

**MINUTES OF THE CHURCHILL COUNTY
ADVISORY BOARD TO MANAGE WILDLIFE**

**155 N. Taylor St., Fallon, NV 89406
April 30, 2025**

Call to Order:

The regular meeting of the Advisory Board to Manage Wildlife was called to order at 7:00 PM on April 30, 2025.

PRESENT:

Member Peggy A. Hughes
Member Jim Curran
Member Jason Sibley
Member Aubry Burgess
Deputy Clerk Crystal Muschetto

ABSENT:

Member Andrew Howells
Pamela D. Moore, Deputy Clerk to the Board

Pledge of Allegiance:

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited by the board and public.

Public Comment:

Chair Hughes asked if there was any public comment but there was none.

Verification of the Posting of the Agenda:

It was verified by Crystal Muschetto, Deputy Clerk, that the Agenda for this meeting was posted on the 23rd day of April, 2025, between the hours of 1:00 and 5:00 PM at all of the locations listed on the Agenda, in accordance with NRS 241.

Consideration and possible action re: Approval of Agenda as submitted or revised:

Member Jason Sibley made a motion to approve the Agenda as submitted. Member Jim Curran seconded the motion, which carried by unanimous vote.

Consideration and possible action re: Approval of Minutes of the meeting held on:

A- March 5, 2025.

The Minutes of the meeting held on March 5, 2025 are presented for the board's consideration and approval.

FISCAL IMPACT: N/A

EXPLANATION OF IMPACT: N/A

FUNDING SOURCE: N/A

ACTION REQUESTED: Accept

Member Jason Sibley made a motion to approve the Minutes of the meeting held on March 5, 2025 as presented. Member Aubry Burgess seconded the motion, which carried

by unanimous vote.

Appointments:

A- Consideration and possible action re: Petition filed by Cody Knight for a hound hunting permit to be implemented in Nevada for hunting with dogs for mountain lion, bobcat, and black bear.

The board will consider a Petition filed by Cody Knight for a hound hunting permit to be implemented in Nevada for hunting with dogs for mountain lion, bobcat, and black bear.

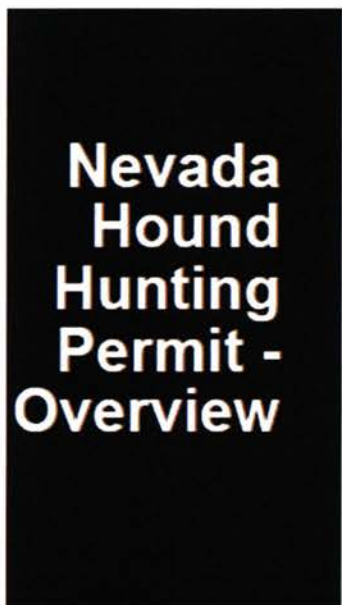
FISCAL IMPACT: N/A

EXPLANATION OF IMPACT: N/A

FUNDING SOURCE: N/A

ACTION REQUESTED: Accept

Cody Knight had the following presentation: The Nevada Hound Hunter Permit has been in development for about a year. This has been carefully crafted by a dedicated group of sportsmen and hounds-men themselves. Their goal? To create a permit system that truly represents and benefits the hound hunting community in Nevada. It has a grassroots effort, built by those who understand the lifestyle and the importance of preserving the tradition.

A black rectangular box with the text "Nevada Hound Hunting Permit - Overview" in white, bold, sans-serif font. The text is arranged in four lines: "Nevada", "Hound", "Hunting", and "Permit - Overview".

Season
February- March (mirroring lion season)

All hunters must have a Hound Hunter Permit to pursue black bear, mountain lion, or bobcat (residents only)

Residents
| \$30.00 over the counter permit- no limit on number of permits
• 2 lion tags per season

Nonresidents
• 40 statewide Hound Hunter Permits selected through draw - \$500.00 permit
• 1 lion tag per season
• If a nonresident draws a bear tag they may purchase a Hound Hunter Permit for the bear season

All permit holders must fill out end of season pursuit and harvest report for the number of lions, bears or bobcats caught

