

Washoe County Advisory Board to Manage Wildlife –
April 29, 2021 minutes

1. **PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE** [Non-action item]
2. **CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL** [Non-action item]

Members in Attendance

1. Steve Robinson Chairman
2. Arnie Pitts Vice chairman
3. Anthony DoMoe secretary
4. Ray Kabisch,
5. Jim Rhea

Others in Attendance

1. Wayne Carner – Deputy District Attorney, Washoe County
2. Cooper Munson, Western Region Game Supervisor
3. Tiffany East, Chairwoman Nevada Wildlife Commission
4. Cody Schroeder, NDOW
5. Cody McKee, NDOW
6. Mike Scott, NDOW
7. Jon Ewanyk, Washoe County Wildlife Biologist
8. Judi Caron, public
9. Rex Flowers, public
10. Mel Belding, public

3. **PUBLIC COMMENTS**-[Non-action item]

Rex Flowers provided Public Comment and discussed his thoughts on tags. He said in Unit 0104 had the lowest count ever and it created an overzealous fawn recruitment. He said in Unit 022 also had a low fawn recruitment and are 21% below the nine-year average. He said he believed if the Department did buck to doe ratios in the fall would be helpful to all. He said member of the board were relying on numbers from four years ago and he hoped there would be more consistent flyovers to provide better data to make decisions with. Mr. Flowers also commended the Department on their work with the big game status books.

Mel Belding spoke in agreement with Mr. Flowers. He added that Area 033 should be shown on its own and this has been something CAB has wanted to see as well.

4. **APPROVAL OF March 11, 2021, MINUTES**-[For possible action]

No changes were noted.

Member Kabisch motioned for approval of the March 11, 2021 CAB minutes.
Member Rhea seconded. The motion carried unanimously.

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5. BOARD MEMBER MEETING ASSIGNMENT-[Non-action item]

Members of the CAB had discussion and determined which member(s) would attend the May 7 and 8, 2021 Nevada Board of Wildlife Commission meeting. Member Kabisch said he would be attending on May 7 and Chair Robinson said he would be there for both days. Member Rhea also said he would be able to attend. Chair Robinson reminded the members of the need to have participation at each of these meetings because there was no Washoe County member at the last meeting.

6. COMMITTEE, MEMBER AND LIAISON UPDATES-[Non-action items]

Chair Robinson opened discussion on the agenda item. Chair Robinson said he had a productive conversation with the new Washoe County Wildlife Biologist, Jon Ewanyk. Mr. Ewanyk introduced himself to members of the board and said he looked forward to working with the board.

7. Commission Regulation 21-14, Big Game Quotas for the 2021-2022 Season-[For Possible Action]

Chair Robinson opened the item by explaining they would be going through each species.

Pronghorn

The Department did not speak to the issue. Chair Robinson said he was surprised about the cuts to the Antelope quotas. Member Kabisch asked for clarification on why the reporting biologist was not listed, and also asked for clarification on the models that were used to determine the quotas. Mr. Ewanyk said that because his position was vacant for that time period there were several individuals who took part in those surveys. He described the process that is used to determine the quotas with the population models. Cody Schroeder, NDOW, also explained that the Department is using the most up-to-date data available. He noted that there were decreases in the pronghorn due to the drought and its intensification. He said the Department had to divert aerial flight time from Northern Nevada and focus on Southern Nevada. Discussion continued about the quota's unit to unit.

Chair Robinson called for public comment. Rex Flowers said that any legal weapon class was getting an increase in tags. He said he wasn't sure if this was due to hunter success or not. He wondered if the quota truly needed to be reduced. Mel Belding added that he encouraged the members of the board to be attend the Commission meeting coming up and also hoped that all members of the board would be able to provide feedback at the upcoming meetings. He also noted to Area 011 has seen an

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increase predation and if there were any projects through the Department that would be addressing this issue. Judi Caron also asked about Area 015 for Antelope and noted she hunted there last year. She asked that if the fawn ratio had gone up, why was there a decrease in tags?

