

COMMITTEE STAFF SUMMARY FOR MAY 24, 2017

7. PREDATOR POLICY WORKGROUP**Today's Item**Information Direction

Provide an update on recent WRC Predator Policy Workgroup (PPWG) activities and discuss the draft predator policy developed by PPWG.

Summary of Previous/Future Actions

- | | |
|---------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| • Previous PPWG meeting | Feb 21, 2017; PPWG, Sacramento |
| • Previous PPWG meeting | Mar 20, 2017; PPWG, Sacramento |
| • Today's WRC discussion | May 24, 2017; WRC, Sacramento |
| • Next PPWG meeting | Jul 13, 2017; PPWG, Sacramento |

Background

In 2016, PPWG developed a draft predator policy, which PPWG revised in Nov based on reviewer comments. FGC staff presented the revised draft policy to WRC at its Jan 2017 meeting for review and discussion. In response to a letter submitted by a subset of PPWG members and comments made by PPWG members at the WRC meeting, WRC Co-chair Williams provided guidance on the draft policy for PPWG consideration, with the understanding that WRC Co-chair Burns may provide additional guidance at the May WRC meeting. PPWG made revisions to the draft policy at both of its Feb and Mar 2017 meetings, but was not able to reach consensus on the draft policy.

Today FGC staff will present the Feb and Mar versions of the draft policy (exhibits 1 and 2) for WRC discussion, provide an update on recent PPWG activities, and present the revised work plan timeline based on input from FGC at the Apr 2017 meeting.

Significant Public Comments

Received one comment letter regarding the activities and efforts of a subset of the PPWG reviewers, self-referred to as the Conservation Reviewers (Exhibit 3).

Recommendation

FGC staff: Provide input to PPWG on the draft predator policy.

Exhibits

1. [Draft predator policy, dated Feb 21, 2017](#)
2. [Draft predator policy, dated Mar 20, 2017](#)
3. [Letter from Tom O'Key and others, received May 11, 2017](#)

Committee Direction/Recommendation (N/A)

California Fish and Game Commission

DRAFT Terrestrial Predators Policy

Developed by the Wildlife Resources Committee's Predator Policy Workgroup

Revised Feb 21, 2017¹

It is the policy of the Fish and Game Commission that:

- I. For the purposes of this policy, terrestrial predators are defined as all native, wildlife species in the Order Carnivora, except those in the Family Otariidae (seals, sea lions) and the Family Phocidae (true seals).
- II. Pursuant to the objectives in Section 1801 of Fish and Game Code, the Fish and Game Commission (Commission) acknowledges that native terrestrial predators are an integral part of California's natural wildlife and possess intrinsic, biological, historical, and cultural value which benefit society and ecosystems. The Commission shall promote the ecological, scientific, aesthetic, recreational, and educational value of native terrestrial predators in the context of ecosystem-based management while minimizing adverse impacts on wildlife and reducing conflicts that result in adverse impacts to humans, including health and safety, private property, agriculture, and other public and private economic impacts.
- III. The Commission further recognizes that sustainable conservation and management strategies are necessary to encourage the coexistence of humans and wildlife. It is, therefore, the policy and practice of the Fish and Game Commission that:
 - A. Existing native terrestrial predator communities and their habitats are monitored, maintained, restored, and/or enhanced using the best available science. The department shall protect, conserve, and provide consumptive and non-consumptive recreational opportunities. The recreational take of native terrestrial predator species shall be managed in a way that ensures sustainable populations of predator and prey are maintained.
 - B. Human-predator conflicts shall rely on management strategies that avoid and reduce conflict that results in adverse impacts to human health and safety, private property, agriculture, and public and private economic impacts. Efforts should be made to minimize habituation of predators especially where it is leading to conflict. Human safety shall be considered a priority. Management decisions regarding human-predator conflicts shall evaluate and consider lethal and nonlethal controls that are efficacious, humane, feasible, and in compliance with all applicable state and federal laws and regulations.
 - C. Native terrestrial predator management shall be consistent with the goals and objectives of existing management and conservation plans. Management strategies shall recognize the ecological interactions between predators and other wildlife species and consider all available management tools, best available science, affected habitat, and other constraints.

¹ A minor revision was made to Section III.B. at the March 2017 Predator Policy Workgroup meeting, but the revision date remains unchanged to more clearly differentiate the February and March drafts currently under consideration by the Predator Policy Workgroup.

