

Staff Summary for April 16-17, 2025

18B. Wildlife Resources Committee (WRC)**Today's Item**Information ☐Action ☒

Discuss referred topics and consider revisions to topics and timing. Consider approving draft agenda topics and changing the meeting location for the next committee meeting on May 15, 2025.

Note: Reference to changing the meeting location for the May 15 WRC meeting is an error; staff does not recommend any change to the meeting location.

Summary of Previous/Future Actions

- | | |
|---|--------------------------|
| • Previous committee meeting | January 15, 2025; WRC |
| • Today consider approving agenda topics | April 16-17, 2025 |
| • Next committee meeting | May 15, 2025; WRC |

Background

WRC works under Commission direction to set and accomplish its work plan.

Committee Work Plan

Topics that have been referred by the Commission to WRC are displayed within a work plan for scheduling and tracking. The updated work plan is Exhibit 1 and includes proposed topics for May 2025.

Update and New Topics

At its February meeting, the Commission requested WRC revisit the topic of “coyotes” associated with the take of nongame mammals topic and to keep the topic narrowly focused on coyotes. Consequently, staff proposes renaming the topic “Take of Nongame Mammals” to “Take of Coyotes” to more properly reflect the narrowed scope of the re-referred topic.

Staff recommends referring “Black bear hunting” to WRC as a new topic, to initiate discussion on an upcoming Department-recommended rulemaking with the release of the Department’s April 2025 “Black Bear Conservation and Management Plan for California.”

Next Committee Meeting

The next committee meeting is scheduled for May 15, 2025 in Sacramento, with webinar and phone options. In addition to standing agenda items (Department updates and future agenda items), eight topics are proposed:

- *Periodic and Annual Rulemakings (6 topics):* Initial vetting for (1) upland (resident) game birds; (2) mammal hunting; (3) waterfowl hunting; (4) Central Valley sport fishing; (5) Klamath River Basin sport fishing; and (6) Department lands.
- *Take of Coyotes:* Discussion and potential recommendation for concerns regarding the indiscriminate take of coyotes.

Staff Summary for April 16-17, 2025

- *Bear Hunting*: Initial vetting for amendments to bear hunting zones, tags, and other aspects.

Significant Public Comments

1. State Assemblymember Hadwick, State Senator Dahle, the County of Lassen, and the Siskiyou County Board of Supervisors all request that the take of nongame mammals topic be referred back to WRC for further discussion (exhibits 2 through 4).
2. The Colusa County Fish and Game Advisory Commission, with the support of the Colusa County Farm Bureau, requests that the Commission not prohibit the take of any nongame mammals because they are becoming more intrusive and problematic, especially in rural areas (Exhibit 5).
3. Animal Pest Services and two cattle ranchers from Butte County (in separate comments) urge the Committee to continue allow the take of coyotes. The former also points out that there is no evidence that coyote populations are decreasing (Exhibit 6).

Recommendation

Commission staff: Approve the draft agenda topics for the May 15 WRC meeting, and approve the work plan as proposed in Exhibit 1, including any changes identified during today's meeting.

Exhibits

1. [WRC work plan, updated April 9, 2025](#)
2. [Letter from Assemblymember Hadwick and State Senator Dahle, received February 12, 2025](#)
3. [Letter from Tony Shaw, Administrator, Lassen County, received February 10, 2025](#)
4. [Letter from Nancy Ogren, Chair, Siskiyou County Board of Supervisors, received February 11, 2025](#)
5. [Letter from Jon Wrysinski, Chairman, Colusa County Fish & Game Advisory Commission, received February 21, 2025](#)
6. [Letters from Dan Fox, President, Animal Pest Management, received February 10, 2025, and Tim and Shirley Bohan, received February 14, 2025](#)

Motion

Moved by _____ and seconded by _____ that the Commission approves the topics for the May 15, 2025 Wildlife Resources Committee meeting, as discussed today, and approves the work plan as proposed.

California Fish and Game Commission
Wildlife Resources Committee (WRC) Work Plan
Scheduled Topics and Timeline for Items Referred to WRC
Updated April 9, 2025

Note: Proposed changes to topics/timing are shown in blue underscore or strike-out font

Topics	Category	Jan 2025	May 2025	Sep 2025
Periodic and Annual Regulations				
Upland (Resident) Game Birds	Regulatory		X	X/R
Big Game Hunting	Regulatory	X/R	X	X/R
Waterfowl Hunting	Annual Regulatory		X	X/R
Central Valley Sport Fishing	Annual Regulatory		X	X/R
Klamath River Basin Sport Fishing	Annual Regulatory		X	X/R
Inland Sport Fishing (including striped bass)	Regulatory	X/R		X
Department Lands	Regulatory		X	X/R
Regulations & Legislative Mandates				
<u>Falconry</u>	<u>Referral for Review</u>	X	X	
Restricted Species	Regulatory			
<u>Take of Nongame Mammals</u> <u>Take of Coyotes</u>	Referral for Review	X/R	X/R	X/R
<u>Black Bear Hunting</u>	<u>Referral for Review</u>		X	X/R