Mike Scott, NDOW, said the Department has quite a few projects addressing habitat and said the Department continues to increase them as able. Mr. Ewanyk noted that BLM has juniper cuts scheduled for Area 011 which could benefit pronghorn by opening the habitat up and allow the pronghorns to have better predation avoidance. Mr. Schroeder said there were also fencing projects to help create better fences for wildlife. He said that for Area 015, the quota was determined using the “Demand/Success” formula the Department uses and that each weapon class has its own “Demand/Success” formula and it is based on a 3-year average for both residents and non-residents and when the information is used in the model, that is where the quotas are determined.

Member Rhea motioned Recommend adoption as written except to raise 015 Early ALW RES from 70 to 75 (keep the same as last year). Member DoMoe seconded the motion. The motion carried with Member Kabisch voting Nay.

Elk

Chair Robinson asked the Department to give an overview on Elk. Cody McKee, NDOW staff specialist, discussed the elk population and said about 90% are at, or below, the population projections. The Department said they were proposing a 12% decrease in cow elk tags statewide to allow the herds to grow. He noted that 34% of the population had met the antler objective. The proposed quotas were made to produce a more enjoyable elk hunting experience. Chair Robinson asked about the spike hunt and why the bull tags were lowered in the same areas where the spike tags were raised. Mr. McKee said there were now spike tags in areas where there used to be none at all, and the spike harvest isn't expected to have an effect of the long-term trajectory of the bull segment of the population. In certain areas the Department saw an uptick in average age while they saw a lower average age in other areas and the Department continues to work towards a balance in all of these areas.

Chair Robinson called for public comment and there was no public comment on the item. Chair Robinson asked if there was any additional comments from the board to which there were none.

Member Pitts motioned to accept the Department's recommendation as written. Member Rhea seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

Resident Nelson Bighorn Sheep

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Chair asked for an overview from the Department. The Department did not have comment on the item. Member Pitts said he hoped to see the Department continue its water efforts for Southern Nevada. Chair Robinson asked about Area 268 and why there was a substantial increase in tags and if that might mean having too many hunters in one area. Mike Scott said the water situation in Southern Nevada has created an issue with overpopulation and there are too many overage class rams in that area. The Department hopes the quotas will bring the population down. Chair Robinson asked about Area 161 and why the ram tag was lowered but there was a large amount of ewe tags. Mr. Scott said that while he wasn't exactly sure, he said the reason is most likely due to the population modelling and the counts they have had in that area. Chair Robinson asked Mr. Scott if there was a way to partner with the National Guard to assist with the water delivery. Mr. Scott said there are currently contracts in place with private helicopter firms who deliver the water and was unsure if partnering with the Guard would supersede those contracts.

Chair Robinson opened the item up for public comment and there were no additional comments from members of the public. Chair Robinson asked if there was further discussion from members of the board. There were no further comments from members of the board.

Chair Robinson motioned to adopt the Resident Nelson Bighorn Sheep, any ram, any legal hunt, as proposed. Member Kabisch seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

Resident California Bighorn Sheep

Chair Robinson opened the item and asked if there were comments from the Department. There were no comments made by the Department. Chair Robinson asked about Area 011 and Area 013 and if there were enough sheep to open it up to hunt. Mr. Scott said the herds are becoming well established and officials in Oregon have seen the same populations of the herd in their state when they do their surveys. Mr. Scott did say there were some sheep lost during the transplant and overall, this has been a complicated issue, but they continue to work on predator control management.

Chair Robinson asked for public comment. Sean Shea gave public comment and thanked the Department for their work in the area. Chair Robinson asked if there was additional discussion from members of the board.

Chair Robinson motioned to adopt the Resident California Bighorn Sheep, any ram, any legal hunt as proposed. Member Rhea seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

Rocky Mountain Bighorn Sheep

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Chair Robinson opened the item and asked if there were any comments from members of the board. Member Pitts said while he was surprised there were only two Rocky Mountain Bighorn shot last year, he believes the herds are doing better. There was no public comment.

Chair Robinson motioned to adopt the Resident Rocky Mountain Bighorn Sheep, any ram, any legal hunt as proposed. Member Kabisch seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

Resident Mountain Goat ALW 7151

Chair Robinson asked both the Department and members of the board if they had a comment. Mr. Scott said there is an aging mountain goat population and there are more aging nannies as a result of this. He said they will continue to educate tag holders to harvest a billy as opposed to a nanny and they may consider moving towards a billy-only regulation. Chair Robinson suggested partnering with the Rocky Mountain Goat Society to increase awareness and education for hunters to ensure they can tell the difference between the billy and nanny goats.

