

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, Regional Wildlife Manager, and/or Conservation Officer will act as agents for the Director in administering this authority. All reports of wildlife depredation received will be handled **promptly** to minimize the crop damage or loss to the complaining party. This procedure is intended for use in handling crop damage caused by deer, elk, and antelope when fencing or paneling of growing or stacked crops is required to protect the crops. However, 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 Section 36-1107, Idaho Code.

Personnel Responsibilities--The local Conservation Officer has primary responsibility for investigating the complaint received, determining the cause and degree of crop damage, selecting the appropriate damage control techniques, negotiating any agreements with the complaining party, coordinating personnel participation in handling the complaint, documenting Department activities relating to the depredation by use of the appropriate report forms, and maintaining inventory control of Department equipment. The Regional Wildlife Manager will provide technical assistance to the Conservation Officer, as required, concerning types of damage control techniques usable to protect the crops and related wildlife behavior characteristics. The Regional Supervisor will be responsible for maintaining adequate inventories of panels, fencing materials, pyrotechnics, and other depredation control materials in the region to properly handle anticipated problems, and approving all depredation control activities in the region. In addition, the Regional Supervisor will direct appropriate personnel to monitor all cooperative agreements to insure 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 panels assigned to each agreement, and numbers and locations of panels not assigned to a complaint agreement.

Supplies and Equipment Provided--The Department will provide 100 percent of the panels needed to properly protect stacked crops. The Department will cost-share with the landowner the materials used to erect a fence to protect growing crops or stacked crops that cannot be adequately protected by use of panels. **The cooperative agreement will stipulate the terms of the cost share and transportation of materials to the fence location.** The Department will transport and erect panels to properly protect stacked crops. The landowner may provide labor at his or her option to erect any fences, and this activity should be noted in the agreement. Fencing materials include electric fences.

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 include electronic noise devices, wildlife chemical repellants (blood bone meal, etc.), firecrackers, scam rockets, crackershells, component explosives, flashing lights, 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.**

Protection Control Methods--Wildlife damage to growing or stacked crops can be prevented



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by keeping the animals out of the crop by harassment (noise, visual or chemical repellants), physical barriers (fence or panels), and removal of the animals (live trapping, controlled killing, and baiting). The control method selected to protect crops should be the most effective method provided for the least cost. Cost figures include personnel costs for time and travel cost of supplies and materials consumed, and rental fees for equipment used. If the complaint is an annual problem, long-term solutions should be approved and implemented. Landowners should be encouraged to assist with the use of pyrotechnics to prevent wildlife damage. Conservation Officers will instruct the landowner in the use of the pyrotechnics **before** they are issued a supply.

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

Required Reports--All activity related to protecting crops will be recorded on the Depredation Complaint Report (CE-40). A separate CE-40 will be completed for each complaint received, investigated, and handled. The original copy goes to the Enforcement Bureau, the yellow copy goes to the regional file, and the pink copy goes to the Conservation Officer's file. When fireworks are issued to the landowner to help protect crops, a Receipt and Release for Issuance of Fireworks, Pyrotechnics, or Other Depredation Control Material Form (CE-56) should be completed and signed. One copy goes to the recipient of the material, one copy goes to the Conservation Officer, and one copy goes to the regional file.

When a complaint results in Department equipment, such as zonguns 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 (CE-57) will be completed and signed. The original copy goes to the Enforcement Bureau, one copy goes to the landowner, one copy goes to the regional file, and one copy goes to the Conservation Officer. If the complaint results in the placement of panels, a Cooperative Stack Paneling Agreement (CE-58) will be completed and signed. Distribution of copies of CE-58 is the same as copies for the CE-57. All copies of reports for a complaint filed at the regional office will be attached together. **The Regional Supervisor will sign all agreements on behalf of the Director.**

Protection of Crops Involving Other Wildlife:

- A. **Predators:** The Department contributes to the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service Animal Damage Control Fund. All complaints involving coyotes will normally be referred to and handled by Animal Damage Control personnel. Complaints involving other predators will normally be handled by Department personnel.
- B. **Mountain Lion, Bear, and Bobcat:** Most complaints relating to these species involve protection of domestic livestock. If the animal causing the damage can be live trapped and relocated, Department personnel will take the necessary action. Release sites must be approved by appropriate management agencies. If the animal is to be killed, Department personnel will conduct the activity if the harvest season is closed. If the season is open, the



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service of a local licensed sportsman should be obtained to make the kill. U. S. Fish and Wildlife Animal Damage Control personnel may take these species while performing their duties.

- C. **Upland game and migratory birds.** Complaints are handled to protect crops by harassment methods or grain baiting techniques. Landowner assistance with harassment 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.
- D. **Furbearers.** Complaints will be handled as provided by related policy and Idaho Code.
- E. **Wildlife damage activity not involving crops.** Appropriate protection measures will be taken to eliminate the complaint in non-crop situations.

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. Destroying the animals causing the damage will be used as a **last resort** when other control measures are not workable, and will be done **only** with approval of the Regional Supervisor.