

The Idaho Department of Fish and Game considers the following document to be an agency guidance document for purposes of Idaho Executive Order 2020-002. The guidance document is not new law; it is the Department's interpretation or implementation of existing law.

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IDAHO DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND GAME

Protection of Growing or Stacked Crops PROCEDURE NO.: WLD-6.0

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The Director has the authority to make determinations as to the applicable kinds and amounts of supplies and services that will be provided by the Department in the handling of verified wildlife depredation problems. The appropriate Regional Supervisor (RS), Regional Wildlife Manager (RWM), Regional Landowner Sportsmen Coordinator (LSC) and/or Conservation Officer (CO) will act as agents for the Director in administering this authority. All reports of wildlife depredation received will be responded to within 72 hours of receipt to minimize the loss to the reporting party. This procedure is intended for use in handling crop damage caused by deer, elk, moose, and pronghorn when fencing or paneling of growing or stacked crops is required to protect the crops. Additional guidelines are included for handling other types of wildlife depredation complaints. These guidelines should be followed in addition to complaints clarified by specific policy and Sections 36-1107, 36-1108, 36-1109, 36-1110, Idaho Code, and associated ADAPA rules.

Personnel Responsibilities—The Regional LSC and local CO have primary responsibility for managing wildlife deprecations within their jurisdiction. Relevant tasks include investigating the complaint, determining the cause and degree of crop damage, selecting the appropriate damage control techniques, negotiating agreements with the reporting party, coordinating personnel participation in managing the complaint, documenting Department activities, and maintaining inventory control of Department equipment. The LSC will provide technical assistance to the CO, as needed, concerning types of damage control techniques appropriate to protect the crops. The LSC will be responsible for maintaining adequate inventories of depredation control materials in the region. The RS will approve all depredation control activities in the region and direct personnel to monitor cooperative agreements to ensure that supplied materials are properly used and stored to prevent damage and loss. **A regional file will be maintained**, indicating current cooperative agreements, numbers and locations of depredation materials assigned to each agreement.

Supplies and Equipment Provided--The Department will provide and transport up to 100 percent of the panels or other temporary fencing needed to protect stacked crops. The landowner will be encouraged to assist in erecting any temporary fences. This activity should be noted in the agreement. The Department may determine that a permanent fence is the best method to protect crops that cannot be protected by panels or other temporary fencing. The Department will cost-share permanent fences with the landowner. **The Cooperative Stackyard Agreement will stipulate the terms of the cost-share and transportation of materials to the fence location and will have all signatures before materials are delivered or picked up.**

In addition to panels or fence material, other supplies and equipment may be provided to help protect the crops. The supplies and equipment provided by the Department may include electronic noise devices, wildlife chemical repellants (blood bone meal, etc.), firecrackers, banger/whistler shells, cracker shells, component explosives, flashing lights, paintball guns, and scarecrows. Each method to keep wildlife from damaging crops has its particular limitations. **The nature of the complaint will determine the method used to protect the growing or stacked crops.**

Wildlife damage to growing or stacked crops can be prevented by keeping the animals out of the crop by harassment, physical barriers, and removal of the animals. The control method selected to protect crops should be the most effective option available. Cost figures include personnel costs for time and travel, cost of supplies and materials consumed, and rental fees for equipment. If the



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complaint is an annual problem, long-term solutions such as permanent stackyards, Continued Use Agreements and Depredation Release Agreements should be evaluated and implemented where appropriate.

If they are comfortable, landowners should be encouraged to assist with the use of pyrotechnics to prevent wildlife damage. Department employees will instruct the landowner in the use of the pyrotechnics **before** they are issued a supply.

Control methods involving baiting, live trapping, lethal removal either by IDFG personnel or depredation-controlled hunts by the public, must be approved by the Director or RS as provided by policy or Idaho Code. These methods will be used **only** in situations when all other methods are not suitable for protecting the crops. Baiting for crop protection is different from emergency feeding.

Required Reports--All activity related to protecting crops will be recorded in the Depredation Complaint Report. A separate damage complaint report will be completed for each complaint received. Complaint reports will be maintained by each region's LSC. When pyrotechnics are issued to a landowner, a Receipt and Release for Issuance of Fireworks, Pyrotechnics, or Other Depredation Control Material Form (CE-56) should be completed. A copy will be entered into the landowner's depredation file that is maintained by the LSC.

When a complaint results in Department equipment, such as propane cannons or AV-alarms being used, a temporary property transfer should be completed to maintain inventory control of the equipment. When a complaint results in the erection of fence material, a Cooperative Fencing Agreement will be completed. The Cooperative Fence Agreement will be routed to Statewide Contracts Routing for record keeping. A copy of the agreement will be stored in the landowner's depredation file. If the complaint results in the placement of panels, a Cooperative Stack Paneling Agreement will be completed. A copy of the agreement will be stored in the landowner's depredation file. **The Regional Supervisor may sign agreements on behalf of the Director.**

Protection of Crops and Livestock Involving Other Wildlife:

- A. **Predators:** The use of licensed hunters to remove damage causing predators will be used when possible, during an open hunting season. Kill permits for predators may be authorized by a RS for landowners who are experiencing livestock depredation. The Department has a cooperative agreement with the USDA Wildlife Services to lethally remove predators in livestock depredation cases. All complaints involving predators not capable of being resolved by the livestock owner will be referred to Wildlife Services personnel.



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- B. **Upland game and migratory birds.** Complaints are handled to protect crops by hazing methods or grain baiting techniques. Landowner assistance with hazing techniques should be obtained, if possible. However, as in all wildlife complaint situations, the Department will not require the landowner to assist with the crop protection activity. The Department has a cooperative agreement with the USDA Wildlife Services that distinguishes between migrating or wintering ducks, geese, and sandhill cranes and locally produced ducks, geese, and sandhill cranes and who has primary responsibility for depredations. Lethal removal of federally protected migratory birds will be handled through a take permit process issued by U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.
- C. **Furbearers.** Complaints will be handled as provided by related policy and Idaho Code.
- D. **Wildlife damage activity involving non-commercial crops.** Appropriate protection measures, including providing technical assistance will be taken to attempt to eliminate the complaint in non-commercial crop situations as resources and time allow.

Sound judgment should be used in handling all wildlife damage complaints. The goal of this program is to protect the landowner from wildlife damage in the most effective manner, with the least amount of cost and time demand for the Department. Lethally removing the animals causing the damage will be used when other control measures are not effective and will be done **only** with approval of the RS.



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