KEY: X Discussion scheduled X/R Recommendation potentially developed and moved to FGC

Agenda Item 16. (B) Wildlife Resources Committee

From Nickens, Andrew <Andrew.Nickens@asm.ca.gov>

Date Wed 02/12/2025 10:24 AM

To FGC <FGC@fgc.ca.gov>

Hello,

Please find attached a letter from Assemblywoman Heather Hadwick and Senator Megan Dahle regarding Agenda Item 16. (B) Wildlife Resources Committee.

Thank you.

Best,



Andrew Nickens

Work: 916-319-2211

Mobile: 916-990-2846

Office of Assemblywoman Heather Hadwick (AD-1)

**Please note that I am the primary point of contact for legislative affairs.*

STATE CAPITOL
P.O. BOX 942849
SACRAMENTO, CA 94249-0001
(916) 319-2001
FAX (916) 319-2101



February 12, 2025

President Samantha Murray
California Fish and Game Commission
P.O. Box 944209
Sacramento, CA

RE: Agenda Item 16. (B) Wildlife Resources Committee

Dear President Murray and Commissioners:

We, the undersigned, are writing to express our serious concerns regarding the recommendation from the Commission's Wildlife Resources Committee made on January 15th to restrict rural agricultural communities' ability to manage coyote populations. Because inadequate public notice was given, there was no opportunity for stakeholders and the public to meaningfully review and participate in the discussion of this agenda item. This recommendation will have devastating consequences for rural agricultural communities.

Farmers and ranchers in California rely on responsible wildlife management practices to protect their livelihoods. Unmanaged coyote populations wreak havoc by stressing livestock, killing animals, and raising the cost of food. The impact to farmers and ranchers demands a comprehensive dialogue.

Unfortunately, this topic was improperly agendized, inadequately noticed, and the recommendation was advanced by a single member of the Wildlife Resources Committee. Without input from rural communities and agricultural producers, the Wildlife Resources Committee cannot make a well-informed recommendation.

We strongly urge you to refer this inappropriate recommendation back to the Wildlife Resources Committee for a complete review that allows the public to meaningfully participate as required by California law pursuant to the Bagley-Keene Open Meeting Act.

Sincerely,

HEATHER HADWICK
Assemblymember, District 1

MEGAN DAHLE
Senator, District 1

County of Lassen
ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES



MIKE SCANLAN

District 1

GARY BRIDGES

District 2

TOM NEELY

District 3

AARON ALBAUGH

District 4

JASON INGRAM

District 5

Tony Shaw

County Administrative Officer
email: coadmin@co.lassen.ca.us

County Administration Office
221 S. Roop Street, Suite 4
Susanville, CA 96130
Phone: 530-251-8333
Fax: 530-251-2663

February 10, 2025

VIA EMAIL: fgc@fgc.ca.gov

California Fish and Game Commission

RE: California Fish and Game Commission February 12 meeting - Section 472

Dear President Murray and members of the California Fish and Game Commission:

Due to a very late communication received by Lassen County Supervisor Aaron Albaugh regarding your meeting of February 12, 2025, I am writing on behalf of the County of Lassen to respectfully request that the you and the Fish and Game Commission send the recommendations from your Wildlife Resources Committee (WRC) regarding coyotes and Section 472 of the California Fish and Game Code back to the WRC.

Of the County of Lassen's first concern, is that it's our understanding that WRC's public noticing of the January 15 meeting was not specific to coyotes, and therefore, meaningful public input was lacking for the WRC to consider prior to the WRC making a recommendation for consideration by you and the Commission.

Secondly, as you are well aware, California Fish and Game Code Section 472 continues to provide impacted Californians, including small business owners who are farmers and ranchers, and youth development programs that teach students about agriculture by raising and selling livestock, with the legal means to protect their crops and livestock before there is a conflict or after when there has been damage to life and property. Prior to making a decision on changing Section 472, please make an inquiry to the Department of Fish and Wildlife to provide data and analysis of the California Wildlife Incident Reporting System with regard to incidents involving coyotes, including incidents reported from metropolitan and rural areas; and for such information to be made available to the general public in advance of any future meetings on this subject.

For these reasons, the County of Lassen respectfully requests that the Commission seek additional public input by sending the WRC's recommendations back to the WRC for further study.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be "TS", with a long, sweeping horizontal line extending to the right.