Back in the 1990s, Nevada started out with just 40 hound hunting permits. Today, the system still requires non-residents to draw a permit if they want to pursue bear or mountain lion, while residents face no such cap. This uneven regulation has created challenges—particularly along the northern border with Idaho. Idaho hunters can cross back and forth easily, while Nevada houndsmen in places like Jarbidge or the Bruno River area can't legally do the same across state lines. As a result, there's been a noticeable and lasting influx of non-resident houndsmen in that region. More recently, Utah's decision to change its mountain lion regulations, treating lions similarly to coyotes, has drastically altered the landscape. With fewer lions left to pursue in

Utah, houndsmen from the east are crossing into Nevada during the snow season, often outnumbering our own residents. The goal here is not to shut anyone out but to restore balance, giving Nevada's houndsmen a fair shot while upholding a responsible and respectful image for the community.

One idea on the table is to establish designated non-resident zones, perhaps three or possibly sticking with the five lion zones already in place. The main challenge is that everyone wants to hunt in optimal conditions, which causes pressure in the most desirable areas. A well-crafted permit system could serve as a tool to better manage that pressure, encouraging non-residents to spread out rather than concentrate in the most favorable zones. This would also align with observed patterns, such as the higher number of California hounds-men who enter during bear season in select regions.

Permit Utilization

Anyone hunting with dogs under the authority of a valid mountain lion or bear tag must be in possession of a valid hunting license, valid tag and a valid Hound Hunter Permit

- A bear tag holder with a valid Hound Hunter Permit may receive assistance from another permitted hound hunter, as long as they remain in close proximity to the tag holder
- Residents pursuing only bobcat with dogs may have a valid furbearer license or hunting license in addition to the Hound Hunter Permit
- Dogs may not be turned loose without the tag holder present, *dogs must remain under the control of the Hound Hunter Permit holder at all times*

The proposal we are putting forward aims to bring balance and structure to hound hunting in Nevada, without overcomplicating things. We are suggesting that the hound hunting season for lions mirror the existing February to March timeline. During this period, anyone, resident or non-resident, who wants to pursue bear, lion, or bobcat with hounds would need a hound permit. However, bobcat hunting would remain exclusive to Nevada residents. The permit itself would be affordable and accessible: \$30, available over the counter, with no limit on the number of permits for residents. Each resident would still be allowed up to two lion tags per season, as is currently the case. For non-residents, we propose reducing that to just one lion tag per season. Why? Because once a hunter fills their tag, they legally cannot continue running hounds solo. This would naturally reduce non-resident pressure, especially on the eastern border where competition is currently high.

Another key change we are proposing is a new reporting requirement. Right now, hounds-men are only asked to submit a report if they successfully harvest an animal. But many of us pursue and catch lions without harvesting them, often letting them go. By requiring an end-of-season

harvest and pursuit report from all permit holders, we could provide valuable data to biologists and wildlife managers. This information would paint a clearer picture of lion populations, hunting pressure, and how many houndsmen are actively purchasing and using permits in Nevada.

Another important issue we are addressing is a current loophole in Nevada's hound hunting regulations. Right now, only one valid lion tag is required per truck. That means an entire group of houndsmen can go out together, with their dogs GPS-collared and actively pursuing game, as long as just one person in the truck holds a valid tag. The others are not required to carry a hunting license or a lion tag, even though they are participating in the hunt. We believe this undermines fair participation and responsible wildlife management. That is why we are proposing that anyone pursuing lion or bear with hounds must hold both a valid hunting license and the appropriate tag, whether they are the main hunter or part of the party. It is about accountability and ensuring everyone in the field is playing by the same rules. This does not mean we want to eliminate teamwork. Bear tag holders, especially the five non-residents who draw tags each year, would still be eligible to buy the hound permit. We understand the value of group efforts in a successful hunt. Under our proposal, as long as a helper stays within close proximity to the valid tag holder, they would still be able to turn their dogs out in support. We are not trying to exclude collaboration; we just want to tighten up a system that currently allows too many to slip through, without proper licensing.



- Some of you may be thinking if current lion quotas are not being met, yet we're paying government trappers to manage lions in so-called "overpopulated units." Why are we doing this? We want to propose empowering licensed Nevada Master Guides or nonresidents to help manage those units instead.
- Typically these units are more challenging to hunt during poor conditions, forcing hunters to hunt those areas will be beneficial for the state.
- Creating a 3 zone nonresident hound permit would distribute hunting pressure more evenly across units, rather than concentrating it in the most accessible or productive areas. The idea that Nevada has a lion overpopulation statewide is misleading—Northern & Eastern Nevada sees more harvests due to access.
- This proposal brings accountability, improves enforcement, and supports sustainable harvests—while creating a new funding stream for conservation, without putting added pressure on general license holders or NDOW budgets.

