

Overarching Game Management Plan Issue Statements

Scientific/Professional Management of Hunted Wildlife

Issue Statement #1

WDFW wildlife managers and biologists have developed goals, objectives, and strategies in these plans to ensure long-term sustainability of all wildlife. The best available science will be the basis for the maintenance of all endemic wildlife populations. Strategies for hunted wildlife will not have significant negative impacts on the sustainability of other wildlife or their habitats. None of the strategies, subsequent hunting season recommendations, or implementation of activities will deviate from these fundamental principles. Science is the core of wildlife management, the basis for achieving the agency's mandate, and the foundation of this plan.

Issue Statement #2

While science and professional opinion form the foundation of wildlife management, social and economic issues often strongly affect public opinion, and influence management strategies and regulations. An easily accessible public involvement process is necessary to facilitate broad public involvement in developing and implementing management alternatives. The key is to develop programs that both achieve key biological objectives and are supported by the public.

Hunter Ethics and Fair Chase

Issue Statement #3

Many hunters think that the latitude to determine what constitutes fair chase belongs to the individual. They feel that others should not determine what fair chase is for someone else. Other hunters are concerned that the image and standard of ethics for hunting may be compromised, particularly with the expanding use of technology for hunting. This is especially evident with equipment technology.

Issue Statement #4

A majority of the general public believes that many hunters violate hunting laws (Duda 2002a). They feel that hunting without a license and poaching are the major violations, and shooting game out of season and hunting over the bag limit are also common violations. Hunters cite these same concerns with the addition of shooting from a vehicle. The public also indicated, they developed their opinions from direct observation, physical evidence, and from talking with others. In addition, they support hunter refresher courses and feel that an additional training requirement will improve their opinion of hunters.

Non-toxic Ammunition

Issue Statement #5

A wide variety of birds may consume spent lead shot, resulting in increased mortalities and sublethal effects. Birds of prey may ingest lead as they scavenge animals (e.g., deer) taken during hunting seasons. In Washington, there is increasing evidence of lead consumption by golden eagles, a species of concern with low population levels. However, some sportsmen are concerned that the added expense of purchasing non-

toxic ammunition is not justified with population-level impacts and may further reduce hunter recruitment and retention.

Hunting Season Regulations

Issue Statement #6

The Department must manage game populations for a variety of hunters, each utilizing different methods and weapon types. This is accomplished with designated seasons for each to ensure all have opportunity. The hunting public informs decisions so that seasons and restrictions are equitable among all user groups. Continuing to solicit input from all users is a primary objective of the Department so hunting opportunity is fair and balanced.