

Date of Hearing: May 1, 2019

ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS  
Lorena Gonzalez, Chair  
AB 1254 (Kamlager-Dove) – As Amended April 11, 2019

Policy Committee: Water, Parks and Wildlife

Vote: 9 - 4

Urgency: No

State Mandated Local Program: Yes

Reimbursable: No

**SUMMARY:**

This bill, until January 1, 2025, prohibits the hunting of bobcats. Specifically, this bill:

- 1) Makes it unlawful to hunt, trap, or otherwise take (kill) a bobcat during the five-year period except under the following circumstances:
  - a) Under a depredation permit.
  - b) By a law enforcement officer or licensed veterinarian acting in the course and scope of their official duty.
  - c) Based on a good-faith belief that the take was necessary to protect a person from immediate bodily harm.
  - d) For scientific research and field investigation, as specified.
  - e) Under the provisions of a restricted species permit.
- 2) Upon appropriation by the Legislature, requires the Department of Fish and Wildlife (DFW) to develop a bobcat management plan, by January 1, 2024, to inform and coordinate management decisions regarding bobcat populations. Requires the plan to be submitted to the Fish and Game Commission (FGC) and the Legislature and to include all of the following:
  - a) A current statewide bobcat population estimate based on the best available science.
  - b) An assessment of the overall health of the statewide bobcat population.
  - c) A comprehensive strategy to manage bobcat populations and their habitat throughout the state, as specified.
  - d) An investigation of nonlethal solutions to prevent bobcat predation on livestock, as specified.
  - e) Recommendations for regulatory or legislative changes necessary to implement plan.
- 3) Beginning January 1, 2025, authorizes the FGC to open a bobcat hunting season in any area, as specified. Requires the FGC to consider various factors when making the decision.

- 4) Requires FGC to require the implementation of nonlethal management strategies to address public safety and livestock conflicts related to bobcats and adopt the management plan developed by DFW as a condition of opening the hunting season.

**FISCAL EFFECT:**

- 1) DFW costs of up to \$2.5 million to develop and implement a bobcat management plan (General Fund).
- 2) Loss of revenue of \$35,000 per year for five years from bobcat hunting tags (special fund).
- 3) DFW costs of \$30,000 to review and possibly update regulations (special fund).

**COMMENTS:**

- 1) **Purpose.** The author argues that because bobcats are not used for sustenance, California, as a leader in wildlife protection, should put an end to the trophy hunting of these animals. This bill places a moratorium on bobcat hunting while DFW develops a bobcat management plan.
- 2) **Background.** The hunting season of bobcats is from October 15 through February 28, and the bag limit is five bobcats per season. Bobcat tags returned by hunters provide information on the number, method of take and the date, time, location and gender of harvested bobcats. DFW allows an annual statewide harvest quota of 14,400 bobcats.

For the 2017-2018 season, the total hunter harvest of bobcats was 331 individuals. There was a total of 11,988 tags sold, and 2.8% of tags were reported as successful by bobcat hunters during the 2017-18 season.

- 3) **Hunting and the DFW Budget.** The year for hunting licenses runs from July 1 to June 30 of the following year. The current license price, including certain fees, for the July 1, 2018, through June 30, 2019, period for residents at least 18 years of age is \$48.34 and for persons under 18 years of age is \$12.70. Validations and harvest tags are required for many species and typically have an additional cost. Each bobcat tag costs \$3.24.

All hunting license sales generated more than \$25 million in fiscal year 2017, including the sale of hunting tags, validations and other entitlements.

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