

STATE OF UTAH	NO. W1AG-4	NO. PAGES 5
DIVISION OF WILDLIFE RESOURCES	EFFECTIVE DATE: January 5, 2006	
ADMINISTRATION	APPROVED: Wildlife Board, January 5, 2006	
SUBJECT: MANAGING PREDATORY WILDLIFE SPECIES		
DISTRIBUTION: ALL DIVISION EMPLOYEES		

## I. PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to provide direction in managing predator populations. The Division recognizes the need to efficiently and effectively manage predators [~~the Division~~] and recognizes predator management [~~to be~~] as a [~~viable and~~] legitimate wildlife management tool that must be available to wildlife managers when needed. However, the Division also recognizes that predator management [~~is~~] can be controversial both publicly and professionally. [~~The purpose of this policy is to provide direction in managing predator populations.~~]

## II. POLICY

[~~Predator populations, as with all wildlife in Utah, will be managed to assure their future ecological, intrinsic, scientific, educational and recreational values, and to limit conflicts with human enterprise and values.~~] When predator populations are believed to be inhibiting the ability of the Division to attain management objectives for other wildlife populations and the Division decides to implement predator management actions, [~~the~~] these management actions will be directed by a [~~predation~~] predator management plan. Predator populations, as with all wildlife in Utah, will be managed to assure their future ecological, intrinsic, scientific, educational and recreational values.

When a predator management plan is implemented predator populations will be managed through [~~habitat manipulation,~~] sport hunting, depredation control, habitat manipulation and other programs. Wildlife managers and administrators implementing predator management options will consider the ecological relationships that will be affected. Management decisions will be consistent with objectives or management plans [~~for prey base~~] of affected wildlife populations, predator species management plans, habitat, and other biological and social constraints.

The [~~Division is not responsible for managing~~] management of coyotes and raccoons [~~that are~~] is under the jurisdiction of the Utah Department of Agriculture

(UDA). The Division however[, ~~the Division~~] may invoke predator management actions directed at coyote and raccoon populations when wildlife management objectives are not being met and predation by these species is a contributing factor. [~~Thus, the monitoring of these species will be accomplished in accordance with a plan jointly developed and approved by the Division, UDA, and United States Department of Agriculture Wildlife Services (USDA-WS).~~]

The Division, when and where feasible, will rely on sportsmen to take predators. Circumstances requiring predator management efforts by USDA-~~[WS]~~Wildlife Services (WS) or the Division will be considered as needed. Management programs to reduce predator populations will be:

- A. Confined to specific treatment areas;
- B. Targeted toward the species and the offending animal whenever practical; and
- C. Initiated only after preparation of a predator management plan containing an explanation why predator management is necessary, measurable objectives, expected results, and criteria to determine when to discontinue predator management actions.

This policy does not invalidate existing predator management policies and procedures used to administer livestock depredation issues.

### III. DEFINITIONS

- A. **“Predation”** means the act of an individual animal killing another live animal, normally for food as a means of maintaining its life.
- B. **“Predator”** means any wild animal species subsisting, wholly or in part, on other living animals through its own efforts. For the purpose of this policy, predators only include terrestrial and avian wildlife species.
- C. **“Predator management”** means the application of professional wildlife management techniques directed at predators (individually or at the population level) to accomplish specific management objectives.
- D. **“Prey”** means a species consumed by the predator and for which predator management is initiated.
- E. **“Take”** means to hunt, pursue, harass, catch, capture, possess, angle, seine, trap, or kill wildlife species.

#### IV. PROCEDURES

The Division will not support any public fund-raising contests, or similar activities, involving the taking of predators that may portray hunting in an unethical fashion, devalue the predator, or be offensive to the general public.

Managers must recognize the role of predators in an ecological and conservation context. The effects of removing one predator species may result in a population increase of another predator species. ~~[The actions by the]~~ Division actions must be based on the best available scientific information. In addition, ~~[managers must recognize the limited potential for predator removal to positively impact]~~ prey populations ~~[given the]~~ are affected by a multitude of ~~[additional]~~ factors ~~[involved. With this realization, managers must acknowledge that]~~. If reducing predator populations does not have the desired effect on prey populations, within a reasonable time frame, other overriding factors need to be addressed and further efforts to reduce predator populations ~~[are]~~ may not be warranted.

