

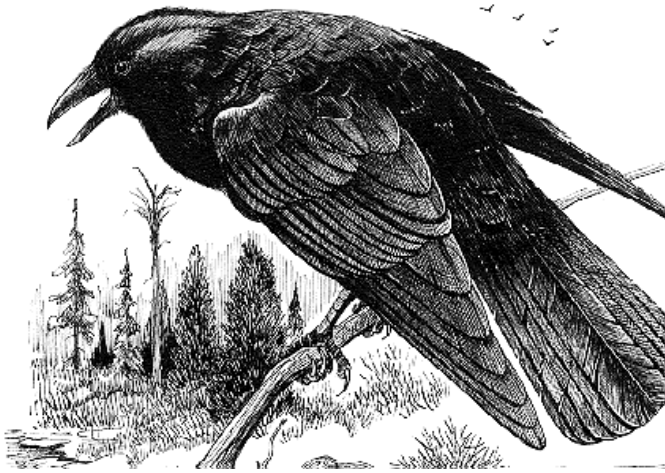
The Outdoorsman

Bulletin Number 3

May 2004

“The Compass”

by George Dovel



Idaho's newest game bird – the common crow. Sportsmen license dollars will now be used to “manage” this predator.

During the first week in May, many Idahoans saw “The Compass” advertised on TV news or received a copy in the mail, or tuned in to the redesigned IDFG website home page on the internet and found it under “Featured Pages”. This elaborate 25-page publication was carefully designed, using the latest psychological sales techniques, to appear to address everybody’s concerns about the future of Idaho wildlife management.

But The Compass is actually a blueprint to replace emphasis on hunting, fishing and trapping with a concept developed in Washington, D.C. over several decades because “People’s values have shifted.” The Washington, D.C. based International Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies is primarily responsible for this change.

What’s in a Name?

Like Idaho, many state wildlife management agencies have retained “Fish and Game” in their name rather than “Fish and Wildlife” for a very good reason. Until the late 1980s Webster defined “wildlife” as “mammals, birds *and fishes* hunted by man”. That definition was used in I.C. Sec. 36-103 to declare Idaho’s Wildlife Policy (i.e to provide continued supplies of such wildlife [mammals, birds and fishes hunted by man] to the citizens of this state for hunting, fishing and trapping).



Changing the wolves’ status from predator to big game animal also allows IDFG to use sportsmen license dollars to manage them.

The current definition of wildlife still does not include snails, snakes, bats, beetles or several thousand other assorted life forms that the IAFWA and other Washington, D.C. based groups are trying to burden state wildlife agencies with protecting. Former IAFWA President Jerry Conley ignored Idaho law and created a new definition of wildlife by convincing the Andrus appointed F&G Commission to approve “Project Wild”, “Watchable Wildlife”, “Automated Wildlife Data Systems”, “Teaming With Wildlife”, “Wildlife Interpretive Centers” and other non-game and fish activities promoted by the IAFWA.

In order to comply with Idaho law (and with federal law to receive matching funds derived from excise taxes on weapons, ammo and fishing equipment) IDFG can only spend sportsmen’s license dollars to preserve game species we pursue and harvest by hunting, fishing or trapping. Yet when Conley was replaced by Steve Mealey, nearly three million dollars of sportsmen’s license fees were being misused each year to fund these programs which do nothing to preserve our traditional wild game and fish.

“Wildlife Diversity” Funding

“Nongame” funding from income tax check-offs and the sale of “bluebird” license plates declined steadily so

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the Idaho Fish and Wildlife Foundation designed new nongame license plates with an attractive likeness of elk, trout or other big game species. These raised substantially more money than the bluebird plate until many sportsmen learned the dollars were being used to protect predators and other nongame species, or build launch sites for kayakers.

IDFG tried to convince the Legislature to increase the sales tax or use general fund money for non-game and fish activities but the legislators refused. IDFG spent more sportsmen dollars promoting federal passage of CARA to fund "Teaming With Wildlife" but it was defeated because it would have hurt hunting and fishing.

When CARA failed, the TWW coalition convinced Congress to create State Wildlife Grants (SWG) in 2001 "to prevent wildlife from becoming endangered." In order to continue to receive the grants, which are substantial, each state must inventory all species and their habitat and develop a statewide Comprehensive Wildlife Conservation Strategy (CWCS) by 2005.

To comply with this requirement, IDFG hired extra employees who have no background in managing traditional fish and game species. Among the strategies already approved by the F&G Commission was the protection of all amphibians and reptiles in March.



Although the rattlesnake is a prolific and abundant predator in Idaho, it was protected by IDFG in March 2004. (IDFG photo)

The ban on killing rattlesnakes was promoted by the "Partners in Amphibian and Reptile Conservation" (PARC), one of multiple preservationist organizations allied with the IAFWA and TWW. The Commission action ignored the reality that venomous snakes, including mostly rattlers, bite 8,000 Americans each year and cause some losses to livestock and pets.

On April 13, 2004, Idaho's Congressmen Butch Otter and Mike Simpson joined Senator Mike Crapo in signing letters requesting increased appropriation for SWG in FY 05. Their request would increase Idaho's portion to over \$1 million but Senator Craig did not sign.

Federal Money Has Strings

Arguments against accepting the increased federal grant money included the following:

1. It requires matching non-game funds at the state level, which IDFG does not have.
2. It increases the overhead and support costs of this expanding agency which will only divert more sportsmen license dollars from legitimate game and fish management.
3. It places the burden on this overloaded agency to do the fed's job for them with a multitude of species that may never be threatened.
4. There is no assurance that any threatened species will be prevented from being listed.

IDFG has spent 21 years and countless dollars to save Idaho's endangered Selkirk caribou herd and failed. Mule deer populations are also at record low numbers despite years of management by IDFG because it refuses to properly address the primary causes for their decline.

Based on its history, if IDFG detects a candidate species for listing, the only "remedy" it will attempt is to impose more restrictions on hunting, fishing, farming, grazing and other legitimate utilization of public and private lands. That is not this agency's lawful mandate.

