

STAFF SUMMARY FOR JANUARY 18, 2017

2. PUBLIC FORUM**Today's Item**Information Direction

Receive public comments for items not on the agenda.

Summary of Previous/Future Actions (N/A)**Background**

The Committee generally receives two types of correspondence or comment under public forum: Requests for the Committee to consider new topics, and informational items. As a general rule, requests for regulatory change need to be redirected to the full Commission and submitted on the required petition form, FGC 1, titled "Petition to the California Fish and Game Commission for Regulation Change" (Section 662, Title 14, CCR). However, at the discretion of the Committee, staff may be requested to follow up on items of potential interest to the Committee and possible recommendation to the Commission.

Significant Public Comments

1. Letter requesting that WRC review regulations and establish harvest limits for muskrat, beaver, rodents, ground squirrels, and small game, which are predators outside the scope of the Predator Policy Workgroup. In addition, requests hunting seasons for marmots and mountain beaver.

Recommendation

FGC staff: If the committee wants to recommend any new future agenda items based on issues raised and within the FGC's authority, staff recommends holding for discussion under today's Agenda Item 9, Future Topics.

Exhibits

1. [Letter from Lynn Boulton concerning regulations for nongame mammals, received Sep 19, 2016.](#)

Committee Direction/Recommendation (N/A)

September 16, 2016

California Fish and Game Commission
Wildlife Resources Committee
1416 Ninth Street, Suite 1320
Sacramento, CA 95814

Re: Non-Predator Harvest Limits

Dear Members of the Wildlife Resources Committee:

Thank you for reviewing the state's policy for predators. I hope you will soon review the regulations for those animals that are not within the scope of that project: muskrat, beaver, rodents, ground squirrels, and small game. Most of these animals don't have harvest limits. All harvested species should be carefully monitored and if there isn't reasonable data for their population numbers, then limits should be extremely low or harvesting should be suspended until there is data. It seems incongruous that some of these animals are focus species and some are even species of greatest conservation need (SGCN) in SWAP, yet there is no mechanism to prevent over-harvesting.

I ask that you specifically add marmot to the list of non-game animals and assign them a winter hunting season. Marmots are big ground squirrels and are not as numerous as California ground squirrels or Belding ground squirrels. They are an alpine species that lives in balance with its environment. There is no reason for someone to kill them except to practice hunting or trapping skills. Since ground squirrels don't have a season, someone could decide to trap marmots in the summer, when it is easy to get to the high country where they live. They could kill all the marmots outside of the National Parks and no one could stop them. This should not be allowed to happen. Also, please require that hunters and trappers report their marmot takes so you can monitor their populations better.

I also ask that you specifically add mountain beaver to the list of non-game animals and assign them a winter hunting season and ask hunters and trappers to report them. Mountain beavers are very large rodents and are not as abundant as the many species of small mice and rats. They are harder to find than marmots and so less likely to be hunted. However, they are rare and should be tracked separately. Mountain beavers are also a focal species and a species of greatest need (in some provinces) in SWAP.

Rabbits (brush, cottontail, pygmy, snowshoe) have a long hunting season and a high limit of 5/day. Since rabbits are the food source for many meso-carnivores and raptors, they are important to have in abundance in ecosystems. A hunting limit of 5/person/day seems very high and there is no limit for jackrabbits at all. Jackrabbits and riparian bush rabbits are focal species in SWAP and are even a SGCN in some provinces. The pygmy rabbit is a CDFW species of concern. I hope you will re-evaluate these smaller species and set seasons and limits by county for each keeping in mind that California is facing a future of drought and forest fires, which will destroy a tremendous amount of their habitat.

Sincerely,
Lynn Boulton
Lee Vining, CA