



## **HUMAN WILDLIFE CONFLICT WORKING GROUP**

**Chair: Brian Wakeling (Montana)**

**Vice-Chair: Doug Brimeyer (Wyoming)**

**Tuesday, September 24<sup>th</sup>, 2024**

**1:00 – 3:00 PM**

**(CDT)**

**Hall of Ideas I,**

**Level 4**

[114th Annual Meeting of the Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies](#)

### **Meeting Minutes**

- **Call to Order/Review Agenda/Introductions (Doug Brimeyer)**
  - Vice-Chair Brimeyer called the meeting to order
  - ~ 30 individuals were in attendance representing:
    - 14 State fish and wildlife agencies
    - 2 Federal agencies
    - 4 non-government organizations
- **Approval of Minutes from the previous meeting (D. Brimeyer)**
  - No changes were requested to the minutes of the previous meeting
- **USDA-APHIS-Wildlife Services (Janet Bucknall, Deputy Administrator)**
  - See the Appendix for the report provided
- **US Fish and Wildlife Service Black Vulture Management (TBD)**
  - In conjunction with AFWA, USDA-APHIS-Wildlife Service, and other partners, a symposium is being hosted on Black Vulture Management during The Wildlife Society Annual Conference in Baltimore, Maryland (exact date/time TBD).

- **Wildlife Management Institute (Dr. Bill Moritz)**
  - No report was provided
- **Update on AFWA papers: (Bryant White)**
  - **Urban Coyote Publication (in press)**
    - The best practices document on managing human/wildlife conflicts with coyotes in urban settings is currently in press in the Human Wildlife Interactions, Berryman Institute Monograph series. Hard copies of the publication will be available in November.
    - 3000 copies will be printed. 25 copies will be provided to each agency at no cost, and remaining copies will be provided upon request.
  - **Managing Conflicts with Beavers Paper (review draft)**
    - This document is still being developed. A draft for review will be available by mid-November and will be distributed to the HWC Working Group and the Wildlife Resource Policy Committee. Comments should be returned by January 15, 2025. The HWC WG will ask for final approval to move forward with publication at the March meeting.
  - **Managing Cougars in North America (WAFWA)**
    - The document on Managing Cougars in North America has been revised. It is being printed by the Berryman Institute and will be available in hard copy by the end of the calendar year 2024. This is a limited printing.
  - **Best practices for managing conflicts with wolves**
    - The group has determined to develop another best practice document on managing conflicts with wolves. We will soon begin to develop a group of authors. Timeline for production is TBD.
- **Human Health and Ecological Risk Assessment for the Use of Wildlife Damage Management Methods by APHIS-Wildlife Services (Bryant White)**
  - WS has been preparing risk assessments (RAs) on many of the methods it uses, which analyze the impacts of these methods on people and the environment.
  - All assessments (including drafts) are available to the public on the APHIS-WS-NEPA webpage.
  - In conjunction with AFWA 29 Risk Assessments have been completed.
  - **Two RAs are in the external review process ( Brodifacoum and Bromethalin). AFWA would greatly appreciate it if anyone would volunteer to review these chemical methods.**
  - **9 additional methods are in development and will need to be reviewed**

- **Roundtable: State/Federal/Tribal/Provincial/Regional Associations/AFWA Members**
  - **Nevada**
    - has an urban wildlife coordinator position open
  - **Wisconsin**
    - would like to assist with the wolf conflict document. 6 dogs were attacked by wolves and there are also some issues with wolves attacking livestock.
  - **Oregon**
    - recently AFWA published a Feral Cat Toolkit through the Berryman Institute Monograph Series
    - Steller Sea Lion removal is ongoing to protect endangered salmon in the Columbia River. Over 300 have been removed. Removal occurs fall-June by staff specifically dedicated to these removals. Most animals removed are adult males which may weigh as much as 2000 pounds. 15-60 are removed annually. Veterinarians euthanize the sea lions and it typically takes a crew of 20 people about 12 hours to handle a removal.
    - Experiencing issues with wolf depredation. ~170-180 wolves in the state and some are moving into California.
  - **Missouri**
    - Over 100 mountain lion sightings have been reported over the past 25 years but there is no breeding population
    - Two female lions have been identified by DNA and are killing elk
  - **Utah**
    - Lots of bear conflicts due to mast crop failure from a late freeze
    - The agency does pay out for depredation
    - Mountain lions may be hunted or trapped, though very few are taken by trapping. Some regulatory changes were made to increase opportunity for take but this has not resulted in an increased harvest.
  - **Texas**
    - Recently implemented a 36-hour trap check for mountain lion sets
    - There may be two distinct lion populations in Texas
    - Texas wants to be sure their mountain lion population is well managed
    - Recently an aggressive lion was removed from Laredo, Texas as a threat to public safety
    - The Black Bear population is increasing in western Texas
    - Texas does not pay out for damage by wildlife
    - Urban coyotes are a problem
    - They have call center with 9 full time staff
    - Urban great blue heron rookeries create problems (1000s of birds on the streets, etc.)
  - **Minnesota**