Another CARA

In an effort to secure even more federal dollars that cannot be spent on perpetuating game and fish populations, IDFG, IAFWA, TWW and a long list of so-called conservation groups support passage of the Get Outdoors (GO) Act. Reportedly designed to induce obese Americans to get outdoors and hike or bike along miles of developed scenic trails with interpretive sites, GO would allocate most of \$3.125 billion annually to condemn and purchase private lands and develop public lands for purposes other than hunting and fishing.

About \$350 million would be apportioned to states, part of which would supplement SWG non-game and fish activities, and most of which would be spent for non-hunting-fishing-trapping recreation and education. This is the third effort to get a version of CARA passed in Congress with the inducement of more federal pork with the usual strings attached.

The Compass

A careful examination of "The Compass" reveals that it is designed to promote Washington, D.C.'s programs of environmental activism. Less than 20 percent of the objectives relate to hunting and fishing and some of those are misleading.

For example, on Page 10 one objective is "Manage predation to achieve a balance between game and predator populations." Does that mean digging up more groves of Russian olive trees to provide fewer nesting areas for magpies until a hypothetical balance is achieved? If so, who will determine whether that balance is acceptable or has reached an unhealthy ratio?

If the intent is actually to control (reduce) predator populations by lethal means to provide healthy juvenile-to-adult female prey ratios until the prey populations reach biological objectives, why doesn't it say so? Although upland bird hatches and newborn fawn survival may vary with weather conditions, counting recruitment (the number of juveniles that *survive*) every year is the most reliable and economic method of detecting unhealthy predator-prey ratios on a large scale.

Biological studies indicate that wildlife biologists underestimate predator populations by an average of 300 percent. When no one knows how many predators actually exist in an area, it is not possible to target a specific number exceeding 50 percent for control.

IAFWA has cautioned IDFG that it should keep up-to-date on the research and development of alternatives to lethal population management methods. That is a real concern of knowledgeable outdoorsmen who read the vague statement "manage predation" in The Compass.

Fish, Wildlife and Plants?

The optimistic list of objectives in The Compass is a declaration of IDFG's intent to continue to duplicate the legitimate agenda of a dozen other state and federal agencies. It is neither a "bureau of outdoor recreation" nor a "certified education facility" and has no legal mandate to continue to promote the philosophies and agendas of IAFWS and its environmental allies.

The only form of "fish and wildlife recreation" it is required to facilitate is hunting, fishing and trapping. If it manages these species properly all Idahoans will reap the benefits both aesthetically and financially.

Editorial Comment...

When I published The Outdoorsman 30 years ago I was criticized by a reader, who worked for IDFG, for not reporting more positive things the agency accomplished.

These first three issues have pointed out the Department's unwillingness to mitigate excessive big game mortality during the occasional extreme winter, and the reasons for its refusal to recognize and correct the severe predator-prey imbalance that exists in many parts of Idaho. Until these glaring management deficiencies are corrected, little space will be devoted to praise.

In this issue, I also reported four examples of our wildlife managers' intolerance of people who dared to disagree with their mismanagement of our wildlife resource. In my opinion, the best way to stop "combat biology" is to publicize it.

I have received many complimentary notes and several generous donations from people who read the first two issues. The sole criticism came from a gentleman who was apparently offended by my reporting a comment from a hound hunter who demanded more cougar despite declining deer numbers.

When deer and elk populations are healthy, everyone, including hound hunters, enjoys a reasonable chance to hunt and harvest game. But when deer and elk numbers are allowed to decline, the F&G Commission is bombarded with requests from a few organized bow hunters, black powder hunters and hound hunters, each seeking special treatment to give them an advantage over other hunters.

Most organized sportsman groups are willing to "bite the bullet" along with everyone else and request shorter seasons, no female harvest and a reduction in predators until healthy game populations are restored.

Several of my relatives and close friends hunt with muzzleloaders, compound bows or hounds and they know I do not discriminate against any legitimate method of hunting or fishing when I report facts.

With your support The Outdoorsman will continue to supply facts about wildlife management to combat the misinformation from groups who care nothing about preserving our hunting, fishing and trapping heritage. The June issue will provide valuable information on cost effective predator control and game harvest.

To those of you who have sent a donation to receive this in the mail please accept my sincere thanks. To those who have not, I urge you to contribute and help increase circulation. This cannot happen without your financial support.

If you are able to provide a copy of these bulletins to your county commissioners or appropriate local officials the information will help them understand what is happening to our valuable wildlife resource. Together we can restore sound management to benefit everyone.

On a lighter note, my wife and her friend caught these crappie several weeks ago at a local fishing hole. Thanks to the efforts of those who introduced them, these "invasive species" provided healthy recreation and a nice mess of tasty fish for two families.



Why IDFG Refuses to Control Predators

by George Dovel

A March 17, 2004 *Idaho Statesman* headline read, "New plan may put perch back in Lake Cascade – F&G will poison pikeminnow, restock perch." The news article described how the fourth largest body of water in Idaho was once Idaho's most popular fishing spot.

During peak years, anglers caught about 400,000 perch from the lake and contributed millions of dollars to the local economy. The reservoir was built in the 1950s and native squawfish, now called "pikeminnows", were aggressively poisoned in the 1960s and 70s to allow non-native yellow perch to thrive and multiply.

Cougar Destroy Endangered Caribou

In a March 29, 2004 *Statesman* news article, a Canadian wildlife biologist warned that cougars continue to destroy the Idaho herd of woodland caribou that has been on the endangered species list for the past 21 years. Despite the expenditure of hundreds of thousands of dollars, which included transplanting 113 Canadian caribou into Idaho's Selkirk herd between 1987 and 1998, only three or four caribou remained in Idaho this past winter.

When IDFG biologists determined that lions were killing most of the initial transplants as well as the original herd, they refused to kill the lions and spent the caribou money developing tracking techniques for grizzly bears.

On March 28, 2004 Robert Serrauyo, a researcher with the University of British Columbia, told a group of north Idaho residents that, despite 92 percent pregnancy rates, nearly all of the caribou calves are dead within 10 months. He said necropsies indicate that two-thirds of caribou deaths are from predation, primarily cougar, and that neither malnutrition nor poaching is a factor.