As part of this proposal, we are also recommending a set of clear guide regulations to ensure everyone involved in guided hound hunts is properly permitted. Specifically, master guides would now be required to carry a hound permit in addition to the documents they already have to maintain, like their valid contract, BLM authorization, and Forest Service permits. Sub-guides would also need to carry the hound permit and to remove any confusion in the current language, we want to make it crystal clear: hound permits are non-transferable. We still want non-resident sub-guides to be able to obtain permits but with a key stipulation, they must be actively guiding a valid client. This would prevent a flood of non-resident sub-guides from coming in on their own, while still allowing for local help where it makes sense.

Looking at the bigger picture, we are also seeing a real opportunity to help manage lion populations more effectively, especially in overpopulated areas where the state is currently spending significant money on government trappers. Places like Central Nevada, Middlegate, or areas around Gerlach are underutilized by houndsmen. These are tougher, drier grounds to hunt but we know there are experienced dry-ground hunters in states like Utah and Arizona who would rise to the challenge if given the opportunity. By creating 3 to 5 designated zones and directing more non-residents into these under-hunted areas, we could reduce the state's reliance on expensive predator control programs. It is a strategic shift, using experienced hunters as a tool for conservation and cost reduction. Plus, this zoning approach would give enforcement officers a clearer way to track and manage houndsmen activity statewide.

We understand no one wants to carry yet another piece of paper but with the sheer volume of non-residents we are seeing, especially along the Northern and Eastern borders, we believe something has to change. Many of us are in the field 100, even 200 days a year. We are out there. We see what is happening. Instead of staying quiet, as houndsmen have often done in the past, we want to be proactive. We want to stay ahead of the changes and be part of shaping a future that protects our tradition, our wildlife, and our access.

NDOW Revenue- Money for Conservation



Generates new revenue.

\$20,000+ from nonresident permits
\$6,200 in nonresident hunting license fees
\$4,160 from nonresident mountain lion tags
\$9,000+ from resident permits



Helps fund:

Mountain lion check-ins
Research & aging data
On-the-ground enforcement
GPS collaring of lions

On top of the conservation and enforcement benefits, this proposal would also generate significant revenue for the state. Even with just 40 hound permits issued, we would be looking at \$20,000 from permits alone. Add to that \$6,200 in hunting license fees and \$4,260 from non-resident lion tags, and you have got a meaningful source of funding. Nevada has not historically done much in-depth mountain lion research. That is a gap we believe this funding could help fill, supporting studies, aging data collection, and long-term management plans that would benefit both wildlife and hunters. We see this as a win-win: a self-sustaining system where hunters directly contribute to the health of the very species we pursue.

Another piece of the puzzle is lion check-in logistics. In some parts of the state, checking in a harvested lion can mean a four- to five-hour drive, a real barrier, especially in winter. If this proposal were adopted, we would love to explore ways to create more accessible check-in locations, at least seasonally, in areas with high lion activity. This would improve compliance, support data collection, and make the process easier for those of us who are committed to doing things the right way.

Other State Hound Permits

Idaho	Montana	Wyoming
70 nonresident permits through draw \$301.75 fee	80 nonresident permits through draw ~\$595.00 total fee	Nonresident lion license \$373.00
Resident permits OTC \$15.00	Resident Hound Training License included in sportsman license fee	Resident only pursuit permit once quotas are met Pursuit permit \$15.50, lion license \$32.00
No personal use for nonresident guides Only valid for the permit holder Number of Nonresident Applicants: 584 Number of NR Hound Permit Sold (Including Selway): 142 Total number of all 2024 Permits: 4,677	The license is for personal use only. You cannot assist others.	Killing during pursuit is illegal and punishable by fines or jail. Only valid for residents

