

I would like to submit this comment regarding Mendocino County's contract with Wildlife Services. I will be unable to speak via Zoom, at the meeting. This is a news item regarding Humboldt County's revised relationship with Wildlife Services. Mendocino County can do the same.

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**EUREKA, Calif.** - In response to advocacy by a coalition of animal protection and conservation groups, Humboldt County today approved a new contract with the federal wildlife killing program, Wildlife Services, that will result in far fewer native species being killed. The contract requires that Wildlife Services implement numerous reforms to reduce its killing of wildlife involved in conflicts by – among other reforms – prioritizing non-lethal mitigation measures in urban and suburban areas and prohibiting killing of beavers.

Advocates began working with county officials after notifying the county that its existing contract with Wildlife Services violated state law by allowing the use of lethal methods without considering their impacts to the environment.

“It is vital that every government agency – from local to the federal level – follow the law for the protection of wildlife,” said Animal Legal Defense Fund Executive Director Stephen Wells. “We will continue to ensure laws that protect animals are followed and enforced.”

Under the modified contract, Wildlife Services cannot kill animals in urban or suburban areas of the county until after implementation of “all feasible non-lethal mitigation measures.” The new contract also imposes reporting requirements and restricts cruel or ecologically harmful killing methods such as pesticides, lead ammunition and body-gripping traps.

Humboldt County is the most recent California county the coalition called upon to reform its wildlife management program. Shasta, Siskiyou, Monterey, Sonoma, and Mendocino Counties have all terminated, suspended, or considered the environmental effects of their contracts – either voluntarily or by court order – after the coalition and others took or threatened legal action.

Phillip Ratcliff