

Although I am not a resident of Mendocino County, I am no stranger to the place. I spent much of my childhood exploring the north coast with my family, and have continued to visit periodically all my life. You are fortunate to be able to call such a beautiful place home. I imagine you are well aware of that, and welcome the opportunity to give something back to the place that has given so much to you. And I understand that you have been given the chance to do just that – to leave the place better than you found it by putting in place policies that will end the senseless killing of our precious wildlife and help their populations recover for current and future generations to enjoy.

I sincerely hope you will do the right thing and terminate the county's contract with USDA Wildlife Services to conduct its despicable Integrated Wildlife Damage Management (IWDM) Program. There are many effective non-lethal, humane approaches for dealing with human-wildlife conflicts that can be administered locally. I understand that it can be extremely difficult for people to lose pets and livestock to predators. It can be emotionally and/or financially challenging. But in a world where our domesticated animals and ourselves make up 96 percent of the mass of mammals on the land, and only 4 percent is everything else - mountain lions, coyotes, bobcats, elk, rabbits, squirrels, etc. – the status quo is not acceptable. We simply have to learn to coexist with other species. If we don't, the only large animals left on this planet will be us, our livestock and our pets.

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*Holly Sletteland*