To better shape our own approach, we have also looked at how neighboring states are managing hound hunting, especially when it comes to non-resident pressure. For example, Idaho currently issues 70 non-resident hound permits through a draw at about \$300 each. Importantly, if you are a non-resident guide, the permit is for business use only, you cannot use it for personal hunting. That policy has real teeth. In 2023, there were 584 non-resident applications for those permits, and because areas like the Selway zone in Northern Idaho offer more tags, they actually ended up selling 142 non-resident permits. In total, Idaho sold over 4,600 permits in 2024—including resident and non-resident—with a much broader opportunity for game, especially bear, due to their higher tag allocations. Montana, on the other hand, offers 80 hound permits through a draw and, from conversations we have had with hounds-men involved in creating their system, they noticed a similar trend. Once Idaho put its permit system in place, Montana saw a significant increase in non-resident traffic, confirming that once one state tightens up, others can get flooded. That's exactly what we are trying to get ahead of here in Nevada. We are not trying to lock people out, we are trying to prevent being overrun, while giving the Department real tools to manage pressure and distribute hunters more evenly across the state. Wyoming provides another example. They have implemented a pursuit permit that is valid only for residents and they use unit quotas to control pressure. Once a unit quota is met, only residents can continue pursuing game, keeping control local while still allowing fair access.

We are learning from what is working in these other states. The goal is not to copy them exactly but to take what has been proven effective and shape a Nevada-specific system that supports residents, protects wildlife, and ensures the future of hound hunting here.

Resident vs. Nonresident Tag & Harvest Comparison

- Estimated 25–30% increase in nonresident hound hunters in recent years

Nonresident tag sales	
2020-2021	366
2021-2022	631

72.4% increase

Lion Harvest Data	
10 year average	Residents: ~104 per year
	Nonresidents: ~52 per year
2023-2024 season	Residents: 77
	Nonresidents: 71

2024–2025 data: TBD

Nonresidents: over 40% of 2023-2024 harvest

Data we don't have

- # of houndsmen in Nevada
- # of lions were caught yearly, not just harvested
- Game Management Unit
- Sex and approximate age (kitten, sub-adult, mature)
- Pursue method (hounds, spotted, encounter)

- Align Nevada with regional wildlife management standards
- Big game nonresident quotas are usually ~10%

At first glance, it might look promising that 631 mountain lion tags were sold in Nevada in 2022 but the truth is, we do not actually know how many of those were purchased by active hounds-men. That is a critical data gap. Even if we did nothing else right now, just fixing that alone would be a huge step forward. Requiring all houndsmen to purchase both a license and a tag would not only close that loophole but also give us a much clearer picture of how many houndsmen are actually operating in the state.

Over the last 10 years, the average harvest has been 104 lions by residents and 52 by non-residents. That breakdown, roughly 40% non-resident, is why we have landed on a 40% cap in our proposal. We believe that anyone drawing a permit is highly likely to harvest a lion, so it makes sense to manage that ratio carefully. What is concerning is what we saw during the 2023–2024 season, again, 40% of the lion harvest came from non-residents and some of that includes guided hunts. We are not opposed to fair, legal hunting by non-residents but we also know what is happening on the ground. Areas like White Pine County are seeing an influx of Utah houndsmen, many of whom are catching and releasing lions regularly, which still puts pressure on the population. This is why we are pushing to stay proactive. By gathering accurate data, closing the current loopholes, and monitoring where hunters are coming from, we can protect opportunities for Nevada residents, maintain healthy lion populations, and ensure the sustainability of hound hunting in our state.

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Let's Protect What's Ours

This is our chance to fix the imbalance, protect wildlife, and support ethical hound hunting

This petition to be assigned to a committee for concise wording revision and to provide additional opportunity for input from nonresident stakeholders

We respectfully ask the Commission to approve the Hound Hunter Permit and give Nevada the tools to manage this resource responsibly, for residents, wildlife, and future generations

At this point, what we are asking for is the opportunity to present this proposal to the Commission. We have put in the legwork, attending as many County Advisory Boards (CABs) as possible, and so far, we have received about 10 approvals from different counties, showing a strong level of support from across the state. This is not a finalized rule, we know there are still details to fine-tune. If we can get the Commission's initial approval, we will then be in a position to collaborate with the Department on the specific language, final tag numbers, how to structure the zones, and the best way to implement the system effectively. Our goal from the beginning has been to create a fair, enforceable, and sustainable program for hound hunting in Nevada, by houndsmen, for houndsmen, and we are ready to work together to make it a reality.