Washington State University cougar researcher Rob Wielgus argued, "The survival of the caribou might mean doom for cougars in the region." He said that two-thirds of all males (lions) are killed by hunters each year, "You couldn't find a five-year-old male cougar in this study area if your life depended on it."

What's the Difference?

Killing predators of both fish and game to keep them in balance with their prey created the fish and game paradise that Idaho wildlife biologists inherited in the 1940s and 1950s.

The biologists eagerly agreed to poison hundreds of thousands of predatory *fish* when it became necessary to correct the predator-prey imbalance created by fish harvest plus prolific predators. They are still doing it, as evidenced by their solution to restore Cascade Lake perch.

Yet they refuse to control any predatory *animal, bird or reptile* to correct the predator-prey imbalance created by natural disasters or human harvest of game birds

animals or fish. However, my review of the textbook used by Jim Unsworth to obtain his doctorate, which qualified him to be promoted to IDFG Wildlife Bureau Chief, revealed this is not what they are currently being taught.

"Wildlife Ecology and Management" by Caughley and Sinclair, teaches that *wildlife that is harvested by humans must be manipulated*. Its numbers must be controlled both by direct regulation of harvest and by indirectly influencing numbers by altering food supply, habitat, *density of predators* or prevalence of disease.

The book explains that custodial ("hands off") management, may be appropriate for a national park where populations are *not* harvested. It is not intended to stabilize the system but allows free rein of the natural processes.

The Balance-of-Nature Theory

To understand why Idaho wildlife biologists refuse to obey Idaho law and manage all wildlife, including predators, to provide continued supplies of wild game animals and birds for hunting, it is necessary to examine the origin of their extremist philosophy.

From 1958-1962, graduate student David Mech flew over the wolves and moose on Michigan's Isle Royale in Lake Superior each winter and observed what appeared to be a rough balance between predator and prey. This caused Mech and Purdue University's Durward Allen to advance the "Balance of Nature" theory in a 1963 National Geographic article, which caused a chain reaction among academic wildlife biologists and environmentalists.

Wildlife biology graduate students were offered grants to conduct brief "studies" of other large predator-prey relationships in order to prove that nature will always balance itself and predators are the essential self-regulating mechanism in every ecosystem.

In Idaho, graduate student Maurice Hornocker secured his grants and hired a local lion hunter to study the relationship between mountain lions and deer in Unit 26 on Big Creek in the Idaho Primitive Area (now the Frank Church Wilderness). He provided a student to fill in during his absence in the first winter of the three-year study and published alleged lion behavioral traits that reflected his lack of experience and knowledge.

Deer and elk populations in Unit 26 had been severely depleted by multiple deer harvests and 90-day seasons extending through mid-December. The ratio of mountain lions to deer far exceeded the healthy one lion per 360 deer that Leopold had documented in his 1933 study in California. Despite decreased hunter harvest, deer numbers continued to decline each year, and the study offered the opportunity to document the fact that excessive lion populations were the primary cause.

Based on the lions that were captured repeatedly in the study area during the three winters, Hornocker estimated there were 25-30 resident lions in the 200 sq. mi. area, and recorded a lion population of one lion for each seven or eight square miles. According to Hornocker, this represented one lion for each 163 deer and 71 elk or, on a "biomass" (relative weight) basis, one lion per 358 deer.

By a not surprising "coincidence", that was almost exactly the one lion per 360 deer Leopold had recorded in a healthy predator-prey relationship 33 years earlier.

According to this information, Unit 26 would have had a population of 4,075-4,890 deer and 1,775-2,130 elk. Yet IDFG helicopter counts totaled only 466 deer and 691 elk in the entire unit during the third year of the study. His inflated figures represented an *average* of 22 deer plus 10 elk for every one of the 200 square miles in the Unit 26 study area!

Hornocker apparently used the highly exaggerated population estimates to justify his published study conclusion, "Lion predation appears incapable of limiting elk and deer populations in the Idaho Primitive Area."



The 1964-67 Idaho Mountain lion study by graduate student Maurice Hornocker used exaggerated prey statistics to claim cougars were incapable of limiting deer and elk populations.

He ignored evidence that lions repeatedly passed by a sick bighorn ewe and a crippled elk that had been wounded by hunters, to kill healthy animals. The two sick and crippled animals eventually died without being killed by predators.

Although Hornocker failed to document even one sick or crippled animal killed by mountain lions during the three winters, his study report claimed that lions cull both physically and behaviorally unfit animals from the herd.

Media Perpetuated Deception

Like Durward Allen, Hornocker sold his story to National Geographic, and hundreds of wildlife biologists, including university professors, began demanding protection for all mammalian and avian predators. Newspaper and magazine

articles and television guest interviews provided a vehicle for unprincipled predator advocates to spread their misinformation.

A typical article in the March 13, 1970 issue of *Life* magazine titled, "Let Us Now Praise Mountain Lions," began with the claim that lions kill "the culls and leavings of the herd...old, young, sick and crippled deer." The author, Edward Abbey, was described by *Life's* Managing Editor as a combination author and park ranger in the Southwest desert.

He cited Hornocker's preliminary study as proof of his claims and added, "There is no authentic record of a lion actually attacking a human being." He apparently had not read, "The Puma – Mysterious American Cat" by wildlife biologists Young and Goldman. The 1944 book mentioned numerous cougar attacks on humans and documented 18 specific attacks, including several which resulted in the victims being killed and eaten.

Never Cry Wolf – A Fraud

A book that probably influenced more Americans to accept wolves as friendly, lovable, family oriented creatures than anything else was "Never Cry Wolf" written by Farley Mowatt in 1963. Purported to be a record of a biologist's scientific field observation of wolves, it was a total fraud.

Mowatt was actually an author of children's fiction. Whether it was a tale about a beached whale marooned off the coast of Canada or a lost Viking treasure protected by a heathen curse, his books are characterized by elevating animals to a position superior to humans and by a contempt for civilized man's endeavors.

Yet Walt Disney studios made a movie of Mowatt's fantasy and the book and movie are still sold by museums, wildlife educational organizations and TV reruns as "a true story". Bona fide wolf biologists Banfield and Pimlott denounced Mowatt's fiction in 1964 and 1966 because it led people to believe wolves live primarily on mice rather than ungulates.

