

From: [FGC](#)
To: Woodson.Caren@FGC
Subject: FW: SDCVC Input about Predator Policy
Date: Tuesday, April 01, 2014 8:26:02 AM
Attachments: [What is Varmint Hunting Letter.pdf](#)
[SDCVC Final policy comments.pdf](#)

From: [REDACTED] Robert Williams
Sent: Sunday, March 30, 2014 4:14 PM
To: FGC; Wildlife DIRECTOR
Subject: SDCVC Input about Predator Policy

Dear Director Bonham and the Fish and Game Commission,

I have attached the San Diego County Varmint Callers input about the Predator Policy. The information attached should be forwarded to the Commissioners, each member of the Wildlife Resource Committee and to Sonke Mastrup, Executive Director.

We have also used the format for the predator policy which was suggested by Subcommittee Chairman Mr. Mastrup. We used the suggested color-codes for our comments to indicate which issues we consider serious (red), requiring further discussion (orange), or minor (green). We hope this helps.

Of course, there is much more we have to say about the proposed Code and Regulation changes, but placing them in a spreadsheet format is not possible. We look forward to discussing these issues in depth at the May 7th WRC meeting. In addition, if any meeting of the Predator Policy Subcommittee is scheduled before May 7th, we would appreciate a prompt notice of that meeting.

Besides finding the attached comments on the Predator Policy, you will also find a letter about **Varmint Hunting**. Varmint Hunting has been portrayed very negatively lately. I hope my personal perspective on Varmint Hunting will give you a different outlook.

We look forward to being a vital part of working through these codes and regulations.

If you have any questions or comments please contact me,

Robert Williams

President

San Diego County Varmint Callers

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San Diego County Varmint Callers

Predator Response

Existing F&G Code	
<p>2003 Possession and Take General</p>	<p>We believe that the CDFW, along with the Fish and Game Commission, recognize that hunting and trapping of coyotes is a valuable component of the management of the predator population of our state. While we are not suggesting that California follow Utah's imposition of a \$50 bounty on each coyote taken, nor Nevada's allowing hunting of coyotes without a hunting license, we do believe that current hunting regulations are helping California's sportsmen and women limit the growth of the coyote population. We believe that the hunting of coyotes will decrease the predation on other species deemed to be of considerable value to the State's economy (e.g., cattle, sheep and other livestock) as well as to the citizens in general (e.g., dogs and cats). Coyote and other predators are increasingly being seen in densely populated areas and are preying on domestic animals. Based upon the recognized, science-based principles and experience of game management, it is our belief that decreasing the number of these predators taken by hunters will only result in increased harm to the economy of the State and the welfare of its citizens.</p> <p>The arguments on both sides of this issue are often characterized by emotional rhetoric and questionable/biased studies; neither are valid bases from which to formulate good policies and regulations. We suggest, therefore, that the current code and policies be continued unchanged (including contest hunting) for a period of time sufficient to commission an independent, unbiased, objective scientific study of the trends in predator population and the effects of their predation on the other species in the State. At the conclusion of the study, the CDFW and the Commission will have scientific, statistically valid information upon which to make a factual assessment of the codes and, where</p>
<p>4000, 4002, 4003, 4004, 4011 Trapping of Fur-Bearing Mammals</p>	<p>The Trappers need to be involved in this section.</p>
<p>4152 Nongame Mammals</p>	<p>We think before there is a need to change any daily timeline to a 24 hr period, we need to hear from the trappers. Changing to a 24 hour period could possibly make it difficult for a trapper to meet their time schedule. We see this section could use some grammatical clean up, like the HSUS is recommending. The intent of the code is good and it allows for the Fish and Wildlife officer to make good judgment.</p>
<p>4153 Nongame Mammals</p>	<p>The department should report the finding and reasons why they need to control harmful nongame mammals. They should show these findings after they have responded to the threat. This will allow for the department to protect any bird, mammal, or fish which is being preyed upon in a timely manner. Reporting the findings before hand would only slow down the process and would put these bird, mammal, or fish in harms way.</p>
<p>4154 - Non game Mammals</p>	<p>This code is working and it allows the department to use it's best judgment</p>