Member Curran raised a key procedural question, since the proposed permit would include fees and license requirements, would it need legislative approval or could the Department implement it directly? In response, Mr. Knight clarified that the proposed hound permit would be structured similarly to a SWAM permit, not requiring a change in Nevada Revised Statutes (NRS). Therefore, Department authority should suffice for implementation. It is a permit, not a change in law. Member Curran asked if all members of a hunting party would be required to have this permit. Mr. Knight clarified that only guides and sub-guides who are handling dogs would need it. Clients would not. This mirrors Idaho's model, which the group agrees is a good framework.

Member Sibley expressed concern about whether this might discourage lion hunting, especially in areas where lions are causing serious predation issues. Mr. Knight responded that there are

sufficient resident houndsmen to keep up with nonresident harvests in snowy units. The focus should be on guides being required to hunt in underserved areas, such as Gerlach or parts of Elko County, potentially offering specific permit numbers (e.g., 40 in Gerlach, 5–10 in Elko).

When Member Sibley questioned if non-resident guides (like those from Utah) would be willing to travel across the state for this, Mr. Knight pointed to the Idaho hound permit, which remains popular despite tough odds, he mentioned waiting five years himself to draw, while another houndsman waited 25 years.

Mr. Knight emphasized avoiding a return to unit quotas, which are problematic due to how mountain lions range widely. Instead, a statewide permit system with zone guidance would help distribute pressure. He also proposed exploring deprivation tags for residents—since hunters are limited to one lion per year, it restricts help they can provide. Mr. Knight suggested many resident houndsmen, especially those hunting 100+ days per year, would take more lions if permitted.

Member Sibley asked how open houndsmen are to running dogs without killing, given the one-tag limit. Mr. Knight replied that it depends on the houndsman. Many enjoy helping others get their first lion, often doing so without compensation and continue to volunteer time even during bear season when tags are limited.

When asked about season timing, Mr. Knight said the hound permit season would follow the existing lion season and start March 1st, making it annual.

Other speakers offered strong support:

Mr. Pete Olsen, a long-time resident and houndsman, supported the proposal, especially for how it helps manage guide pressure in problem areas.

Mr. Casey Nelson, with 30+ years of experience, shared how competition from out-of-state guides near the California border has discouraged hunting in the area. He too supports pushing hunts into underutilized areas.

Mr. Jesse Lattin, not a lion hunter himself, emphasized this petition is an example of sportsmen self-policing, with added benefit of generating revenue for the Department. He urged support.

Mr. Lance Gomes, a 6th generation resident and dairy farmer, supported the proposal, especially in light of lion overpopulation in places like Granite Peak, where trappers have removed 30+ lions in a year. He noted he would hunt more if not limited by tags.

Back to policy concerns, Member Curran said he had no issue with extra permits for nonresidents, but did not want to overburden residents. He also brought up a need to clarify language, particularly regarding bobcat trappers, some of whom use dogs to locate cats. He urged caution against requiring these trappers to have additional permits. Mr. Knight responded that the original intent was lion and bobcat pursuit with hounds but acknowledged the point. He

agreed that, if needed, the bobcat portion could be removed to prevent confusion. He noted that most houndsmen who pursue bobcats also pursue lions but are open to adjustments.

Finally, Member Sibley asked about zone assignments and Mr. Knight confirmed those would be determined by the Department.

Chair Hughes asked if there was any public comment but there was none.

Member Jim Curran made a motion to support the Petition. Member Jason Sibley seconded the motion, which carried by unanimous vote.

B- Consideration and possible action re: Fiscal Year 2025 Predation Management Plan, Amendment #1, to alter funding distribution between existing projects.

The Commission will review an amendment to the Fiscal Year 2025 Predation Management Plan to alter funding distribution between existing projects. The Commission may take action to modify or approve the amendment as presented.

FISCAL IMPACT: N/A

EXPLANATION OF IMPACT: N/A

FUNDING SOURCE: N/A

ACTION REQUESTED: Accept

During the discussion, Member Curran reflected on a prior conversation, noting that two opposing amendments had been made, which involved redirecting funds away from two smaller projects in order to allocate more funding elsewhere. In response, Member Sibley observed that Project 37 saw a significant funding boost, with an increase of \$100,000, highlighting it as a notable change in the revised budget or project plan.

