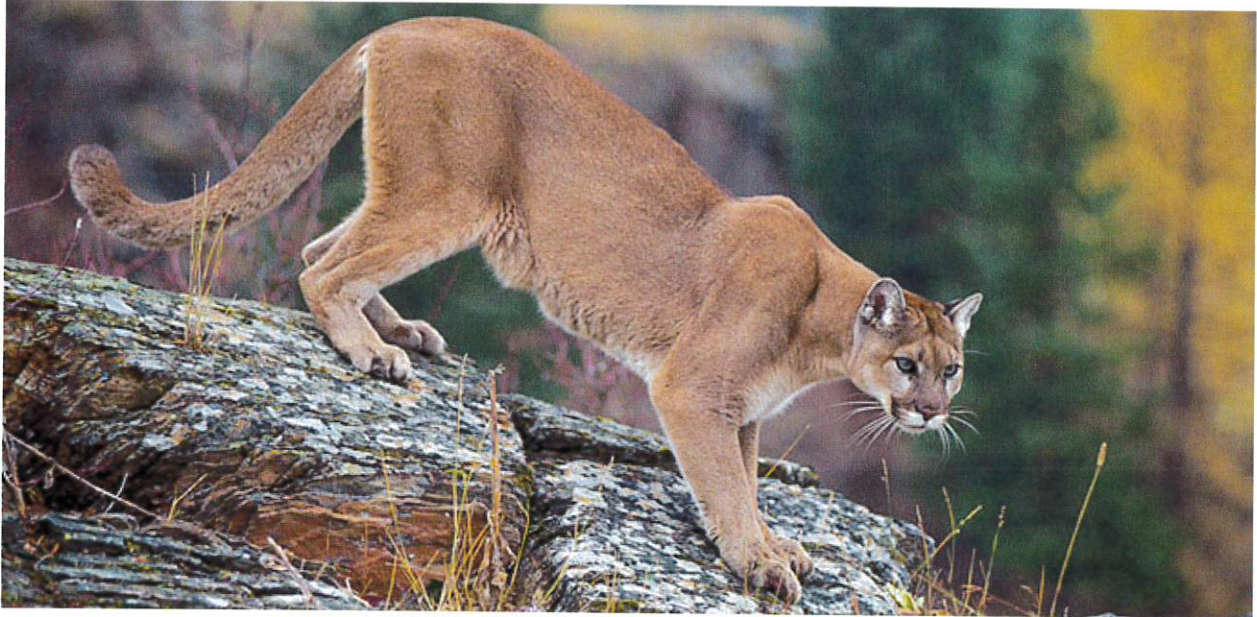


**H.B. 125S01, Division of Wildlife Resources
Amendments
Rep. Carl Albrecht**

The Science Behind Predator Control in Utah



When can predator control increase deer populations?

Increased predator control can help deer populations under the following conditions:

- Deer populations are well below the carrying capacity of the available habitat.
- Predation is identified as a factor that keeps populations from growing.
- Control efforts reduce predator populations enough to yield results (e.g., 70% of coyote populations).
- Control efforts are timed to be the most effective (before predator or prey reproduction occurs).
- Control occurs in focused geographic areas.

What circumstances can prevent deer herds from growing?

There are multiple factors that can affect the growth of Utah's deer herds:

- When predators limit otherwise healthy populations from increasing (the top-down effect)
- When insufficient vegetation affects deer health and limits population increases (the bottom-up effect)

To address both of these effects, increases in habitat work (through Utah's Watershed Restoration Initiative) and predator control are key.

How do we know if a population is at carrying capacity?

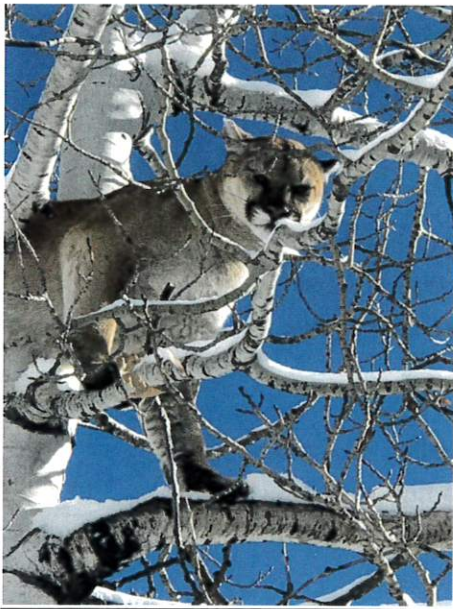
- The Utah Division of Wildlife Resources (DWR) captures and collars nearly 1,500 big game animals annually.
- While studying these animals, Utah obtains population data about the animals' ages, body condition, migration routes and pregnancy rates.
- The data gathered plays a critical role in identifying which areas can be helped with increased predator control.

