

A black raven is perched on a tree branch, facing right. The bird's feathers are dark and glossy, and its beak is long and pointed. The background is a soft-focus view of green foliage.

OPTIONS TO REDUCE RAVEN DEPREDATION IN WESTERN STATES

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BACKGROUND

- Population growth doubled over last 50 years
- Ongoing management challenge
- Impacts include depredation on sensitive species, livestock, and utility infrastructure
- Protected under the MBTA; take requires authorization



A black crow is perched on a sandy, light-brown mound. The crow is facing left, with its head turned slightly towards the viewer. Its feathers are dark and glossy, and its beak is a lighter, horn-like color. The background is a soft, out-of-focus landscape with warm, golden-brown tones, suggesting a sunset or sunrise. The overall mood is serene and natural.

PRESCRIBED TAKE LEVELS

PTL Approach:

- Pre-authorized thresholds on allowable take
- Expedites analysis of permits
- Ensures impacts stay within scientifically analyzed thresholds

Current Situation:

- Requested take well below PTLs
- Reported take further below PTLs
- Partners still express concern about limited take



POSSIBLE TOOLS

- **Not recommended:**
 - Removal from MBTA protection
 - Hunting regulations
 - Depredation or conservation orders
- **Current:**
 - Non-lethal techniques
 - Depredation permits
 - Agency Species Protection permits
 - Utility permits
 - Collaboration



**TOOLS CONSIDERED AND NOT
RECOMMENDED AT THIS TIME**



Considered and Eliminated from Further Consideration

REMOVAL FROM MBTA PROTECTION

- Treaty negotiation required by the Dept of State:
 - Canada
 - Mexico
 - Japan
 - Russia
- Significant legal, diplomatic, and policy implications

HUNTING REGULATIONS

- Hunting regulations determine which species can be legally hunted.
- Raven hunting is not currently authorized – not classified as a game or huntable species.
- Authorizing raven hunting would require a federal rulemaking process, including:
 - NEPA review
 - Tribal consultation and engagement
 - Public input

DEPREDATION, CONTROL, AND CONSERVATION ORDERS



Key Points

- Authorize take without individual permits
- Specifies who may act, what species, where, and why

Limitations

- No upfront registration and inadequate reporting can create challenges for adequately analyzing effects

Future

- Approaches that leverage technical advances to provide for registration and reporting (e.g. RCGR app)



TOOLS CURRENTLY
AVAILABLE



NON-LETHAL TECHNIQUES

- Landscape modification
- Operational practices
- Active Hazing
- Passive Dissuasion

**Use Wildlife Services
expertise!**



DEPREDATION PERMITS (50 CFR 21.100)

- Authorizes take to address damage
 - Agriculture, property, safety, and sensitive species
 - In-use nest/egg take, trapping, lethal take
- Non-lethal measures must continue alongside take
- Permit valid up to 1 year

SPECIAL PURPOSE AGENCY SPECIES PROTECTION PERMIT (50 CFR 21.95)

- Authorizes agencies to take birds to protect species of concern
- Available to qualifying government agencies
- Can authorize concealment and attractants
- Valid for up to 3 years



UTILITY PERMITS (50 CFR 21.95)

- Authorizes salvage/disposal of dead birds on utility property
- Allows in-use nest removal when there is an imminent safety risk
- Useful for raven nests on power infrastructure
- Permit valid for 3 years



Photo credit: allaboutbirds.org

ADDRESSING EAGLE DEPREDATION

- Lethal take of eagles is not authorized
- Hazing and deterrence are allowed without a permit unless they may disturb eagles
- Reducing site attractiveness is encouraged and generally permit-free unless actions result in disturbance
- Trapping for relocation/falconry requires a depredation permit
- Nest removal requires separate authorization (50 CFR 22.27)



CONTINUED COLLABORATION

- Partnerships across agencies, Tribes, states
 - Raven Working Group
- Monitoring & research
- Smart infrastructure & subsidy reduction
- Opportunities to streamline permitting
- Feasibility: practical limits to achieving take
- Permit staff available to help navigate options





KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Start with Wildlife Services
- Implement robust non-lethal management plans
 - Reduce human-provided subsidies
- Permits authorize take when justified
- PTLs support take remaining within sustainable limits
- Coordinate with states, Tribes, and partners

QUESTIONS?