Dr. Pimlott said Mowatt had hurt the cause of wolf advocates by deceiving his readers with fiction that was presented as if it were the truth. All of this information was available to Hornocker during his three-year limited lion study but he advanced unproven theories, which supported Durward Allen's premature balance-of-nature theory from similarly limited wolf-moose observation on Isle Royale in Michigan.

Idaho's SCS snow survey supervisor, Morlan Nelson and BLM soil specialist William Meiners published the same type of undocumented claims about golden eagles that Allen and Hornocker had about wolves and lions. "The first prey of eagles are the sick, weak and starving small and large animals that they can find. Lamb and other domestic animals in no way constitute a part of the normal diet of eagles."

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Nelson ignored existing USDA records of ~8000 sheep killed by golden eagles in Wyoming each year and said, "The world is apparently ready to accept the truth about its environment whether it's a rattlesnake, golden eagle or mountain lion." Meiners persuaded Congress to withdraw 26,255 acres of BLM land along the Snake River because "the 'king of the wind' deserves this as a special Natural Area where he can be himself."

Because juvenile bald eagles can sometimes be mistaken for golden eagles, Congress had already passed the Eagle Protection Act in 1962. But when several golden eagles were incidentally killed at a coyote bait station, the predator activists demanded the Act be amended to include extreme penalties for accidentally killing a golden eagle.

Although FWS quickly required 1080 poison used in bait stations to be diluted so it could not kill eagles, magpies or other non-target species, it did not stop the activists' campaign. 1971 amendments provided more severe federal penalties for accidentally killing golden eagles than for accidentally killing a human.

Academic biologists Hornocker, Allen and Starker Leopold from Berkley were appointed to the Cain Committee which presented a report to Congress recommending sweeping changes in treatment of predators. Treaties with Mexico and Canada resulted in protection for magpies and crows, and, in 1971, mountain lions were given protected big game status in Idaho.

That year Congress amended the Fish and Wildlife Act of 1956 to provide maximum fines of \$5,000 and imprisonment for one year, or both, for anyone who uses an aircraft to shoot or attempt to shoot or harass any bird, fish or animal, with limited exemptions. President Nixon then issued an executive order banning the use of poisons to control all *predators* – but not rodents or other species.

The Endangered Species Act of 1973 and the Marine Mammal Protection Act have been used for 30 years to increase populations of large predators at the expense of sound game and fish management. Increased marine mammal predator numbers soon reduced anadromous fish runs, Canada's commercial cod fishery and Alaska shellfish harvest.

Change to Species Management

In an April 11, 1972 seminar for IDFG biologists, Dr. Hornocker told them that wildlife managers must change from a hunter-oriented philosophy of wildlife management to an application of species management with specific objectives. As an example, Hornocker cited the once famous mule deer herd in Idaho's Unit 39 on the Boise Front.

"Perhaps we should set this herd aside and manage it for its aesthetic value and tell the hunter to go to Bear Lake for his trophy," he said. "Perhaps we should manage a certain area to provide deer for cougar - herd management for specific objectives," he continued

Mech Denounces "Balance-of-Nature"

Hornocker's recommendations indicate that he had learned the balance-of-nature theory was a figment of the imagination and that uncontrolled predators will eventually deplete game populations. David Mech continued to observe the wolf and moose populations on Isle Royale and the wolf and white-tailed deer populations in Minnesota and proved the destructive theory was wrong.

For several years there had been 20-25 wolves and about 600 moose on the 210 square mile island. The wolves were killing most of the calves each year and the moose population remained about the same.

Then, in the late 1960s and early 70s, several severe winters hit and, with easier hunting in deep snow, wolves began to kill large numbers of moose that were not eaten. The moose population nose-dived and the wolf population quickly doubled.

But as more moose were killed, the Isle Royale wolves, with no alternate prey species, began to starve. Soon, disease and cannibalism caused additional deaths.

Mech was also observing the wolf and white-tailed deer situation in northeastern Minnesota and the same scenario played out there, with some exceptions. The wolves quickly destroyed much of the famous whitetail herd during the severe 1968-69 winter and most of the fawns that were born in 1969 failed to survive.

As was the case on Isle Royale with moose, the wolves quickly increased when prey was easier to kill and the increased number of wolves then killed more adult deer. But unlike, Isle Royale, many of the wolves turned to moose, their alternate prey species, while others left the area, killing livestock, domestic animals and pets and eating garbage to survive.

The wolves that remained killed most of the remaining deer and then killed each other seeking food in adjacent pack's territory while younger wolves starved. Mech learned the hard way what experienced outdoorsmen already knew, that wolves and other predators must be killed whenever their prey species declines.

Minnesota was forced to shut down all deer hunting statewide in 1971 and Mech denounced the balance-of-nature theory and said that wolf control programs were essential to maintain healthy prey and predator populations.

Idaho Biologists Conceal Truth

Yet university wildlife biologists like Idaho's Jim Peek continued to teach the false theory, and brainwashed IDFG wildlife biologists and commissioners continued to preach and practice it.

Unlike Dr. Mech, they have ignored 30 years of long term scientific studies which proved, beyond any doubt, that predators must be killed to restore healthy predator prey balance whenever natural or man caused disasters, *including overharvesting*, reduce the available prey population.

In 1985 Mech wrote a valuable article referencing a well-controlled experiment in central Alaska where biologists removed from 38 to 60 percent of wolves from a test area where moose and caribou were declining. Moose and caribou calves and yearlings increased two- to four-fold. The population remained consistently higher than the surrounding areas with no wolf control where game populations continued to decline.

In 1991, Alaska Department of Fish and Game biologists, who still promote wolves, published a report entitled, "Overview of Relationships Between Bears, Wolves, and Moose in Alaska." The report explains that wolves were scarce through the 1950s due to federal poisoning and aerial control but began a recovery in the 1960s.

"They now occur in most of their range except for the Anchorage and Fairbanks area and the Seward Peninsula," the report says. But elsewhere, bear and wolf numbers have kept moose populations at only one moose per two square miles, "well below levels their habitat can support."