Tony Shaw

Lassen County Administrative Officer

RE: Committee and Department Reports: Wildlife Resources Committee (Agenda Item 17(B)) - County of Siskiyou Comments

From Elizabeth Nielsen <enielsen@co.siskiyou.ca.us>

Date Tue 02/11/2025 09:49 AM

To FGC <FGC@fgc.ca.gov>

Hello,

Please disregard the previous letter and use this attached one which includes a corrected footer.

Thanks!

Elizabeth
(530) 842-8012

From: Elizabeth Nielsen

Sent: Tuesday, February 11, 2025 9:01 AM

To: fgc@fgc.ca.gov

Subject: Committee and Department Reports: Wildlife Resources Committee (Agenda Item 17(B)) - County of Siskiyou Comments

Hello,

Please see attached a comment letter for the Commission's February 12th meeting.

Thanks!

Elizabeth Nielsen

Deputy County Administrator

County of Siskiyou

1312 Fairlane

Yreka, CA 96097

(530) 842-8012



COUNTY OF SISKIYOU

Board of Supervisors

1312 Fairlane, Suite 1
Yreka, California 96097
www.co.siskiyou.ca.us

(530) 842-8005
FAX (530) 842-8013
Toll Free: 1-888-854-2000, ext. 8005

February 10, 2025

President Samantha Murray
California Fish and Game Commission
P.O. Box 944209
Sacramento, CA

Subject: Committee and Department Reports: Wildlife Resources Committee (Agenda Item 17(B))

Dear President Murray and Commissioners:

We are writing to express our strong concern regarding the motion passed by a single member of the Commission's Wildlife Resources Committee on January 15, recommending that the Commission approve a future rulemaking to amend Section 472 by removing coyotes, in conjunction with a future rulemaking to maintain hunting opportunities. We understand that during its February 12 meeting, the Commission will "potentially act on the recommendations" and "discuss referred topics" from the Wildlife Resources Committee and "consider revisions to topics and timing" of matters referred to the Commission by the Committee.¹ In light of the potential consequences of this motion, we ask that the Commission *re-refer* this issue to the Wildlife Resources Committee for a full and proper review.

Siskiyou County, a rural agricultural community in Northern California, is home to many livestock producers whose livelihoods depend on healthy and productive herds. Coyotes, if left unmanaged, pose a grave threat to these operations, causing stress to livestock, disrupting their reproductive patterns, and directly killing animals. Livestock producers are compelled to manage coyote populations to safeguard their businesses. The motion put forth by the Wildlife Resources Committee creates immediate and unacceptable risks to our local agricultural economy. To date, there has been no indication that the County, livestock producers, nor the general public received adequate notice or outreach before the January 15 meeting regarding the Committee's consideration of limiting coyote take under 14 C.C.R. 472.

As highlighted in the California Cattlemen's Association's January 30 letter, the Bagley-Keene Open Meeting Act mandates that state bodies provide proper notice of meetings and agendas. While the Committee's agenda mentioned a "Discussion and potential recommendations for change to the take of nongame mammals regulations," it did not clearly specify that the Committee would consider a proposal to restrict livestock producers' ability to manage coyote

¹ Video recording: Wildlife Resources Committee Meeting - January 15, 2025 - Sacramento | Webinar/ Teleconference, at 6:36:31 (Jan. 15, 2025) (motion of Wildlife Resources Committee Co-Chair Erika Zavaleta), available at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_tz6KlOpF8M [hereinafter January 15, 2025 WRC Meeting].

populations. The agenda was insufficiently detailed, leaving out critical information that could have signaled the potential harm to our rural communities and agricultural producers.

Given the severity of the proposed changes and their far-reaching consequences, we insist that this matter be referred back to the Wildlife Resources Committee with explicit instructions to provide *clear and comprehensive notice* before any future discussions or hearings on this issue. This re-referral will ensure more transparency, foster greater public participation, and facilitate a more thoughtful and informed decision-making process.

We appreciate the opportunity to comment on this matter, and your consideration of our concerns. We look forward to a productive dialogue on this important and consequential topic.

Sincerely,

Signed by:

852DA1B9F1C44B4...

