

MINUTES
JOINT MEETING

**HOUSE RESOURCES & CONSERVATION COMMITTEE
SENATE RESOURCES & ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE**

DATE: Wednesday, January 29, 2014

TIME: 1:30 P.M.

PLACE: Lincoln Auditorium

MEMBERS: Chairman Denney, Vice Chairman Gibbs, Representatives Wood(35), Barrett, Moyle, Eskridge, Raybould, Andrus, Shepherd, Wood(27), Boyle, Vander Woude, Gestrin, Miller, Anderson(1), Pence, Erpelding, Rubel

Chairman Pearce, Vice Chairman Bair, Senators Cameron, Siddoway, Brackett, Heider, Tippets, Stennett, Lacey

**ABSENT/
EXCUSED:** Rep. Moyle, Anderson(1)

GUESTS: Sharon Kiefer, Ann Moser, IDFG; Jack Bennett, SETT; Diane French, IDL; Norm Semanko, IWUA

Chairman Pearce called the meeting to order at 1:34 p.m.

Dr. Jimmy Taylor, Research Wildlife Biologist and Project Leader for the National Wildlife Research Center in Corvallis, Oregon stated this research was mostly conducted in the Big Horn Basin. He said some cooperators are the Bighorn Basin Conservation Districts, Bighorn Basin Predator Management Districts, and Fidelity Oil Company. Since no research or in-depth monitoring has been done to determine limiting factors in the Basin, the initial ranking of factors was subjective based on the personal and professional observations. Dr. Taylor said some of the goals are to understand sage-grouse/predator relationships, determine what levels of control are effective, and to determine if those levels of control are feasible. The objectives are to identify sage-grouse predators, identify nest predators, conduct predator removal experiments, determine habitat usage, and collect other baseline data. Dr. Taylor said they are very interested in watching the hens since they have a greater investment in raising the young. For the hens that have successful broods, they want to know the length of the brood's survival rate.

Dr. Taylor explained that they process captured birds to collect data such as health assessments, wing pictures, blood collection, feather samples, weight, and collar or leg band attachments. National Wildlife Research Center personnel monitor different leks throughout March to determine where to capture the birds. They have captured over 200 birds and out of the birds handled or collared, only three have died. They use two different types of transmitters. The first is the VHF collar attachment and the second is the ARGOS attachment. VHF birds are located by homing or triangulation using handheld yagi antennas. ARGOS data is downloaded in the office and processed. Dr. Taylor said nest camera placement is also used and is a fairly inexpensive way to get information. He said it also helps them monitor which predators come in and out of the nest. The information presented, showed that ravens only take the eggs from the nests, but coyotes will eat the hen as well. Dr. Taylor said badgers, weasels, and bull snakes are also nest predators but are not as great a threat as ravens or coyotes. The future direction of the research is to continue using data collection, continue peer-reviewed science, and renew focus on ravens.

Jim Pehringer, District Supervisor with Wildlife Services in Cody, Wyoming addressed the committee's questions and stated, in his own opinion, he explained that there is not enough money or time/resources available to determine coyote population.

ADJOURN: There being no further business to come before the committee, the meeting was adjourned at 2:33 p.m.

Representative Denney
Chair

Amber Duke
Secretary