

Predator Control Actions May Occur

- In areas where game populations are fragmented or isolated, or where introductions or transplants of potentially vulnerable wildlife have occurred.
- In areas where evidence shows predation to be a significant factor in game populations not meeting management goals.
- In wildlife management areas, especially those managed primarily to provide for production of species, critical winter range, and areas acquired and managed to help mitigate for wildlife losses elsewhere.



Nonlethal Actions Usually Not Feasible

A variety of nonlethal predator controls have been tried, including capturing and relocating bears, mountain lions and wolves. Despite some successes, removing live animals for release in habitats already occupied by the same species often creates additional problems. These techniques are difficult and generally ineffective when predators are limiting game populations. Fish and Game considers the costs and potential benefits before starting any control action.

The Goal: Reduction Not Elimination

Predator control often involves removal of animals, but the intent is not to completely eliminate predators. The long-term goal is to reduce predator numbers enough to allow increased game numbers, increased harvest opportunities, and to maintain viable populations of all wildlife, including predators. Fish and Game does not support contests or bounties on predators, that portray hunting in an unethical light, devalue the predator and may be offensive to the public.

Controversy will always surround predation management. It is complex and involves balancing diverse interests using biological and social considerations. Left unmanaged, predators and prey are likely to cause private property damage and have significant economic impacts. Unmanaged wildlife populations can also result in increased disease transmission, declines in habitat, food sources, and reduction of hunting, fishing and trapping opportunities.

Want to know more?

For an example of a Predation Management Plan, visit <http://fishandgame.idaho.gov> Click on 'Wildlife', then 'Wildlife Plans', and scroll down to the link on 'Predation Management Plan for the Lolo and Selway Elk Zones.'

Predation management actions will be based on the best available scientific information. Predators will be managed to minimize adverse impacts on other wildlife populations, minimize conflicts, and to ensure Idahoans continue to have healthy game populations for hunting, fishing, trapping and viewing.

For information about Fish and Game scan this QR code:



Understanding Predation Management in Idaho

To fulfill its statutory responsibility, Idaho Department of Fish and Game must efficiently and effectively manage all fish and wildlife, including predator species, to preserve, protect and perpetuate fish and wildlife for hunting, fishing and trapping.



When game populations drop below objectives and regulated harvest of predators is not adequate, a more aggressive approach, guided by a predation management plan is sometimes necessary.



First...

Idaho Fish and Game biologists study all the possible causes of declining game populations. They look at the quality and quantity of habitat, weather, the health and reproductive rate of the game animals, harvest levels and the impacts of predators. They then undertake the actions most likely to increase game numbers.

Management Options Include:

Habitat Improvement

In some cases, habitat improvement involves prescribed fire, noxious weed control and vegetative plantings to generate new growth and provide food and cover for game animals. Fish and Game also collaborates with federal and state agencies, counties and private landowners to promote similar habitat improvement activities.

Changes in Hunting Seasons

If hunting pressure is the cause of a population not meeting management goals, wildlife managers may alter seasons or impose harvest quotas. This includes managing hunters using OHV's during hunting season to improve habitat effectiveness and reduce harvest vulnerability.

Liberalize Trapping/Hunting Regulations

Hunting and trapping are important tools to manage predation. Where excess pressure from predators push the decline of game populations, managers offer longer seasons, higher bag limits, reduced tag prices or more opportunities to hunt or trap predators.

Then...

When there is evidence that predators are limiting game populations, a predator management plan is developed and implemented.

Different Strategies

A single management approach is unlikely to satisfy everyone. Fish and Game uses different strategies in different parts of the state to provide for different values, demands, and circumstances. Fish and Game uses regulated hunting, fishing and trapping when feasible to resolve predator conflicts with people or reduce their impacts on game populations. Some situations, however, call for more direct control methods.

Predation control actions are used when regulated hunting, fishing, or trapping is not enough to reduce predator populations to resolve conflicts with people or reduce impacts on game populations.

Long-term Wildlife Health

Fish and Game has a 75-year history of managing predator and game species. Populations of bears, mountain lions, wolves, mule and white-tailed deer, elk, moose, turkeys, and many other species are higher today than 75 years ago. The agency will continue to manage all Idaho's wildlife, with healthy populations, sustainable harvests and conservation as our guiding principles.