Nancy Ogren

Chair, Board of Supervisors

cc:

Rural County Representative of California (RCRC)
California State Association of Counties (CSAC)
Shaw Yoder Antwih Schmelzer & Lange
Assemblymember Heather Hadwick
Senator Megan Dahle
California Cattlemen's Association
Siskiyou County Cattlemen's Association
Siskiyou County Farm Bureau

COLUSA COUNTY FISH & GAME ADVISORY COMMISSION
546 Jay Street, Suite 202
Colusa, CA 95932

February 18, 2025

California Fish and Game Commission
P.O. Box 944209
Sacramento, CA 94244-2090

The Colusa County Fish & Game Advisory Commission would like to address the item that was on your agenda this month regarding the "Take of Nongame Mammals". Our Commission with the support of the Colusa County Farm Bureau request that you do not prohibit take of nongame mammals. Our state has a huge problem with nuisance as well as predatory mammals. While the effects might not be so great in the urban areas such as Torrance and Anaheim which were referred to in your staff summary, they are a major concern of rural areas in Northern California where farming and ranching are abundant. We understand the need the Commission has to protect and preserve fish and wildlife in the state, there also needs to be a focus on the needs of the residents and those who make their living and provide for basic needs of others as well. With the loss of land for food, including hunting and fishing opportunities due to the increased need for housing, these mammals are becoming much intrusive and problematic.

We urge you to oppose this item and appreciate your consideration regarding our request as you consider the needs of the residents of this State. We look forward to hearing back via email to our Secretary at hgallagher@countyofcolusa.com or via mail at the above address.

Sincerely,

Jon Wrysinski

Jon Wrysinski
Chairman
Colusa County Fish & Game Advisory Commission

Animal Pest Management Services, Inc. - Letter for Commissioners

From Melissa Featherstun <mfeatherstun@animalpest.com>

Date Mon 02/10/2025 04:39 PM

To FGC <FGC@fgc.ca.gov>

Cc Dan Fox <dfox@animalpest.com>

Hello,

Please see attached letter for the commissioners regarding coyotes.

Thank you,

Melissa Featherstun

Animal Pest Management Services
13655 Redwood Ct,
Chino, CA 91710
(800) 344-6567



Animal Pest Management Services, Inc.
Urban Wildlife Professionals 🐾

Phone 800.344.6567
Fax 909.591.0941

Date: February 2nd, 2025

Dear Commissioners,

I would like to voice my opposition to any changes in the non-game regulations in the Fish and Game Code. It is my understanding this may come at the Commission this week under agenda item 16 (b) on the Wildlife Resources Committee report.

My business – Animal Pest Management Services, Inc. (APM) – has been operating in Southern California since October, 1982. Today, we have 44 employees providing solutions for control of all types of wildlife causing human conflicts. We have ongoing contracts with a number of cities and counties, along with private business like homeowner associations, golf courses, wineries and even individual homeowners.

Most of our work involves removal of non-game animals, with coyotes representing a percentage of our workload.

It is our understanding that most of the discussions in the Wildlife Resources Committee of the Commission have been regarding coyotes and possible elevation to a game animal, removing them from the non-game list and the regulations current in affect. We are seriously concerned how this would impact our business, especially if depredation permits are required for each coyote. We do enough work with other game animals – most often problem bears and bobcats – that we know how much extra time, cost, and effort is involved in these cases. In fact, it can frequently take a week or more to get one of these permits from the Department of Fish and Wildlife. Frequently, because of the added time, we are unable to respond to a specific problem animal in a timely fashion and have to respond after permits are in hand, waiting until another problem occurs. In the case of killed pets or livestock, this cumbersome permit process just increases the losses to the affected people.


While we have adapted to this process, if all non-game animals, and specifically coyotes, were removed from the non-game list and special permits required for their take it would add a significant cost to our ability to serve the public and agencies who use our services.

Our staff did a quick survey of scientific literature on the status of coyotes, and found virtually no evidence their populations or range are decreasing anywhere in the country. In fact, populations continue to grow and increase their range, especially in Southern California. Our work in urban areas proves these animals can adapt – even thrive – in just about any environment from suburban neighborhoods and city parks to local wilderness.

As our friends at HOWL have pointed out, this effort seems like a “solution looking for a problem”. I would like to encourage the Commission to table indefinitely any discussions on changing the non-game regulations at this time.

I appreciate your time and consideration.

Respectfully,


Dan Fox
President
Principal Biologist
Urban Wildlife Biologist
Pest Control Advisor #70969
QAL #96258



February 8, 2025

California Fish and Game Commission
715 P Street, 16th Floor
Sacramento, CA 95814

Dear Fish and Game Commissioners,

This letter is in response to your consideration of removing coyotes from a critical section of code that allows for their take regardless of the situation. We strongly disagree with this action, and respectfully request you reconsider this possible decision.

Our family has been cattle ranchers in Butte County for over 140 years. Coyotes have been a serious nuisance over the years. Controlling coyote populations is the only way to keep their population from exploding.

Every year, we lose one or two newborn calves to coyotes. Not only are we concerned with our calves being taken down, but with the deer herd being decimated and citizen's pets, domestic chicken flocks being threatened and killed.

The coyote population is substantial, we cannot afford to allow it to exponentially increase by removing them from the code.

Thank you for your consideration of this request.

Sincerely yours

Tim and Shirley Bohan

