

To the Mendocino County Board of Supervisors:

I want to urge Mendocino County to terminate its contract with the USDA Wildlife Services and its lethal Integrated Wildlife Damage Management Program. A Non-lethal Wildlife Damage Management Program to be administered locally ought to be adopted instead.

Wildlife Services' killing of bears, wild canids, and cougars violates the moral imperative that wildlife is a public trust and should be managed as such. Mountain lions, bears, coyotes, bobcats, and other species targeted by Wildlife Services are ecologically vital species. The site-specific and cumulative harm of their removal on ecosystem health can be profound.

Wildlife Service's lethal approach also kills far too many non-target species including other wildlife and domestic dogs and cats.

The Integrated Wildlife Damage Management Program obviously specifically targets cougars and should be rejected for that reason alone. It would expand cruel and unnecessary killing methods for killing captured wildlife.

Indisputable scientific research indicates that killing wildlife to reduce predation on livestock or damage to crops is rarely necessary and sometimes counterproductive. For example, such killing may actually increase populations of coyotes while negatively impacting apex predator species such as cougars. There are many cost-effective non-lethal methods of addressing human-wildlife conflicts, including the use of livestock guard animals, appropriate fencing, night-corrals and innovations like Foxlights.

Once again, I urge Mendocino County to embrace a Non-lethal Wildlife Damage Management Program to be administered locally.

Thank you,

Dan De Vries, forty-year California resident and wildlife enthusiast.