- There has been an uptick in wolf conflicts in the state
- Wolves are protected as threatened in the state
- **North Carolina**
  - Has a Human Wildlife Interaction call center which is staffed by 4 FTE (wildlife biologists)
  - 26,000 calls received
  - Some issues are wildlife health related
  - 1,300 calls about black bears and bold bear behavior
  - Recently 5 bears had to be euthanized that invaded a home and destroyed the interior; people were feeding the bears; the community supported the agency response
  - Concern that some wildlife rehab centers and individuals are lacing hotdogs with ivermectin and feeding them to red fox with mange
  - Has developed a training program for staff to help deal with wild life attack response
- **Idaho**
  - Reimburses for wolf and grizzly bear damage
  - Recently became a BearWise member state
  - Had a poor mast crop so expecting more conflicts with bears
  - Problem with snow geese depredating wheat fields in the spring
  - Farmers are conserved about HPAI getting into their cattle
- **Ohio**
  - Has 9 staff that focus on wildlife damage
  - Black Vulture damage is increasing
  - Bobcat population is expanding
- **New Jersey**
  - Biggest problem is with black bears
  - In 2 weeks the agency trapped 217 bears causing problems
  - The black bear hunting season opens soon
- **Michigan**
  - Few problems with wolves recently
  - Bear population has increased 74%
  - Beavers are a big problem even in urban settings
  - Canada Geese are a problem as well, can't be moved, must be euthanized
  - Sandhill Cranes becoming a problem
  - Black Vultures causing increasing damage
- **Virginia**
  - Develeoped a help line for the public to get assistance with wildlife conflicts, call increasing about 10%/year
  - Major sources of conflicts are deer, bear coyote, fox and raccoon
  - These issues put an increasing burden on the agency
  - Need to educate people about mange, mange in black bears is an epidemic, putting ivermectin in corn
  - Traffic conflicts with wildlife, 9 elk hit in 2 months with only a population of 230 animals
- **HSUS**
  - Appreciated the work WI has done with wolves
- **Colorado**

- Introducing more wolves in December
    - A pair of those introduced last year has had pups
    - Only 8-9 wolves at this point
    - Added 5 conflict coordinators to the staff to deal with wolf, lion and bear issues
  - **Wyoming**
    - Does for damage by wildlife
    - Paid out over \$1 million dollars last year mostly related to elk, grizzly bears, wolves and deer
    - 5 grizzly bears were recently removed from a corn maze
    - Counted 109 grizzly bears in one unit recently
    - There were 86 depredations by grizzly bears this year
    - WHART-Wildlife Human Attack Response Training; Wyoming would like to have one of these trainings and would consider working with AFWA to get a grant to fund these workshops for agencies
  - **Montana**
    - Recently a grizzly bear attack occurred when a bear dragged a 3 year old girl out a tent
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- **Wrap-up Discussion and Assignments for Next Meeting (D. Brimeyer)**
    - The beaver conflict paper will be sent out to the group to review by November 15. Please return comments by January 15.
    - May consider a grant to provide WHART trainings to agencies
    - Two RAs are in the external review process ( Brodifacoum and Bromethalin). AFWA would greatly appreciate it if anyone would volunteer to review these chemical methods.
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