

Request from Sagebrush Ecosystem Council

Thursday, June 27 2019

Item 10 (moved to between items 5 and 6).

Update from the USFWS relating to the potential increase in raven take permits in Nevada.

To be more accurate, I believe the Council is looking for the potential increase in ***authorized take numbers*** for ravens in Nevada. Permits and authorized take of migratory birds is managed through the FWS' Migratory Bird Program. Across Nevada, there are just a few take permits (USDA-APHIS/Wildlife Services (WS), NDOW, and some private landowners). Each of these permits have an authorized number of ravens that can be killed. In some cases, the management actions by a particular agency might be operating under different permits. For example, according to the DRC-1339 label, only APHIS is approved to use this pesticide.

From 2006 to 2017, the take authorized (collectively) by the USFWS for Nevada has increased from 2,260 to just under 5,200. The reported implementation of raven management (number killed) has typically been less than the amount authorized (over 12-year span, averaged 71.8%; ranging from 8.3% to 101.4%). This has been the result of the authorized take identified for livestock operations (2,500) not being fully utilized each year. However, the authorized take for protecting sage-grouse (also 2,500) has been maxed out each year. This has been implemented by Wildlife Services at the request of NDOW and has only been able to address a small subset of leks across the state.

There is increasing interest in the utility and effectiveness of egg-oiling. This management action has been incorporated into existing authorized take using the adjustment formula of 1 bird=2 eggs.

There has been interest by various parties in increasing the authorized take of ravens in Nevada to help manage the apparently burgeoning population. Right now, the Service's Migratory Birds Program is a Cooperating Agency with WS in the development of a statewide EA for predator management which will include management of ravens. This has been a slow process and is resulting in a fairly robust document.

The Service is committed to continuing to work with WS through this NEPA process and help accommodate appropriate management of ravens in Nevada. The Service also recognizes that the raven population cannot be managed through direct killing or egg-oiling alone. While these actions may have utility in specific areas of concern; across the state, these are simply addressing the symptoms of a much larger problem of subsidies such as nesting sites, roosting sites, and food and water subsidies (e.g. water troughs, road kill, and landfills). To address this

issue, we need to have an all-in/conservation community approach that includes local, state, and federal agencies as well as private landowners and organizations. We might be able to put out the spot fires but what is our long-term objectives and approach?

That being said, the ask was to provide an update on the request for an increase in authorized take for ravens in Nevada. This is actively being worked on by WS through the NEPA process with the Service as a Cooperating Agency. At this time, based on population models developed by both agencies, they are looking to incorporate a request of 19,000 ravens. This is still pre-decisional. As for the timeline, Wildlife Services just got back agency reviews of the draft EA (FWS, NDOW, NDA, etc.) and is going through those comments. There is hope and anticipation that there will be a ROD by the end of this year.

Authorized/Reported take history:

Year	Authorized	Reported
2006	2620	2384
2007	2820	523
2008	2170	2201
2009	2140	1997
2010	1810	150
2011	4086	3062
2012	3810	3287
2013	4540	4209
2014	4383	4184
2015	4450	3423
2016	5150	4189
2017	5197	2148