##### A. Predator Management May Occur But Is Not Limited To The Following Circumstances:

1. In localized areas where introductions or transplants of potentially vulnerable wildlife species (e.g., bighorn sheep, wild turkeys, Utah prairie dogs, and black-footed ferrets) has occurred or is imminent. Control should be ~~[intensive and of]~~ sufficient ~~[duration]~~ enough to allow transplanted ~~[animals and their progeny]~~ populations to become established and ~~[to become]~~ self-sustaining.
2. ~~[Situations where]~~ When prey populations are unable to meet management goals and objectives, and predation plays a significant role. For example, where survival or recruitment of wildlife populations is chronically low, populations are below management plan objectives and there is evidence that predation is a significant factor. Predator control will not be implemented to compensate for other problems such as habitat deficiencies and natural population cycles of the prey species.
3. When an individual predator is consistently preying on sensitive prey populations (e.g. when a individual cougar is consistently preying a group of bighorn sheep).
4. On wildlife waterfowl management areas, especially those primarily managed for specific species and predation is significantly affecting the population.

## B. Options

Three options are available to the Division to remove predators and are listed in order of preference:

1. Licensed or permitted hunters or trappers will take predators in the seasons provided;
2. Designated individuals, including WS agents, will systematically take specified predators in a selected geographic area; or
3. Division personnel will take predators in a selected geographic area.

Predator Management Plans ~~[must]~~should consider options other than ~~[just]~~ lethal removal. Various kinds of habitat manipulation can sometimes negate or minimize the effect of predators, including constructing nesting islands and providing cover plantings~~[- Preventative actions are important in reducing [- therefore, the Division will cooperate with federal and state agencies, counties and others to promote activities on public and private lands that will limit predator impacts. Such activities may include the maintenance of clean camps, information and education efforts, livestock husbandry practices and other agricultural practices].~~

## C. Predator Management Plans

The wildlife section chief and regional supervisor will review all predator management plans. The director must approve predator management plans. Predator management plans will be reviewed and evaluated ~~[annually]~~every 3 years in conjunction with cougar harvest recommendations.

Predator management plans will be prepared using the following outline:

1. Definition of the area;
2. Definition of the problem - discuss hunting factors, habitat quality, and hunting strategies;
3. Establish measurable objectives including evaluation criteria;
4. Identify strategies and management actions, including
  - a. predator control - species, method
  - b. habitat enhancement
  - c. hunting strategies; and

5. Identify when to stop management actions.
  - a. criteria to stop based on prey populations / objectives.
  - b. criteria to stop based on the predator population status, and / or
  - c. lack of response of prey populations despite predator reductions.

## V. REVIEW DATE

This policy shall be reviewed on or before January 5, 2016.

### Appendix I

#### Criteria to Initiate Consideration of a Unit Predator Management Plan

1. When a transplant or reintroduction of a species susceptible to predation (e.g. bighorn sheep, black-footed ferret, etc) will occur in the next year.
2. When big game populations on a management unit or subunit are below 65% of management objective (criteria does not apply to bighorn sheep).
3. When big game populations on a management unit or subunit are below 75% of management objective and are stable or decreasing for 3 consecutive years (criteria does not apply to bighorn sheep).
4. When bighorn sheep populations on a unit or subunit are below 90% of management objective.
5. When big game populations are below viable levels (e.g. bighorn sheep < 125).
6. When big game sex ratios or average age class objectives of prey populations are below unit objectives.
7. When predators are significantly impacting Sensitive Species populations (e.g. [~~predator control to protect~~]sage grouse, Utah

prairie dogs, black-footed ferrets or other Sensitive Species[  
~~populations~~].

8. [~~In addition,~~]When a big game population is chronically below unit management plan objective, that objective will be reviewed as it relates to the carrying capacity of the habitat.

Proposal