



IDAHO FISH AND GAME GOLDSHEET

January 2026 Commission Meeting

Agenda Item: Depredation Compensative Alternative

TAC's Concept Update

Presented by: Dan Garren

Position/Title: Regional Supervisor

Agenda Item No.: 16

Supervisor Approval: JR

Background:

This agenda item relates to a conceptual program that could reduce depredation claims from some producers experiencing damage from elk. Staff will present the history of increasing depredation claims, and the framework for the Depredation Compensation Alternative Tag (DCAT) program that could allow landowners to choose between submitting damage claims, or receiving an elk tag in lieu of claims. The development of this program is the result of several years of damage claims that exceed department budget allocation.

Statutory Authority and/or Policy Issues:

Idaho Code 36-104 grants authority to the Commission to promulgate rules for the taking of wildlife consistent with state policy. Idaho Code 36-115 establishes a Big Game Damage account for payment of depredation claims. Idaho Code 36-1107, 36-1108, 36-1109, and 36-1110 address wildlife damage to private property and compensation for damage.

Idaho Code 36-122 establishes a Fish and Game Advisory Committee consisting of 6 members appointed by the director of the Department of Agriculture and 6 members appointed by the director of the Department of Fish and Game. The Advisory Committee serves as a liaison between the Commission, landowners, the Department of Agriculture, and the Department of Fish and Game, and wildlife, outdoor recreation and sportsmen's organizations. The Advisory Committee also acts as an independent resource to give advice and recommendations on the administration of depredation and compensation programs authorized in Idaho Code 36-1108 and 36-1109.

Species management plans developed by the Department and adopted by the Commission provide long-term direction for population and harvest management, including addressing depredation issues.

Public Involvement Process:

Preliminary conceptual programs developed to address elk depredation issues were presented to the Fish and Game Advisory Committee (FGAC) in 2022, and a preliminary version of the concept was presented to the Commission in November 2024, but no additional public outreach has occurred since then while the concept has been in development.



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Justification:

Continued depredation claims at levels experienced in recent years will exceed the department's ability to fully compensate producers for impacts related to elk depredations. The DCAT program may help reduce wildlife depredation claims, thereby allowing the Department to better compensate landowners for depredation claims within existing budgets.

Staff Recommendation:

Staff recommends the Commission weigh the potential value of the DCAT program in reducing depredation claims and direct staff to engage the FGAC before additional public outreach occurs.

Action Requested:

No formal action is requested. Staff seeks Commission concurrence to proceed with reconvening the Fish and Game Advisory Committee in coordination with the Department of Agriculture.

Suggested Motion:

N/A – informational only.