



State of California – Natural Resources Agency
DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND WILDLIFE
Northern Region
601 Locust Street
Redding, CA 96001
www.wildlife.ca.gov

GAVIN NEWSOM, Governor
CHARLTON H. BONHAM, Director



11/6/2023

Lassen County Board of Supervisors
221 S. Roop Street, Suite 4
Susanville, CA 96130

Subject: CDFW Response to July 2023 Director's Commitments

Dear Chairperson:

On July 11th, 2023, California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) Director Charles Bonham spoke to the Lassen County Board of Supervisors (BOS) and promised to address several issues of concern to the County and its constituents. After the meeting we coordinated with Tony Shaw, Deputy County Administrative Officer, who recommended that CDFW provide a written response regarding each topic addressed to the Lassen County Board of Supervisors. Please see our comments and answers below and we look forward to further discussions with County staff and establishing regular meetings and/or presentation with local CDFW and County staff.

Northern Region-Specific Issues:

- 1. Meet with City, County staff, and Lassen F&G Commission to discuss urban deer management in Susanville.**

We look forward to finding a cooperative solution to address public concerns related to species management within the City of Susanville and will work with the Lassen County Fish and Game Commission and/or the Lassen County BOS. Brian Ehler, Lassen County Unit Biologist, will be our lead in those discussions with the assistance of Branch staff including Brian Leo, Statewide deer coordinator as appropriate. Regional staff are willing to meet with County staff on a quarterly basis, beginning in January 2024, to present strategies to reduce human-deer conflict within an urban setting. A helpful resource is this document developed by the Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies. This document offers management options to communities and agency leadership for resolving common human conflicts with urban deer. It provides an overview of the common issues and identifies common management practices with their associated benefits and challenges.

Lassen County Board of Supervisors
11/6/2023
Page 2

https://www.fishwildlife.org/application/files/7315/3745/9637/AFWA_Deer_Mngmt_Pop_Areas_August_31_2018_version.pdf

2. Meet with BOS and County staff to discuss management and current science of local wildlife species.

We are happy to have the opportunity to provide updates on local wildlife species (mountain lion, gray wolf, black bear, mule deer, elk & pronghorn) and describe current management practices to the County. Brian Ehler, Lassen County Unit Biologist, will be available to present and answer questions for county staff upon request, and will be willing to present wildlife updates to the BOS on a quarterly basis beginning in January 2024.

3. Have quarterly discussions with the BOS to discuss their priorities for CDFW Wildlife Areas in Lassen County (including grazing to control weeds).

We are happy to schedule quarterly meetings with local staff, please provide us with a date and time that you would like to meet and future meetings can be planned at that time. CDFW has started the internal process to develop a grazing plan for the Willow Creek Wildlife Area. Grazing at Ash Creek Wildlife Area is also a high priority and we have also started internal discussions on the goals and objectives for grazing at Honey Lake Wildlife Area.

Wildlife Branch and Region 1 Coordinated Issues:

4. Have greater CDFW presence in Lassen County, especially to discuss wolf management.

We have attended meetings where CDFW staff have been requested to participate and will continue to do so. We look forward to meetings that are more collaborative in nature where we can resolve ongoing and future challenges faced by constituents within Lassen County. Brian Ehler, Lassen County Unit Biologist (530-340-6808) is available locally to answer any questions or to discuss wildlife management in general. Kent Laudon, Wolf Specialist, Northern Region (530-215-0751), can address specific questions related to wolf management.

5. Is CDFW aware of any hybridization between wolves and coyotes in California?

There is no evidence of wolf/coyote hybridization in California, or other western states that have wolves including the Northern Rockies that have had wolves for decades. In eastern states, there has been some genetic mixing of these species, most likely having occurred hundreds of years ago. Looking into the future, hybridization in California is unlikely. Wolves are highly territorial against coyotes and will kill them.