

Jaguar Conservation Team (JAGCT) Summary Notes

Douglas, Arizona

January 23, 2004

Introduction

Bill Van Pelt, Arizona Game and Fish Department (AGFD), called the meeting to order at 9:05 a.m. All in attendance introduced themselves and the organizations they represented.

A. Opening comments and ground rules

Ground rules were the same as previous meetings. Participants were asked to raise their hand to ask a question or state an opinion. Only one person was allowed to speak and side conversations were kept to a minimum. This allowed each person to be heard and kept the meeting moving through the agenda. Participants in the Jaguar Working Group (JAGWG) (i.e. everyone present at JAGCT meetings) may comment and are encouraged to do so on any issue being discussed at the JAGCT meeting. Participants were asked to turn cellular telephones and beepers off or set to vibrate.

B. Agenda Review/Additional Discussion Points

Added: Update on Defenders of Wildlife (DOW) and Center for Biological Diversity (CBD) lawsuit against the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS)

Added: Review of Jaguar Conservation Assessment and Strategy

Added: Education subcommittee update

Added: Wildlands campaign

C. Discussion of summary notes from the July 2003 JAGCT meeting

There were no comments or questions about the July 2003 JAGCT summary notes. There were no action items identified at the July 2003 meeting.

D. Task Reports:

1. Update on AZ-NM sightings – Tim Snow and Terry Enk

New Mexico – There were two sightings investigated since the last meeting. Both were probable mountain lion sightings and were considered Class III-2 sightings.

Arizona – There were eight sightings reported since the last meeting.

Classification	Investigation	Comments
II-6	no	
II-6	yes	Mountain lion kill was found; may be reduced to III, because neighbors have seen mountain lions
II-7	no	Reported too late for investigation
III-2	no	Observers think they saw a jaguarundi
III-2	yes	
III-2	yes	Observers think they saw a jaguarundi
III-4	no	Reported too late for investigation
III-1	yes	Determined to be bobcat

2. Kill Verification Activities (Section 5.H.2.) – Jack Childs

No depredation by jaguars on livestock has been reported.

Another photo of a jaguar was captured by a remote camera on August 6, 2003. This same animal was photographed in 2001. The two photos were taken approximately 4 miles apart. As far as Jack can tell, this animal is not killing livestock. Jack has not seen any jaguar tracks or has collected any jaguar hair from hair snares. However, he is collecting scat for future DNA analysis.

There was an article in a newsletter stating an unknown group wanted to track down the jaguar and return it to Mexico. AGFD followed up on this and found nothing.

There are routine law enforcement patrols during the hunt informing hunters that jaguars might be in the area.

There are 17 cameras (Childs 13; U.S. Forest Service 4) set within 10 miles of the Mexican border between the Pelloncillo Mountains and San Rafael valley.

E. Other Business

1. Education (Section 6.B.) – Karen Schedler

One hundred copies of the Spanish translation of the jaguar study unit have been printed and are available. Please see Karen if you would like a copy of the Spanish unit. In addition, Jack Childs' book *Tracking the Felids of the Borderlands* is currently being translated into Spanish.

2. Mexico Update – Bill Van Pelt

Investigations are still being conducted 135 miles south of the border. In October 2003, AGFD received a letter from the Mexican federal agency Secretaria de Medio Ambiente y Recursos Naturales (SEMARNAT) requesting GIS collars to put on captured jaguars. They are having difficulty following animals in the rugged terrain and are not obtaining good location data. AGFD in cooperation with the Northern Jaguar Project are refurbishing four collars to send to Mexico in February or March.

The female they had collared dropped her collar in October 2003. It appears the collar was slipped and no evidence of blood was found on the collar. Jaguars are not difficult to collar, they are hard to capture; leghold snares are used. In addition, the terrain is rugged, and the area is very remote with very few roads to travel on.

3. Lawsuit Update – Stuart Leon and Sarah Rinkevich

USFWS is doing 2 things in response to the lawsuit: 1) trying to settle out of court; they were closer to that in November than they are now and 2) preparing for court; they will probably be there soon and will be able to speak more openly at the next meeting. They are being represented by USFWS counsel. USFWS will not include listing critical habitat in a settlement.

USFWS restated that they wholly support the JAGCT and feel that the team is doing what is needed for jaguar conservation. USFWS are not legally liable for establishing critical habitat.

4. Jaguar Conservation Assessment and Strategy (JCA&S)

AGFD is currently conducting a 6-year review of the JCA&S, which was handed out at the meeting. Before we rewrite the strategy, we have to assess what has been done and what has not been done. There are some gaps in the information in the review. Please pay close attention to your areas of expertise in the review and help fill in some of these holes.

You can access the review on the jaguar website at:

www.azgfd.com/wildlife_conservation/jaguar_management.html

Action Item: Send comments/corrections to Deb O'Neill by March 1, 2004 at 2221 W. Greenway Rd, Phoenix, AZ 85023; doneill@gf.state.az.us; or fax (602) 789-3939 (all).

Action Item: Put draft on jaguar web page by February 9, 2004 (Deb).

5. Website and electronic subscription update – Bill Van Pelt

AGFD has always maintained a hard copy mailing list, but would like to move toward an electronic subscription list. This will make updates more efficient and provide a cost savings to AGFD. We will have an update for this service at the next meeting.

Action Item: Set up electronic subscription list by June 30, 2004 (Deb).

6. The Wildlands Project – Kim Vacariu

The Wildlands Project is conducting a campaign in identifying the five most endangered wildlife areas from Canada to Mexico. It is called the Room to Roam campaign. One of the areas identified as a critical wildlife area is from the Peloncillo Mountains to the Pajarito Wilderness area. They are working with the public and agencies to encourage wildlife linkage across the border and inform how important it is to maintain. The jaguar that was photographed twice is proof that corridors are needed. The project is willing to offer expertise and aide to the JAGCT.

Border patrol has not reported any jaguar sightings. The Wildlands Project would like to keep border patrol from building impenetrable barriers. A comment was made that it is economically infeasible to build an impenetrable barrier from the Peloncillo Mountains to the Pajarito Wilderness area.

They would like Mexico to be more involved and help the Wildlands Project identify important corridor areas in Mexico. The group would like to have a meeting with AGFD and Mexico to identify what conservation activities have already done.

You can find info on their website: www.wildlandsproject.org.

Question: Does the lawsuit cover this area mentioned by the Wildlands Project?

Answer: There are no constraints on area for critical habitat.

Question: If there is no defined area for the lawsuit, what happens if USFWS loses?

Answer: Judge may remand entire process; we do not know what will happen. The lawsuit wants a recovery plan. This plan would have to address the entire historical range for jaguars from Brazil into the United States.

Maintaining open dialogue and an open process is very important with controversial issues like this. It is important that all parties involved stay engaged.

7. Ideas to increase trapping success

Use recorded jaguar vocalizations to incite a response or attract them. The vocalizations may drive away other species that are trapped. Childs used these in Brazil and they worked well; two responses were documented. This method was not very successful at camera traps in Mexico. A computer system that automatically calls (emits vocalization) and records response may be beneficial. Alan Rabinowitz thought the computer system could work. If this method is used, should male or female vocalizations be used? There are benefits to both.

More cameras would be helpful. If someone has the money, Childs has places to put cameras. No one has vandalized or stolen cameras yet; most people do not know they are there. Childs has captured photos of border patrolmen and illegal aliens.

F. Close Meeting

The meeting adjourned at 10:00 p.m.

The next JAGCT meeting will be held Thursday August 5, 2004 at 10:00 MST in Animas, New Mexico at the Animas High School.