They refer to the predator pit that exists in most of Alaska as "Low Density Dynamic Equilibrium" (LDDE) "because moose density fluctuates but remains low." "Together, bears and wolves kill most of the moose calves...except in Unit 20A where wolves were controlled and moose quickly increased."

The biologists predicted that an abundance of wolf trappers in Unit 20A should allow reasonable moose harvest to continue in that Unit. They felt that because either grizzly or black bears kill at least 40 percent of moose calves, removal of a large number of bears by hunting might improve the LDDE (predator pit) enough to allow slightly increased moose harvest.

ADFG biologists dramatically increased the hunter harvest of bears during the next 12 years, but learned that, without wolf reduction by aerial gunning, wolves would still kill the moose and caribou that bear control saved. They recently published another report entitled "Wolf Control in Alaska", which explains, "Predators kill 80 percent of the moose and caribou that die during an average year, while humans kill less than 10 percent."

"In most of the state, predation holds prey populations at levels far below what could be supported by viable habitat. Bear numbers can sometimes be intentionally reduced through hunting, but wolf hunting and trapping rarely reduces wolf numbers enough to increase prey numbers or harvests." (emphasis added)

While Fish and Game biologists in Alaska and some other states appear to have gotten the message, Idaho biologists and many of their peers continue to repeat the lie that predator control does not work. When an Idaho F&G Commissioner works up enough courage to mention the effect of predation, he receives a pitiful look from the biologist who says, "Yes, they do take a few" or "They've

coexisted for thousands of years", or "Control is too costly and won't do any good", or "We'll study it."

During the past 12 years, working closely with IDFG employees, I've learned that this attitude is not from lack of factual information. I am convinced it is an illogical fanatical belief, cultivated during their entire career and reinforced by their peers and environmentalist associates.

Numerous IDFG biologists, conservation officers and department heads have expressed to me their personal belief that all predators are "entitled" to kill the game that hunters own and support with their license dollars. They emphasize that hunters are only entitled to harvest any surplus that may then exist and they, as wildlife managers, are only required to provide wildlife related *recreation opportunity* – not more animals to harvest.

When the Deer and Elk Teams were developing their mission statement and goals, they emphatically refused to allow the phrase "provide continued supplies of elk (or deer) for hunters" to be included. Yet they insisted that "provide elk (or deer) for bear and mountain lions to eat" was a significant goal of management.

IDFG attempted to transplant wolves and grizzlies into Idaho before the ESA existed and biologists have quietly shifted emphasis and hunters' license dollars away from preserving game species that are harvested, to funding "watchable" wildlife, Project Wild and a multitude of other non-game programs.

In the past, when either the F&G Commission or the Legislature has directed IDFG to control predators, it has always turned into a "study" with insufficient control to achieve desired results.

Several years ago in a public meeting in Jerome, outspoken Research Biologist Jim Unsworth told his former professor, Jim Peek, that he had not taught the truth about the impact of predators on game populations. But, in March 2004, Wildlife Bureau Chief Unsworth provided the Commission with a booklet from his Western Mule Deer Working Group that claims loss and degradation of habitat by invasive species, cattle grazing, wilderness breakup and drought - not predator/prey imbalance - are the reasons for the mule deer decline.

However, Jim DeVos, research chief for the Arizona Game and Fish Department and chairman of the Western Mule Deer Working Group, has just revealed a long-term Arizona study during a 10-year drought, which indicates that predators, not habitat, limit mule deer herds.

With all other factors being equal, mule deer inside the 30-year-old predator-proof "3-Bar" enclosure had 100 surviving fawns per 100 does while deer in adjacent Unit 22 with predators present had only 18 fawns per 100 does. The study measured the quantity and quality of habitat in both areas in every quarter of each year and used ultrasound to measure the percentage of fat and the pregnancy rate of live collared deer in both areas.

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Combat Biology

by George Dovel

When Steve Mealey was hired to restore responsible fish and game management in Idaho, he immediately promised to put a stop to what he called "combat biology". That was Mealey's term for the process IDFG officials use to silence whistle-blowers or critics who expose Department mismanagement of wildlife or funds.

Following its reorganization of IDFG in the 1950s, the Washington, D.C. based Wildlife Management Institute taught F&G employees to infiltrate local sportsman organizations and develop key supporters in the legislature and the media. Biologists were taught that "biopolitics" (deliberately mismanaging wildlife by providing favors to special interest groups) was appropriate to gain support for their programs.

By 1988, the influence of non-game oriented organizations on IDFG policy had resulted in widespread mistrust among Idaho sportsmen. As non-hunting environmental extremists also exerted their influence on Idaho Wildlife Federation policy, many sportsman members abandoned the IWF in disgust.

IDFG Forms Support Group

The IWF continued to rubber stamp IDFG's programs and activities but most sportsmen refused to lend their support. Realizing they needed a show of support from legitimate sportsmen and resource organizations, IDFG and IWF jointly sponsored the "Idaho Wildlife Congress" on November 19-20, 1988.

The participants were divided into discussion groups, with IDFG supporters scattered around the room to control discussion. Traditional resource user groups left in disgust after the first day and the "Idaho Wildlife Council" was formed with the false claim that it represented a cross section of Idaho natural resource interests.

Don Clower, a postal employee from Texas, was elected to head IWC. Traditional IDFG supporters Ed Lehman, Jack Fisher and Kent Marlor evolved as leaders of regional IWC groups in the Panhandle, Southwest and Southeast Regions.

These four people have conducted damage control for IDFG ever since. An audit ordered by several Legislators revealed that sportsmen license dollars paid \$62,851.03 of the \$80,637.49 cost of the two-day event.

In February of 1994, Sandy Donley and I were scheduled to testify before the House Resource Committee concerning starvation of big game during the 1992-93 winter. The day before the hearing was scheduled, Clower called me and said Linford had also asked him to testify and arranged to meet with us shortly before we testified.

During that meeting Clower claimed to represent 20,000 IWC members and urged us not to "air the Department's 'dirty linen' in public." He said his group

was powerful and assured us that IDFG would resolve our problems if we were willing to cooperate.