San Diego County Varmint Callers

Predator Response

<p>4181, 4181.1, 4185 & 4190 Depredators</p>	<p>4181. We agree with clarifying all species to which this section applies</p>
<p>401 - Permit to Take Animals Causing Damage</p>	<p>We agree with getting rid of the word immediately in section (a) We agree with the Farm Bureau to add (2) Insert to 401(a) The department shall respond to an application as soon as possible, but no later than 72 hours after receiving the application. Should the department fail to respond, an application shall be deemed accepted and a permit issued.(3) Insert subsection 401(j) Taking of Bears Damaging or Threatening to damage Bee Hives. When issuing a permit authorizing taking of bears that have damaged or are threatening to damage bee hives, the department shall consider the feasibility of methods to prevent damage and deter future damage. Fencing shall not be required in instances where installation is infeasible.</p>
<p>461, 462, and 464 - Badger and Gray Fox, Muskrat and Mink, Raccoon</p>	<p>Nothing should be done in this unless an independent, unbiased, scientific study shows there is a need.</p>
<p>472 - General Provisions</p>	<p>This section is meeting the current need and we see no change needed or necessary unless there is an independent, unbiased, scientific study to show the need to make a change. A study should be done to show what the limit of animals should be or if there is even a need to limit the take of these animals. Show a Management Plan before anything is done.</p>
<p>475 Nongame Mammals</p>	<p>There is nothing wrong with this section. We see <u>there is a need for Electric calls</u>. This is a useful tool and is being used by many professionals. This electric device gives you more versatility when the weather isn't in your favor. This is a very useful tool that has helped many people deal with predator management on local farming and agriculture lands. Not only should electric calls be used for predator control, but should also be encouraged for more animals like fox and bear. This tool shouldn't be removed unless the best available science and studies show otherwise.</p>
<p>478, 478.7 & 480 - Bobcat</p>	<p>The current Commercial trapping activities are not having a detrimental effect on the Sportsman's take of bobcat. As the reported annual take of bobcat is well within the management guidelines, and no scientific data opposes this, the Commission's current management efforts are not in need of change.</p> <p>Hunting and trapping of bobcats should continue under the current plan. The 2012-2013 DFW Bobcat Harvest Assessment recommendations state that the DFW should "Continue to monitor the take of bobcats by geographical area, and use that information to determine the management needed to maintain viable bobcat populations throughout California." We believe this is a great plan and we should stick to the DFW recommendations.</p>

San Diego County Varmint Callers

"Varmint Hunting"

I would like to give you a little background on varmint hunting. First off, when it comes to varmints, most people think of rats, mice, ground hog and squirrels. In addition, however, there are predator animals like foxes, coyotes and bobcats that are also considered varmints. The coyote, the most notably hunted of the varmints, has not only grown in numbers but has also moved into every state except Hawaii. The coyote has learned to live amongst humans and can be seen in most urban and suburban areas. Many people talk about seeing the coyote living in, or running through the neighborhoods their kids play in.

What is coyote hunting and why do people choose to hunt the coyote? I guess the same question can be asked about deer, waterfowl and other types of hunting. Coyote hunting is more than just an exhilarating challenge between big game hunting seasons. Coyote hunting for me means getting out into the field as a parent and teaching my kids about nature. Teaching my kids that the coyote is very smart and aware of their surroundings. The coyote possess good eyesight, hearing and a highly developed sense of smell. My children have learned this by camping and being amongst the wildlife. Hunting coyotes requires one to engage in nature, understand it's cycles and become a natural and ethical part of the predator chain.

Coyote hunting isn't about stacking up piles of coyotes for the sport of it. Those pictures floating around and being seen time and time again do nothing but make this subject emotionally charged. We should not allow a few pictures to speak for an entire group of hunters that pride themselves on being ethical and safe hunters. I, along with the other groups in southern California, pride myself on being professional and sensitive to the environment and my neighbors as we hunt coyote.

Besides doing varmint hunting as a sport, we also believe this is a public service. In San Diego County the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Wildlife Service's Program responds to hundreds of calls a year of nuisance coyotes and other varmints. This agency works day in and day out to keep on top of the normal calls for help. Wildlife Service spends much of its time working within the cities where the coyotes have become very adapted to city life. The time spent in the cities is time unavailable for managing rural areas where the coyote is preying on farming and agricultural communities. This is where our public service has been helpful. We have been able to spend time assisting farmers and ranchers by helping them with the removal of coyotes.

Because of a few insensitive hunting groups, varmint hunting has been portrayed by anti-hunting groups in a very negative light. Hunting and trapping is the most cost effective way to control and to manage wildlife populations. If we had to rely on the government alone to manage the wildlife it would be extremely costly. This is where I and others come in -- we pay for the privilege to hunt. To this day, it is the most cost effective way to manage animals, specially the coyote.

Respectfully,

Robert Williams
President, San Diego County Varmint Callers