open quail early letter to Fish and Game Commission
Attachments: \$P Youth Quail.docx

Dear F&G

Below is a letter that I sent to the CA F&G Commission last year asking for a ONE DAY, TWO WEEK earlier quail season for the youth that were able to participate in the 2011 Mojave National Youth Quail hunt. My request along with the request from several other individuals, the Mojave National Preserve and several conservation organization was denied.

I feel that the main reason this request was denied was because of the testimony of Dan Yparraquirre, Wildlife Division of CA F&G, at the August 3rd meeting of the F&G Commission. I listened to Dan's statements, and for some reason he could not get the facts straight. Let me go thru several of the comments Dan mentioned.

"We would have to create another Zone and it would complicate the regulations."

My take on this: What zone would have to be created for a one day hunt? Complicate the regulations? If the CA F&G cannot take some time to figure out how to accomplish changing the regulations for the youth, our future, then I question the motives of the leaders of the CA F&G.

Dan Mentioned "Biological concerns" Imature birds is what he was taking about.

My letter below goes over this concern. This Jr hunt is within 50 miles of the AZ border, AZ has opened their quail season two weeks earlier then CA for years and I have hunted this season for ten years. AZ F&G does not seem to have these biological concerns about imature birds. If imature birds were being taken then the first ones to speak up would be the hunters wanting to delay the season.

Dan mentioned that the season was requested to be opened up to a month earlier as he did not know the details. He then went on to state that our request would be like opening duck season next week.

The fact is we requested the season to be opened two weeks earlier than the regular season. The reason for the two week request instead of only one is due to the fact that deer season opens one week before quail season. As to the comment about opening duck season next week, doing that would mean opening a season 2 1/2 month earlier. We are just requesting that the season be opened for one day two weeks earlier than the regular season, which would be around the same time AZ opens their quail season.

This is the letter I sent out to all of the supporters and volunteers of this years 2011 youth hunt. As you can see below we doubled the number of youth participants from the previous year. Our goal is to max out at 50 youth participants. These last two years have been very successful as far as participation from conservation organizations, volunteers and youth. The only part of the hunt that was unsuccessful was the amount of birds taken by the youth. My best estimate is 10-15 birds. It is very discouraging for a youth hunter to go out into the field and not even get a chance to take a bird. We feel that if the season was opened as we requested the youth might

be able to get more chances to take home a bird, thus greatly encouraging the youth to share and participate in a tradition shared by many sportsmen. All it takes is one bird to excite the youth about the sport rather than disappoint them. The early opening should not have any effect on the normal opening of quail season on the Million and a half acres of the Mojave National Preserve, due to the fact that there will only be up to 50 participants and will be limited to areas they can easily be hunted in one day when starting from Hole in the Wall campground. That leaves the majority of the MNP untouched by the early opening and even if we were able to increase the take to 30-40 it would not even put a dent in the number of quail available for the opening of the regular season.

Dear Friends and Supporters:

We would like to thank you for your generous support with the 2011 Mojave National Preserve Jr. Quail Hunt. Without support from individuals and organizations such as yourself, it would not be possible to have these Jr. hunts, introducing our future generations to the great outdoors.

At this last hunt, we had a total of 117 participants, of which 34 were Jr hunters. It takes several on the ground volunteers, including guides, camp hosts, clean up crews, and cooks to have a successful event. The cooks prepared over 300 meals which included hot breakfasts on Saturday and Sunday as well as dinner Saturday evening. We had a successful raffle and auction, of which all the items were donated by organizations and individuals such as YOU. 100% of the money collected goes right back into preparations for next year's hunt.

On behalf of the Mojave National Preserve, CA Fish and Game, Safari Club Orange County, CA Deer Association, Society for the Protection and Care of Wildlife, Quail Unlimited, Quails Forever, Quail & Upland Wildlife Federation, and all other supporters, we would like to thank you and your organization/company for your contributions to this year's junior hunt.

Looking forward to next year.

Sincerely,

Cliff McDonald

Water for Wildlife

www.waterforwildlife.us

Last years letter asking for a earlier season

January 20, 2011

California Fish and Game Commission

P. O. Box 944209

Sacramento, CA 94244-2090

Dear California Fish and Game Commission:

My name is Cliff McDonald and I am writing to you as a participant in this year's Mojave National Preserve's First Annual Junior Quail Hunt. Myself and five other volunteers helped organize this successful youth hunt. The Mojave National Preserve/National Park Service, Orange County Safari Club, Quails Forever, Upland Game Bird Assoc., Quails Unlimited and Water for Wildlife encompassing many volunteers, pulled together to furnish food, accommodations, prizes, ammo, backpacks, shirts and hunting vests for each youth participant.

We had 17 boys and girls enjoy two days of camping and one day of bird hunting. This event

took place on the 2nd weekend of quail season. The purpose of this letter is to express our desire to hold the hunt two weeks earlier or the first full weekend of October. This would allow the youth to hunt the birds (quail and chukar) prior to the birds becoming skittish, thus allowing the kids to have greater success and more fun while learning the skill of bird hunting. All of us involved really want to make this an enjoyable weekend for these kids and their parents, thus encouraging continued participation in the future.

I would also like to point out that for over 10 years AZ Game and Fish have been opening the quail season state wide two weeks earlier then CA. The area where the juniors would be hunting is only 50 miles from the AZ border. I live in Needles, CA and have hunter quail in AZ on opening day for the last 10 years. The river area, Kingman and the mountains around Oatman have always produced mature birds. It has been mentioned that by opening the season early there might be immature birds, I have not found this true in AZ. The first of Oct, the weather is almost perfect, the temps should be in the mid 70's during the day and mid 50's at night. Good weather makes for a better experience for the kids and their families.

Each year CA has several junior pheasant hunts with planted birds and the kids get to try out their shooting skills on these birds. There is a big difference between a wild quail or chukar and a planted pheasant. The kids will really get to experience hunting not just shooting. In most cases the pheasant hunts are on level ground, alfalfa fields etc, whereas this jr quail hunt will give the kids the true sense of the wild by chasing birds up and down the hills and mountains.

By way of history so that you know why I am involved I would like you to know that over the last six years I have organized many work parties to repair and restore wildlife drinkers throughout the East Mojave including the Mojave Preserve. You can go to www.waterforwildlife.us and see some of the work that the volunteers have done along with several kids learning conservation while volunteering to restore water for wildlife. To date we have restored over 100 guzzlers/drinkers and have plans to restore 100+ more.

It is my heartfelt desire that you will consider this request to open quail season two weeks early for these kids. This will be a limited hunt involving only property on the MNP. I wish to emphasize that there will be no adult participation in hunting of these birds. The adult participation will be dog handlers, parent supervision and camp volunteers; i.e, cooks, etc.

The Mojave National Preserve has graciously hosted this event and wants these Junior Hunts to become an annual event.

Sincerely,

Cliff McDonald

Water for Wildlife

Society for the Protection of Care and Wildlife