Legitimate Sportsmen Attacked

One month earlier, on January 17, 1994, Harvey Peck from Pocatello and Dee Eldridge from St. Anthony had testified concerning deer starvation losses in their respective areas. Clower attacked their right to testify in his "IWC Update" newsletter, ignoring the fact that Peck was awarded "Conservationist of the Year" in 1984 by the IWF for hundreds of hours of volunteer work which restored goose populations in the Pocatello area.

Eldridge participated in numerous conservation programs in his region and also formed the Upper Snake River Valley Sportsmen Association. With help from Peck and Directors from other counties, membership soon reached 3,000 making it Idaho's largest sportsman group.

USRVSA Pres. Eldridge continued to document IDFG mismanagement so IDFG and IWC participated in an organized effort to destroy his credibility.

Southeast Regional Supervisor Greg Tourtlotte attended a Region 5 IWC meeting and announced that Dee Eldridge had gone to a sportsman show in Idaho Falls and claimed IDFG used automatic weapons to kill several hundred elk. Tourtlotte's statement was a fabrication designed to impeach Eldridge's facts, and IDFG and IWC quickly spread the rumor around Idaho and made sure it was published in the Idaho Falls *Post Register*.

During the February 17 hearing I attended, IDFG Director Jerry Conley showed a F&G videotape to Linford's Committee which had been carefully edited to make it appear that Eldridge was agreeing that deer losses were minimal. Conley falsely claimed "even Mr. Eldridge agrees the deer are still there."

Then, in front of media representatives and the citizens who testified, Linford and Conley joked about Eldridge's lack of credibility based on the "automatic weapons" story in the *Post Register*.

Two years after Tourtlotte was forced to write a letter of apology to Eldridge, Don Clower wrote the following in a published letter to the *Rexburg Standard*. "If my memory serves me right Mr. Eldridge is the person who claimed to have proof positive that the Fish and Game had machine-gunned 300 elk and buried them in a mass grave a couple of years ago."

This is one of several examples, that I investigated and documented, of IDFG using "combat biology" to destroy a citizen's reputation, family and livelihood.

When newly elected Governor Phil Batt asked for the Andrus appointed Commissioners' resignations, they brazenly refused. Using facilities provided by Conley, Clower organized a protest on the Statehouse steps and

Batt backed down. Although he accomplished a great deal during his tenure, the threat of retaliation in the media prevented him from appointing a unified Commission dedicated to restoring honest wildlife management.

When Steve Mealey was being considered to replace Conley, the three Andrus appointed Commissioners sided with environmentalists and opposed hiring him,

When he was hired, Mealey solicited input from the mainstream majority of shareholders in Idaho wildlife, and implemented appropriate programs and tools to restore healthy populations of fish and game.

Biologists Undermine Boss

Some regional IDFG biologists perceived this as a threat to their private agenda and publicly defied Mealey. Others, working directly under him in the Boise Headquarters, went through the motions of implementing his programs publicly, but quietly took steps to destroy his effectiveness.

These included emailing important, time sensitive information to Clower and to their environmental allies before it was provided to Mealey. Several IDFG emails of a sensitive nature, or critical of Mealey, were made available to me but were never seen by Mealey.

Clower and Marlor repeatedly criticized Mealey in the media, and one Bureau Chief was openly critical of what he called "his and the Commission's attack on my professionalism." Three of the seven Commissioners, who opposed controlling predators, made no secret of their dissatisfaction with Mealey and this also compromised his effectiveness.

Mealey proposed a predator symposium to bring forth the latest biological information and population status for Idaho's large predators. The hope was that providing factual information to Idaho's hunting and non-hunting public about mountain lions, black bears, wolves and grizzlies would be helpful in dealing with these species.

The biologists did not want this information made public and they contacted their environmentalist allies and Clower to generate opposition to the symposium.

The off duty "mooning" incident in north Idaho provided the excuse IWC needed to demand Mealey's dismissal. Ed Lehman, Don Clower and Kent Marlor quickly whipped the urban media into an editorial frenzy demanding that Mealey be fired.

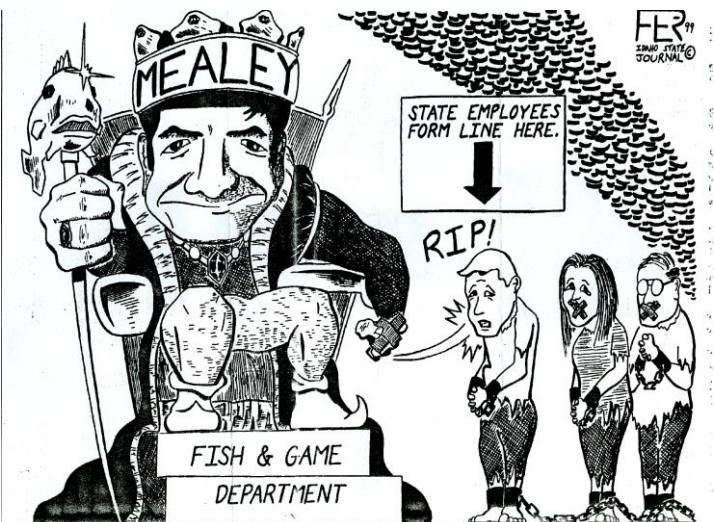
Despite the media condemnation of Mealey, a large number of grassroots sportsmen leaders urged the Commission to ignore the incident. Mealey forfeited \$3,442 in pay and prepared for the next battle orchestrated by the IDFG biologists.

In a series of newspaper interviews, they began to substitute their private philosophy about winter feeding, predator control and breaching dams, for the official Commission policy on these issues. On January 14, 1999, Director Mealey told the IDFG biologists to refrain from publicly discussing the Commission's policy statement on

dams until he attended a meeting with newly elected Governor Dirk Kempthorne.

His remarks were quickly passed on to the biologists' environmentalist allies and the media, who accused him of muzzling his biologists to appease politicians. They failed to mention the fact that no one, including IDFG employees, the media, or environmental activists, had disagreed with the following highly publicized portion of Mealey's February 7, 1997 memorandum, issued when he took office:

"The only limits on internal communication are dignity, respect and good taste. Open, honest, frank, and sometimes critical discussions are necessary. Externally, however, we will speak with one voice, reflecting messages which have the understanding, acceptance and support of the leadership team and the Commission."



