

Minutes of the Telephonic Meeting of the
Arizona Game and Fish Commission
Thursday, June 1, 2006 – 10:00 a.m.
Arizona Game and Fish Department
2221 W. Greenway Road
Phoenix, Arizona 85023

PRESENT: (Commission)

(Director's Staff)

Via telephone:
Chairman Joe Melton
Commissioner Michael Golightly
Commission William McLean
Commissioner Bob Hernbrode

In person:
Director Duane L. Shroufe
Deputy Director Steve K. Ferrell
Assistant Attorney General Shelley Cutts

Chairman Melton called the meeting to order at 10:08 a.m. Director Shroufe conducted roll call confirming that the Commissioners were present. Commissioner Gilstrap was not present. This meeting followed an agenda dated May 12, 2006.

* * * * *

1. Amendment to Commission Order 26 – Population Management Seasons

Presenter: Leonard L. Ordway, Game Branch Chief

Mr. Ordway briefed the Commission on the Department's proposed amendment to Commission Order 26. At the April Commission Meeting the Commission authorized an Elk Population Management Season structure for Units 28 and 31, with a 35 permit allowance for Designated Elk. The Department was later made aware of a small group of elk using irrigated and fertilized oat and barley fields north of Willcox and west of the Fort Grant Road in Unit 32. Historically, this area was not occupied by elk, but a small herd frequently uses an adjacent area in Unit 31 where the Department is trying to limit the population.

The objective for elk management in this portion of the state as specified in the Regional Elk Operational Plan is to maintain the current low abundance of elk through sport harvest. The Department has been using limited opportunity hunt structures in the area to minimize landowner-elk conflicts and the Commission authorized expansion of these hunts to include Unit 32 for 2006. However, Unit 32 was not added to the Population Management Season structure for the area because there was no history of conflict.

The proposed amendment to Commission Order 26 would facilitate conflict resolution with local landowners and assist in meeting management objectives for elk in Units 28, 31 and 32. The elk are unlikely to remain in this agricultural area until the limited-opportunity archery and general season hunts occur because the existing crop will be harvested in June and the summer rains will likely disperse the elk; the damage to the crops will have already occurred. After the oat and barley harvest, the landowner will replace these crops with pinto beans. If the elk are habituated to the field, the damage may continue through the summer before the archery and general fall season take place.

Additionally, proactive management of elk populations by the Department may encourage local landowners to allow hunter access to the public lands beyond their properties at other times of the year.

The proposed season authorization for Elk General Population Management Seasons was as follows:

<u>Season Dates</u>	<u>Open Areas</u>	<u>Legal Wildlife</u>	<u>Permits</u>
Jun 11, 2006 – Dec 31, 2006	28, 31 and 32	Designated elk	100

Commissioner Hernbrode questioned raising the permits to 100 from 35 when only 11 elk were causing the problem. Mr. Ordway stated that the elk were beginning to expand in that area so the Department would like the Director to have the authorization to increase the number up to 100 if necessary. The number of permits will not be the number of animals taken.

Commissioner McLean asked about access or trespass fees on private land and also about the procedure for the application.

Duane Aubuchon from Region 5 was present via telephone and stated that the private landowners in the area have indicated that they don't have any problems granting access to hunters trying to reduce that elk population.

Mr. Ordway stated that the procedure for this hunt will work like the normal population management season hunts.

Motion: Hernbrode moved and McLean seconded THAT THE COMMISSION VOTE TO AMEND COMMISSION ORDER 26 – POPULATION MANAGEMENT SEASONS, AS PROPOSED.

Vote: Unanimous
4 to 0
Gilstrap absent

* * * * *

Motion: McLean moved and Hernbrode seconded THAT THE MEETING ADJOURN.

Vote: Unanimous
4 to 0
Gilstrap absent

* * * * *

Meeting adjourned at 10:23 a.m.

* * * * *

Joe Melton, Chairman

Michael M. Golightly, Member

William H. McLean, Member

Robert Hernbrode, Member

W. Hays Gilstrap, Member

ATTEST:

Duane L. Shroufe
Secretary and Director