During public comment, Sean Shea asked Mr. Scott if there were mandatory classes for hunters when participating in this hunt. Mr. Scott said there is a mandatory online class for mountain goat hunters and that class teaches them to identify differences. There was no additional public comment or comments made by members of the board.

Chair Robinson motioned to adopt the Resident Mountain Goat ALW 7151 as proposed. Member Kabisch seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

Resident Junior Mule Deer

Chair Robinson asked if the Department had any opening comments. Cody Schroeder gave an overview of deer. He said they are in better shape than they have been in the last few years, but doe quotas are being reduced by 27%. He noted that last year was hot and dry for the early seasons and they heard complaints from hunters while the Department saw a lower success rate for bucks. Chair Robinson asked why there was an increase in junior tags, but a decrease for any legal weapon tags. Mr. Schroeder said those changes are driven by demand and success. The quotas are determined independently of one another and that is why you see the discrepancy between the quotas. Member Kabisch asked why the season is no longer split because the area has felt more congested in recent years. Mr. Schroeder said the Department hasn't had discussions regarding the season and hasn't heard many complaints from hunters. Chair Robinson asked if the Department is opposing some of the new development that has been occurring in the Mount Rose and Peavine area. Mr. Schroeder said the Department is actively engaged with the county and city on these developments, but the

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land is private property, which the Department doesn't have decision-making authority on.

Chair Robinson opened the item up for public comment. Rex Flowers said that Unit 015 was lowered from 10 to 7 tags and he would like to see the tag number remain at 10. Mr. Flowers also commented on other local areas and the trimming of quotas. He said the herds are in dire straits due to the development and he hopes the Department could work with Forestry or another entity to control access to public lands and further regulate how people are using the lands. Sean Shea asked how the Department determines based on supply and demand when using mixed weapon classes. Mr. Schroeder said it based on first choice. Mr. Shea asked if the antler point class is used in the models. Mr. Schroeder is doesn't factor in formally to the determination of the quota.

Chair Robinson motioned for adoption of 1107 as written with the exception of area 015 with an increase from 7 tags to 10 tags. Member Rhea seconded. The motion carried unanimously.

Resident Mule Deer unit 011-013

Chair Robinson opened the item and asked for comments or questions from members of the board. Member Rhea said raising the tag limit to 15 may not be appropriate based on what he has seen in the area. Mr. Schroeder said the rationale is the metrics for the model are above, and within, their objectives which is why the increase was recommended. Chair Robinson asked if the increased success rate is a function of an improved season. Mr. Schroeder agreed with Chair Robinson's premise and said the board created a season that resulted in a greater success rate. Member Kabisch asked about the herd numbers and harvest rate and how it was determined in the model. Mr. Schroeder said the survey numbers are affected by the amount of time and land that was surveyed. He also noted the conditions vary when biologists are in the field during their surveys which can change results in individual circumstances. He said this is why they use a statistical model to try and account for these individual issues. Chair Robinson asked if it was possible to use drones to help with surveying. Mr. Scott said at this time, there isn't an ability to use drones to assist with surveys. Chair Robinson noted that drones are currently being used to assist with detecting minerals in Nevada and said he hoped this type of technology could be used for herd surveys explaining that over time it will be cheaper, and safer, for those tasked with carrying out this work.

Chair Robinson called for public comment. Rex Flowers said he supports what the Department is doing with tags this year, but he said he feels it is time to increase some tags based on the trends he has seen in data over the previous years. Mel Belding added that overall, he accepted the Department recommendations, but he would like to see survey numbers from Oregon as well. Mr. Belding also said he would like to see the Department explore drone options for future surveys. Sean Shea said he agreed with

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Mr. Flowers and would also like to see an increase in tags because of the quota data that had been presented.

Chair Robinson asked if Oregon data is being used in the data. Cody Schroeder said he did not believe Oregon was surveyed.