Chair Hughes asked if there was any public comment but there was none.

Member Jason Sibley made a motion to approve the plan amendment as submitted. Member Aubry Burgess seconded the motion, which carried by unanimous vote.

C- Consideration and possible action re: Final Draft of the Fiscal Year 2026 Predation Management Plan.

The Final Draft Fiscal Year 2026 Predation Management Plan will be presented to the Commission for review. The Commission may take action to modify or approve the plan.

FISCAL IMPACT: N/A

EXPLANATION OF IMPACT: N/A

FUNDING SOURCE: N/A

ACTION REQUESTED: Accept

Member Sibley raised a point of clarification regarding Project 21, asking whether it involved raven removal rather than raven research or study. Member Curran confirmed that no formal study had been conducted in recent years. In response, Member Sibley expressed ongoing concern, stating that he reiterates at every meeting the need for data reflecting the outcomes of

the raven removal efforts. He emphasized that the project has been active for 15 or 16 years and is now nearing a total cost of one million dollars. Until those results are made available, he noted, a vote on the matter should be withheld.

Member Hughes asked if there was any public comment but there was none.

Member Jason Sibley made a motion to approve the plan as submitted. Member Jim Curran seconded the motion, which carried by unanimous vote.

D- Consideration and possible action re: Discussion of Coyote Hunting Contest Regulations.

The Nevada Department of Wildlife will present to the Commission an outline of proposed seasons and licensing for coyote hunting contests. These may include draft season, coyote calling contest participant license requirements, and event organizer Special Licenses and Permits (SLAP) language.

FISCAL IMPACT: N/A

EXPLANATION OF IMPACT: N/A

FUNDING SOURCE: N/A

ACTION REQUESTED: Accept

Member Curran noted that the latest proposal includes two alternatives for the Commission to consider regarding coyote hunting contests. One alternative would require participants to hold a valid hunting or trapping license, a shift he identified as unprecedented in how such decisions have been presented. He remarked on how controversial this issue has been in both Commission meetings and public forums. Member Sibley added that the proposal also seeks to establish a season for coyote contests, from September 1 through March 31, which overlaps with big game season. He voiced strong opposition, arguing that adding more regulations like this one will lead to the erosion of hunting rights. He criticized the proposal as being designed merely to appease a particular constituency, warning that sportsmen must push back against unnecessary restrictions. Member Curran agreed, emphasizing that previous attempts to legislate this issue were defeated twice in the State Legislature and failed multiple times before the Wildlife Commission. He pointed out that coyotes are unprotected wildlife and he was unclear how this new push developed.

Member Sibley closed the exchange by underscoring the inconsistency of enforcement, noting that while coyotes can currently be shot without a license, the proposed rule would now penalize hunters for participating in contests, forcing them to buy a license or risk fines, penalties, and demerits, a move he strongly opposed.

Member Hughes asked if there was any public comment but there was none.

Member Jason Sibley made a motion to oppose Coyote Hunting Contest Regulations. Member Jim Curran seconded the motion, which carried by unanimous vote.

E- Consideration and possible action re: Biennial Big Game Release Plan for Fiscal Years 2024 and 2025, Amendment #4.

The Commission will review and may take action to approve an amendment to the Department's Biennial Big Game Release Plan for Fiscal Years 2025 and 2026.

FISCAL IMPACT: N/A

EXPLANATION OF IMPACT: N/A

FUNDING SOURCE: N/A

ACTION REQUESTED: Accept

Member Sibley directed a question to Mr. Jason Salsbury, inviting his input since bighorn sheep are being considered for relocation into his unit. Mr. Salsbury responded that he was not aware his unit was under consideration but expressed that he would be supportive of the effort. Member Sibley added that, in addition to that plan, the department also intends to move 50 sheep to Alpine, highlighting that the relocation involves multiple areas and further expansion of bighorn population.

Chair Hughes if there was any public comment but there was none.

Member Jason Sibley made a motion to support the amendment #4 to the Biennial Big Game Release Plan for Fiscal Years 2025 and 2026 as presented. Member Aubry Burgess seconded the motion, which carried by unanimous vote.