Additional information

- Predator control is science-based. It is most successful when prey animals have sufficient, high-quality habitat.
- Predator control does not always work, but it can work when control efforts occur in focused geographic areas.
- Predators impact mule deer populations differently:
 - Cougars kill deer in proportion to their availability, with impacts on prime-aged deer.
 - Coyotes kill the weakest and oldest animals, with the biggest impact on fawns.
 - Bears kill fawns from 0-6 months old and steal deer stashed by cougars.

Supporters from the conservation and agricultural communities

- Law Enforcement Legislative Committee (LELC)
- Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation (RMEF)
- Sportsmen for Fish and Wildlife (SFW)
- Utah Division of Wildlife Resources
- Utah Farm Bureau
- Utah Wild Sheep Foundation
- Utah Wool Growers Association



Stats exclusively from our ranch property in Kamas/Peoa

2013	Deer 450	Lions 2
2014	Deer 400	Lions 4
2015	Deer 300	Lions 5
2016	Deer 250	Lions 6
2017	Deer 200	Lions 6-8
2018	Deer 175	Lions 6-9
2019	Deer 75	Lions 8-10



Photo from Gary Butler, who helps patrol our Kamas/Peoa property. The pictures are of his own dogs having been attacked by a lion. And yet, the game warden still tells us there isn't anything we can do. The photos and statistics are taken from our ranch property near Kamas/Peoa. The effect of predators has been devastating in just 6 years.

Article 1/31/2020 of cougars captured in Bountiful near our homes

<https://www.ksl.com/article/46712033/after-weeks-of-sightings-2-bountiful-cougars-captured-and-euthanized>

Article of cougars prowling near homes and pets in Bountiful

<https://www.abc4.com/news/top-stories/abc4-exclusive-cougars-caught-on-camera-in-davis-co-neighborhood/>

Please support

HB125 Division of Wildlife Resources Amendments, Rep Albrecht

HB228 Livestock Predators Removal Amendments, Rep Snider

To my colleagues,

2/11/2020

The effect of predators has been devastating in just 6 years. My brother has put in management buck hunting practices on our ranch. It was working as we were seeing much bigger and better genetics being passed down. A lot of work to foster the deer. All of that has been taken away by a cougar/mountain lion infestation that we couldn't do anything about.

Every year our family put in for cougar tags and asked friends to put in tags telling them there will be no trespass fee on our property. Dozens of applications adding up to about a hundred applications now. We are only aware of one cougar tag pulled in all those applications - a drop in the bucket.

We are in the same area as the Unitas. Most hunters that pull tags in our assigned areas go hunt in the Unitas. It has made our property almost a reserve for the cougars. We have asked the game warden over and over as it has decimated the population. He hasn't been empowered at all to help. There isn't anything we can do.

Please support HB125.

Representative Melissa Ballard

Dear Legislators,

2/10/2020

Thanks for asking me to provide insight to the situation pertaining to lions vs deer and elk on the ranch property. I will attempt to relay some of my experiences from the last several years.

I started seeing a trend with deer population in certain areas declining about 6-7 years ago. There are several areas of the ranch that on any given day I could go to certain areas and view a minimum of 40-60 deer at daybreak all from one spot. I would go to these areas multiple times per day, to try and keep an accurate count on animal population, especially since we started purposely trying to control what animals were being taken. Sometimes I would get a solid count on a herd and the next day there would be a specific deer missing from the same herd.

As I traveled through the ranch I would come across various kill sites. I have included a few of the pics but in addition to what I'm sending there are many more. For every kill site I find there are another 10-12 that I don't find. One very specific spot on the ranch has gone from 20 bucks on one mountain at all times to not even a single deer on that same mountain today. This transition took several years but it has been a definite complete devastation of all deer in certain areas. Once the mountain lions move in it is a matter of a month and the deer either move or get killed. I have so many personal experiences I can share but I know this is supposed to be a quick summary. If anyone needs further info I am happy to speak with them personally or write a more in depth explanation.

Gary Butler 801-671-8188