February 4, 1999 Idaho State Journal cartoon depicting alleged mistreatment and muzzling of IDFG employees by Director.

During the January 27, 1999 public hearing portion of the F&G Commission meeting, environmental activist Gene Bray began a loud denunciation of Mealey for allegedly muzzling "science". He insisted the Commission fire Mealey because the agency had "lost its political independence" under Mealey's leadership.

After enduring the tirade of accusations, Mealey responded, "I'm damned sick of your irresponsible rhetoric." Then he questioned Bray's commitment to wildlife conservation.

The combat biology "team" quickly orchestrated statewide newspaper editorials condemning Mealey for his response. Some of these editorials suggested he was campaigning to head the Governor's new Office of Endangered Species and all insisted that he should immediately resign.

Gov. Kempthorne asked the three Commissioners whose terms expired in June, not to take any action until a new Commission was appointed but they ignored him.

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Commissioners Defy Governor

On the first day of the next Commission meeting in Idaho Falls on March 4, during a closed evening session, the three lame duck Andrus appointees joined Chairman Nancy Hadley in agreeing to fire Mealey by a 4-to-3 vote. Someone leaked that information to a *Post Register* reporter and an editorial in the morning edition denounced Mealey and hinted he would be fired that day.

Not even one legislator approved Mealey's being fired, including Rep. Golden Linford who had formerly supported Clower and the IWC. Linford condemned the "sportsmen who are very abusive" and the news media who listened. "It's unfortunate that much of what they have written and said are half-truths and lies."

When Kempthorne appointed the four new Commissioners, both Fisher and Clower were on the Region 3 short list recommended by his Committee. His appointment of Clower was surprising to most sportsmen in view of Clower's long history of attacking legitimate sportsmen and other resource users.

During the August 11-13, 1999 Commission meeting in Sandpoint, the new Commission discussed the need to reduce predator populations in order to restore healthy game numbers. Commissioner Moulton proposed a resolution to direct IDFG to come back at the next meeting with a plan to significantly reduce the number of coyotes, lions and other predators but acting Director Mallet insisted they should conduct another study.

Commissioner Wood suggested drafting legislation to remove the requirement that all bear meat must be carried out of the wilderness areas, to encourage outfitters to kill more bears and increase calf elk survival. But Clower, who was responsible for the law, requiring the entire bear carcass to be salvaged, argued against the proposal.

"War On Predators"

Moulton continued to cite data proving the need for predator control, which was not refuted. His motion, seconded by Commissioner Irby, read as follows:

"That it be the policy of the IDFG to severely and demonstrably reduce the number of predators adversely affecting, or that may adversely affect, big game, upland game birds, fish and migratory waterfowl. And to that end, the Department will suggest an action plan that will accomplish this objective; and the Department's legal staff will contact the Governor's office regarding the possibility of running legislation providing that it is not necessary to remove a bear carcass from the field."

Despite Mallet's and Steve Huffaker's efforts to derail the motion, it passed unanimously. But IDFG quickly notified their environmentalist allies and they responded with angry emails, faxes and letters to the newspapers denouncing the "Commission's 'war' on predators."

IDFG biologists joined the statewide crusade and insisted the Commission intended to exterminate all predatory species. With Jerry Mallet at the helm, they were free to express their own opinions and lie about the Commission intent.

Eager to generate controversy, the media interviewed Clower and he claimed he did not know what Moulton's resolution meant when he voted for it. Except for relaying sportsmen requests to increase the allowable bear and lion harvest by hunters and allow a reduced fee nonresident tag for bear and lions in a few remote units, IDFG has failed to recommend additional control.

Moulton Falsely Accused

IDFG did spend some dedicated predator control money for predator control in a mule deer study but claimed it did little good. When Moulton pointed out that the federal agents reported too few coyotes were trapped to provide significant increases in fawn survival, IDFG retaliated by attacking Moulton in the media.

The Legislature mandated that \$300,000 be spent for coyote control and several legislators, along with Moulton, investigated a highly successful coyote control program in Montana. Then, working with the IDFG Regional Supervisor in the Upper Snake Region, Moulton invited the contractor to come to Idaho.

Moulton asked the trapper to demonstrate his ability to kill a coyote with a rifle and the specialist shot the coyote. The "combat team" quickly got their heads together and falsely claimed the trapper needed a hunting license to kill the coyote and accused Moulton of being an accessory to the "crime".

Clower, Fisher and Marlor fed the media frenzy, denouncing Moulton as a criminal and insisting that the Governor fire him. The media cited an inapplicable portion of the code, which requires sport hunters to have a hunting license.

The law that allowed the specialist to shoot the coyote is I.C. Sec. 36-106(5) which authorizes the director, or any person appointed by him in writing, to take wildlife of any kind dead or alive. It does not require a license and the "Director" has been interpreted to include virtually any employee during the past 50 years.

Thirty-five years ago, I reported to the Director that a graduate student was killing and wasting mule deer and had no license or written permit to do so. I cited this statute and the Director, Assistant Director and IDFG legal counsel all stated that anyone from the Commission down though conservation officers need only be aware of the practice to legalize it.

There are countless instances every year where unlicensed IDFG employees, volunteers, wildlife students and others pursue and capture or kill Idaho wildlife without a written permit from the director or anyone else. IDFG knew this but allowed the accusations to continue until Moulton's reputation was irreparably damaged.

Fisher and Clower again insisted that Governor Kempthorne fire Moulton and, when that didn't work, they formed an alliance to promote a citizen initiative to eliminate Burns' and Moulton's Commission Districts. Despite vicious attacks on Burns, Moulton and Marcus Gibbs for their efforts to restore game populations they failed to gather enough signatures to get it on the ballot.

Combat Biology Still Exists

On December 12, 2001 Garden Valley resident Sandy Donley provided accurate snow depth information that conflicted with the lesser depth claimed by local C.O. Matt Erickson and Landowner Sportsman Coordinator John Nagel. A week later, the two IDFG officers began a program of harassing Donley, by accusing him of killing deer by improper feeding.