California Fish and Game Commission

DRAFT Terrestrial Predators Policy

Developed by the Wildlife Resources Committee's Predator Policy Workgroup

Revised March 20, 2017

Under Consideration by Workgroup

It is the policy of the Fish and Game Commission that:

- I. For the purposes of this policy, terrestrial predators are defined as all native, wildlife species in the Order Carnivora, except those in the Family Otariidae (seals, sea lions) and the Family Phocidae (true seals).
- II. Pursuant to the objectives in Section 1801 of Fish and Game Code, the Fish and Game Commission (Commission) acknowledges that native terrestrial predators are an integral part of California's natural wildlife and possess intrinsic, biological, historical, and cultural value which benefit society and ecosystems. The Commission shall promote the ecological, scientific, aesthetic, recreational, and educational value of native terrestrial predators in the context of ecosystem-based management while minimizing adverse impacts on wildlife and reducing conflicts that result in adverse impacts to humans, including health and safety, private property, agriculture, and other public and private economic impacts.
- III. The Commission further recognizes that sustainable conservation and management strategies are necessary to encourage the coexistence of humans and wildlife. It is, therefore, the policy and practice of the Fish and Game Commission that:
 - A. Existing native terrestrial predator communities and their habitats are monitored, maintained, restored, and/or enhanced using the best available science. The department shall protect, conserve, and provide consumptive and non-consumptive recreational opportunities. The recreational take of native terrestrial predator species shall be managed in a way that ensures sustainable populations of predator and prey are maintained.
 - B. Human-predator conflicts shall rely on management strategies that avoid and reduce conflict that results in adverse impacts to human health and safety, private property, agriculture, and public and private economic impacts. Efforts should be made to minimize habituation of predators especially where it is leading to conflict. Human safety shall be considered a priority. Management decisions regarding human-predator conflicts shall evaluate and consider various forms of lethal and nonlethal controls that are efficacious, humane, feasible and in compliance with all applicable state and federal laws and regulations. A diverse set of management tools should be considered including but not limited to recreational take, wildlife control methods, and exclusionary methods.
 - C. Native terrestrial predator management shall be consistent with the goals and objectives of existing management and conservation plans. Management strategies shall recognize the ecological interactions between predators and other wildlife species and consider all available management tools, best available science, affected habitat, species, and ecosystems and other factors.

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Tom O'Key

May 7, 2017

Dear Commissioners,

Thank you for the opportunity to address the Commission with our comments and please accept our sincere gratitude for your continued dedication and leadership defending our wildlife and wild lands.

I am responding as a member of the PPWG "Conservation Reviewers" with this submission before the May 11 deadline for public comments regarding the Wildlife Resources Committee meeting scheduled for May 24, 2017. The comments being offered here are following item 7 (A) on the agenda; "Update Predator Policy Workgroup activity."

Our Conservation review group will be submitting a larger packet for your consideration at the Wildlife Resources Committee meeting on May 24, 2017.

As the WRC agenda item 7 (A) suggests by its wording - an update - we thought our comments might best be addressed by submitting documents showing the level and extent of our work as the conservation review group of the Predator Policy, up to this point. Among the data that we plan to submit at the meeting will be copies of our call notes from the weekly meetings our group has held for discussing Predator Policy proceedings since this process began.

A key function of our comments is that the Commissioners be made fully aware of the full scope and depth of the effort that has been made by our Review Group to this point. The PPWG conservation review group is a strong, knowledgeable and committed resource and we have been working with dedication and diligence on the tasks as assigned during the entire PPWG process.

We believe there is good reason to review the work that has been thoughtfully proposed and compiled by the conservation Reviewers. At the very least, the insights gained as to what has actually been accomplished by the Work Group to date should constructively inform the timeline for our expectations about completing the work for better wildlife policy and management in the future.

We believe the end result of our work is to update California's predator policy to reflect the changing paradigm of management strategies for all predators, and to improve the laws and regulations related to predator management that are overdue for reconsideration.

Please accept this letter as part of our complete submission for the WRC meeting on May 24.

Thank you,
Tom O'Key

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Tom O'Key', with a long horizontal stroke and a vertical line extending downwards from the end.

PPWG Reviewer,
On behalf of the PPWG Conservation Reviewers group:
Erin Hauge

Sharon Ponsford
Fauna Tomlinson
Keli Hendricks

Cc: Erin Chappell, Wildlife Advisor, CDFW