F- Consideration and possible action re: Commission Regulation 25-12 regarding 2025 Black Bear Quotas and Harvest Limits.

The Commission will consider adopting the 2025 hunting season quotas and harvest limits for black bear.

FISCAL IMPACT: N/A

EXPLANATION OF IMPACT: N/A

FUNDING SOURCE: N/A

ACTION REQUESTED: Accept

There was no further discussion.

Chair Hughes asked if there was any public comment but there was none.

Member Jason Sibley made a motion to support Commission Regulation 25-12 as presented. Member Aubry Burgess seconded the motion, which carried by unanimous vote.

G- Consideration and possible action re: Commission Regulation 25-13 regarding Big Game Quotas for the 2025-2026 Season.

The Commission will consider and may take action to approve regulations for the numbers of tags to be issued for mule deer, antelope, elk, moose, bighorn sheep, and mountain goat for the 2025-2026 season.

FISCAL IMPACT: N/A

EXPLANATION OF IMPACT: N/A

FUNDING SOURCE: N/A

ACTION REQUESTED: Accept

Mr. Salsbury provided a detailed wildlife update across multiple units. He began by noting that antelope populations are doing well, deer are holding steady, and sheep populations are mixed.

Unit 183 is recovering from 2019 and doing decently, while Unit 184 also shows stable numbers.

He speculated that Fairview sheep may have migrated to the Desatoya Mountains during a winter storm two years ago and did not return.

Unit 182 sheep continue to struggle. In contrast, Stillwaters had a strong base population that allowed them to better withstand mountain lion predation. To manage lion impacts, lion removal efforts were initiated last year in the Clan Alpines and Stillwaters using Wildlife Services. However, they were restricted from Wilderness Study Areas, so efforts shifted elsewhere: 7 lions were removed from Stillwaters and 3 lions from the Clan Alpines. Funding cuts halted further lion control efforts in Units 205 and 181, just as momentum was building, partly due to the removal of 1,500 horses from Clan Alpines and over 4,000 from Stillwaters' north end and area 4. He expressed the need to continue lion removals, especially after reducing large biomass (wild horses), which alters predator-prey dynamics. The contracting process for lion control is cumbersome, leaving only two qualified contractors—one in Eureka and one in Arizona—alongside Wildlife Services.

Despite setbacks, Stillwaters reported a lamb ratio of 40, and Clan Alpines had 47, the highest seen in years. But Fairview remained troubled, with lamb ratios in the single digits, likely due to persistent disease. The Desatoya Mountains also had a previous hiccup but are doing better this year.

Unit 305 has had three consecutive years of single-digit lamb ratios and Unit 205 consistently has high lion populations. These predators can decimate small adult sheep populations, similar to what happened in Fairview. Mr. Salisbury mentioned augmentation or further lion removal might be necessary to allow herds to recover.

He concluded with notes on antelope and deer: Antelope had good fawn production, and while models showed a slight decline in observed bucks, the 88% harvest success supports keeping tag quotas steady. Churchill County deer are gaining popularity. Historically, only locals knew the productive areas, but as more hunters learn the unit, success has risen—from 29–34% in the past to 49% last year, which he called “unheard of.” That level of harvest still supports sustainable tag levels of about 100 bucks annually.

Member Curran pointed out that last year the approved quota for antlered, all-weapon tags was about 4,600, but this year's recommendation has jumped to approximately 7,000, a 60–70% increase. He noted this surge has sparked backlash on social media and questioned whether the 4,600 quota was set by the Commissioners and not based on the biologist's original recommendation. In response, Mr. Salsbury clarified that, when looking at the 2024 quota, it is

helpful to review three columns: What the department recommended, what quotas went up or down, and what is being recommended this year. He explained that, in Elko County, there was a significant quota cut last year, the department initially proposed a 50% cut, but the Commission settled on a 25% cut, resulting in an overall 35% reduction across the county.

This year, the department is adjusting quotas upward, based on improved buck-to-doe and fawn-to-adult ratios. However, Mr. Salsbury warned that some of the buck ratios may be artificially high due to modeling effects. Specifically, in units like 10, 6, and 7, many of the bucks counted are only two years old or younger, which inflates the buck ratio to appear above 30 bucks per 100 does, even though the age structure is skewed toward young bucks.

Chair Hughes asked if there was any public comment but there was none.