Three days later, IDFG hired Donley, ostensibly to share his feeding expertise and help feed. Nagel expressly forbid him from making any comments to the media and then refused to feed many of the starving animals.

When the Feeding Advisory Committee told Donley to purchase more blocks and put them out where elk were not being fed on his own time, Erickson confronted him and implied that he was poaching elk. Three days later Nagel replaced Donley with a local resident with no feeding experience.

Donley called Feeding Committee Secretary Fisher to advise he no longer worked for IDFG and Fisher said Commissioner Don Clower had told him earlier that Donley would be fired. Donley was subsequently appointed to an interim feeding committee by the Boise County Commission to investigate and report on the IDFG feeding effort.

As he and two other committee members began to examine and photograph increasing numbers of deer and elk that were dying from advanced malnutrition, the harassment increased. Erickson threatened to cite them for legally removing one leg bone from each carcass for examination by veterinarians.

On March 5, 2002, Donley received a call from Sen. Judy Bartlett advising that IDFG Director Huffaker had warned her that an order had been given to harass and write any tickets they could to Donley and others who were critical of the feeding in Garden Valley.

Sen. Bartlett advised that Huffaker did not say who had given the order but said they were discussing Clower's order to halt shipments of feed that Huffaker had promised to deliver. The harassment accelerated with frequent visits to Donley's home by Erickson.

When Donley told Erickson to stay off of his property and said he considered his visits harassment, Erickson responded, "That's fine, you can consider it anything you want and there are several people who would love to write you a ticket right now."

On March 12, following a County Commission big game feeding hearing attended by IDFG, several legislators

and 80 local residents, Erickson told the remaining group that Donley killed the animals by feeding them too much.

On March 14, Donley and fellow County committee member Jere Calloway were examining and photographing deer and elk that died on the Carpentier Ranch after IDFG stopped feeding them there in mid January. Nagel observed Donley riding his motorcycle along a private golf cart trail well within the property boundary.

Two weeks later Forest Service Law Enforcement Officer Richard Kline issued a federal trespass citation reported by Nagel, alleging that Donley had ridden his motorcycle at "midslope" on FS ground.

The federal Prosecutor told Donley he had the option of paying a \$100 fine and costs, or going to trial and facing a maximum sentence of \$5,000 or imprisonment. After much agonizing, and loss of work while attending his arraignment, Donley opted to fight the false accusation by Nagel and Erickson.

Since Nagel's charge was a lie, and Donley had witnesses to prove it, the FS dropped it, but the harassment continued. In guest editorials published in the *Idaho World* and Boise's *Idaho Statesman*, IDFG employee Al Marion denounced Donley and called him "a local alarmist" who is "taking potshots at Fish and Game".

In an effort to halt the harassment at his home, Donley visited IDFG's then Law Enforcement Chief who told him that Erickson and Nagel had no right to come on his posted property unless they had probable cause or a search warrant. But on the evening of November 17, 2002, Nagel and Erickson again appeared at his home without cause and harassed Donley and his entire family.

Donley contacted the Idaho Attorney General's office with his evidence and was told that the harassment appeared to violate Title 18.1.13.241 "Conspiracy against rights" section of the U.S. Code. Donley asked Senator Bartlett to contact Director Huffaker in his behalf.

In a February 26, 2003 email to Bartlett, Huffaker agreed to handle the matter as a formal harassment complaint, which he said would be investigated by the Regional Supervisor and the Bureau Chief in charge of the employees. He asked Donley to provide his audio and videotapes and promised to return them when his investigation was completed.

More than a year has passed and none of Donley's witnesses have been contacted and the tapes have not been returned. Donley received a brief letter from Huffaker implying that he could not do justice to the complaint and suggesting that Donley pursue the matter through the courts. His letter failed to address the false federal trespass citation and suggested that Donley should make an effort to get along with the local IDFG officer.

The Boise County Commission asked its winter feeding committee to attend an IDFG presentation to the

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Combat Biology

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County concerning area deer and elk populations. During a discussion after the meeting, Donley asked Reg. 3 Supervisor Al VanVooren and Deputy Director Terry Mansfield why they had allowed the harassment.

VanVooren, who was in charge of investigating Donley's harassment complaint, responded, "Well, what do you call what you were doing to us?"

VanVooren knew that Donley had been appointed to a fact finding advisory committee by Boise County's governing body to investigate and report the extent and cause of deer and elk losses. Yet he remained silent while Region 3 IDFG and F&G Advisory Committee officials attacked the County Committee members' credibility and harassed Donley and his family.

Control Predators

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According to DeVos, the 3-Bar deer study findings challenge many accepted biological theories. "For instance biologists have long believed that deer are 'density' dependent, which means that once deer density ratios get high, deer experience a reduction in fecundity - the physical ability to reproduce. That's not happening on the 3-Bar. That tells us that density dependency may not be a valid theory or that the threshold for it is much higher than anyone thought."

The generally accepted biological theory is that habitat conditions, not predation, control deer numbers. "That theory may be true when weather and habitat conditions are good, such as our study during the 1970s in the 3-Bar. However, we have had a decade-long drought with an exclamation point in 2002 - the driest year in recorded history - yet deer numbers, densities and fawn reproduction have remained as high as during the wet years. The absence of predation is the only variable that has changed," DeVos says.

"The original 3-Bar mule deer study in the late 1970s found that fawn survival was 30-percent greater inside the enclosure than outside during a six-year wet period," DeVos reported. Even under good weather and habitat conditions during the 1970s, predators significantly reduced mule deer fawn survival outside of the enclosure.

IDFG biologists refuse to accept the fact that mule deer herds in Idaho were reduced by over-harvesting and/or severe winters; and that low statewide fawn-to-doe ratios are indisputable proof that the herds remain in a predator pit ("LDDE") which they cannot escape without significant reduction of predators.

The Utah Legislature recently passed a permanent annual appropriation of \$650,000 for coyote control. And SFW-Wyoming paid a \$20.00 coyote bounty to sport hunters and trappers in Park County, which resulted in them killing 475 coyotes in less than two months. Meanwhile, IDFG told the Commission it will concentrate on habitat improvement, ignoring predators for now.

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