Member Rhea motioned to approve and recommend adoption of unit 011-013 as written. Chair Robinson Seconded. The motion carried unanimously

Resident Mule Deer unit 014

Chair Robinson asked the Department for an overview of unit 014. Mr. Schroeder said the data provided only included a two hour flight and the conditions were not ideal for a better survey. He said they might have missed some animals in the granites, but overall, he did note this unit is down considerably from years' past. He noted that animals they were able to survey showed evidence of stressed nutrition and that, combined with predation, may be leading to the overall lower numbers that have been documented.

During public comment, Rex Flowers said he had recommended lowering the tags for unit 014, but since the Junior tags were lowered, he would not call for lowering the any legal weapon tags and hoped the board would follow the Department's recommendation. Mr. Belding said he would like to see the tag stay at 15. Mr. Belding added he was alarmed that only 30 deer were surveyed. Sean Shay added that he was in agreement with the Department recommendation.

Chair Robinson motioned to approve and recommend adoption of unit 014 as written. Member DoMoe Seconded. The motion carried unanimously

Resident Mule Deer unit 015

Chair Robinson asked if there were any comments from the Department. The Department did not have any comments regarding unit 015. Chair Robinson did note his appreciation of the quota data that was provided by the Department and said it had been very helpful to members of the board. There was no public comment and no additional comments from member of the board.

Member Kabisch motioned to approve and recommend adoption of unit 015 as written. Member DoMoe Seconded. The motion carried unanimously

Resident Mule Deer 1331-1332

Chair Robinson spoke about area 033 and said he disagreed with adding 15 tags to that area. He thought this may be too aggressive in light of this area beginning to rebound. Mr. Ewanyk said he appreciated the comment, but the Department felt the increase was warranted. Member Kabisch asked if the federal entities provide information to the

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Department in their surveys. Mr. Schroeder said the Department is in contact with the federal entities, but there is not a formal process set up.

During public comment, Mr. Flowers said he did not agree with area 033 adding 15 tags because there have not been recent survey flights in the area and therefore would like to see the board remain cautious. Mr. Belding said he would like to see area 033 remain at 20 tags too. Sean Shea added that he agreed with both Mr. Flowers and Mr. Belding and said he would like to be conservative in this area. He noted he had seen the quality rise in the area over previous years but had not seen the quantity rise.

During comments from members of the board, Member Kabisch said he appreciated the comments from members of the public and agreed with a more cautious approach. Chair Robinson asked the Department if they had strong feelings regarding adding the 15 tags. Mr. Schroeder said that from his perspective, it wasn't a huge deal, and he would continue to advocate for more survey flights for area 033.

Chair Robinson motioned to Recommend 1331-1332 be adopted as proposed with exception of area 033 (1331) to revert from 35 tags to 20 tags. Member Rhea seconded. The motion carried unanimously.

8. Commission Regulation 21-04, Amendment #1, 2021 Black Bear Seasons–[For Possible Action]

Chair Robinson opened the item and asked the Department if they had any input regarding the aforementioned item, specifically regarding population data. Mr. Scott said there wasn't new population information at this moment. He said they continue to see more bears in the state. Chair Robinson added he would like to see all usable meat be taken after the hunt and he felt the bear biologists were not being given an opportunity to gather data in the best way possible.

Chair Robinson opened the item for public comment and Sean Shea commented that he fully supported the Department's recommendations.

Chair Robinson noted that he too fully supported the Department's recommendation as well.

Chair Robinson moved to recommend the Commission Regulation 21-04, Amendment #1, 2021 Black Bear Seasons be adopted as written. Member DoMoe seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

1. PUBLIC COMMENTS –[Non-Action item]

Chair Robinson asked if there was any additional public comment. Sean Shea said

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he appreciated the Department's representation at the meeting and looks forward to working with them in the future. Rex Flowers also thanked the Department for their help during the meeting and emphasized that he appreciated the big game status books. Tiffany East seconded the previous public comments and said she enjoyed the productive dialogue. Finally, Member Kabisch added that he too appreciated the productive dialogue and added he would like to see other entities such as the University of Nevada to partner with the board to research new, and effective ways, for surveys and data collection.

2. ADJOURNMENT [Non-action item]

Chair Robinson adjourned the meeting at 8:39 p.m.