Member Jason Sibley made a motion to support Commission Regulation 25-13 as presented. Member Aubry Burgess seconded the motion, which carried by unanimous vote.

Member Jason Sibley made a motion to support the Antelope Quotas. Member Aubry Burgess seconded the motion, which was carried by unanimous vote.

Member Jason Sibley made a motion to support all Elk Quotas as proposed. Member Aubry Burgess seconded the motion, which was carried by unanimous vote.

Member Jason Sibley made a motion to support all Sheep Quotas as proposed. Member Aubry Burgess seconded the motion, which was carried by unanimous vote.

Member Jason Sibley made a motion to support Mountain Goat Season as per Quotas as proposed. Member Aubry Burgess seconded the motion, which carried by unanimous vote.

Member Jason Sibley made a motion to support all Mule Deer Quotas as proposed. Member Jim Curran seconded the motion, which carried by unanimous vote.

Member Jason Sibley made a motion to support the Moose Quotas. Member Aubry Burgess seconded the motion.

H- Consideration and possible action re: Approval of the State Fiscal Year 2025-2026 Travel Budget to the Nevada Department of Wildlife.

The State Fiscal Year 2025-2026 Travel Budget is submitted for the board's consideration and approval.

FISCAL IMPACT: As presented.

EXPLANATION OF IMPACT: As presented.

FUNDING SOURCE: As presented.

ACTION REQUESTED: Accept

Chair Hughes asked if there was any public comment but there was none.

Member Jason Sibley made a motion to approve the State Fiscal Year 2025-2026 Travel Budget to NDOW as presented. Member Aubry Burgess seconded the motion, which carried by unanimous vote.

Informational Items:

A- Consideration and possible action re: Items listed on the Nevada Board of Wildlife Commissioners' Agenda for May 2 and 3, 2025.

Should the board want to discuss Items listed on the Nevada Board of Wildlife Commissioners' Agenda for May 2 and 3, 2025, which is provided for the board's consideration.

FISCAL IMPACT: N/A

EXPLANATION OF IMPACT: N/A

FUNDING SOURCE: N/A

ACTION REQUESTED: Other

Member Sibley asked for an update on the wildlife salvage permits. Member Hughes responded that she had not seen anything recently, though she recalled another county submitting something. Member Sibley clarified that the topic had actually gone to a vote in the Legislature, to which Member Curran confirmed and provided further details and explained that the bill was introduced in both the House and Senate by a bipartisan group of Democrats and Republicans. The purpose of the bill is to instruct the State Wildlife Department to create a salvage permit process for highway-killed wildlife. He noted that the effort originated in Lyon County and letters were sent to other counties to gain support for moving forward with a petition.

The concept was picked up by the State Senator, who introduced it as Senate Bill 215. The Bill had two hearings in the Senate Natural Resources Committee, with just two minor amendments made during the second hearing. It passed the Senate committee and was then sent to the Assembly, where it is now awaiting a scheduled hearing. Member Curran said he is hopeful, especially since the Bill has bipartisan backing, that it will move forward and result in a formal procedure allowing wildlife salvage.

There was no further discussion of items on the state's Agenda.

Establishment of Next Meeting Date for June 11, 2025 at 7:00 PM.:

The next meeting date will be held on June 11, 2025 at 7:00 PM.

Consider Future Agenda Items:

There were no future Agenda items suggested.

Public Comment:

Chair Hughes asked if there was any public comment but there was none.

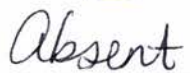
Adjournment:

The meeting was adjourned at 8:14 PM.

Approved: 
Peggy Hughes, Chair

Approved: 
Jim Curran, Vice-Chair

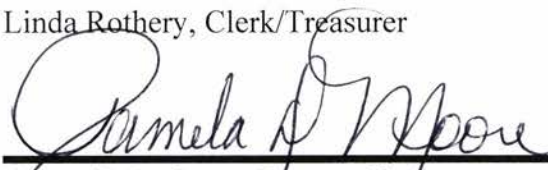
Approved: 
Jason Sibley, Member

Approved: 
Aubry Burgess, Member

Approved: 
Andrew Howells, Member

ATTEST:

Linda Rothery, Clerk/Treasurer


Crystal Muschetto, Deputy Clerk
Pamela D. Moore