

# 2012 Washington State Legislative Session: Summary of Bills Affecting Animal Welfare

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The Washington State Legislature had numerous bills before it in the 2012 legislative session that affected the welfare of animals. Wildlife management was the subject of the majority of bills. Relatively few bills addressed the welfare of companion animals, livestock or poultry.

Summaries of key bills considered in the 2012 legislature that affected animal welfare are presented below.<sup>2</sup> All of the bills carried over from the 2011 session and most bills introduced in the 2012 session failed to pass.

## Bills Passed During the 2012 Legislative Session



### **HB 2191, Concerning Police Dogs**

**Status:** Passed the legislature. Signed by the governor on March 29, 2012. Effective June 7, 2012.

**Companion Bill:** None

**Purpose:** The bill exempts the owners of police dogs from dog bite liability under certain circumstances and adds civil penalties for harming or killing a police dog.

### **HB 2349, Concerning the Management of Beavers**

**Status:** Passed the legislature. Signed by the governor on March 29, 2012. Effective June 7, 2012.

**Companion Bill:** None

**Purpose:** The bill is intended to promote non-lethal measures for managing nuisance beavers and encourage practices that recognize the animal's value to the natural environment. The bill requires the Washington Department of Fish & Wildlife (WDFW) to permit the release of wild beavers on public and private lands with agreement from the property owners. The bill authorizes the agency to limit

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<sup>1</sup> *The Washington Alliance for Humane Legislation is a 501(c)(4) nonprofit organization whose mission is to promote the passage and effective implementation of humane animal welfare laws, regulations, and policies in Washington State and to educate the public about animal welfare issues. It may be contacted at [info@savewashingtonpets.org](mailto:info@savewashingtonpets.org).*

<sup>2</sup> *For additional information on any bill, visit the Washington State Legislature's bill search page at <http://apps.leg.wa.gov/billinfo/>. Enter the bill number. On the bill's web page you will find a list of the bill's sponsors; its progress through the legislature; copies of the bill and any amendments or substitutes; and bill digests, reports, and fiscal notes. If you are reading an electronic version of this report, you can visit each bill's web page by clicking on the bill number. Each bill number in this report is hyperlinked to its page on the legislature's web site.*

the release of wild beavers to certain areas of the state and to place conditions on the release of beavers to maximize the success of relocation.

**SB 6135, Regarding Enforcement of Fish and Wildlife Violations**

**Status:** Passed the legislature. Signed by the governor on March 29, 2012. Effective June 7, 2012.

**Companion Bill: HB 2364**

**Purpose:** This bill addresses a wide range of fish and wildlife enforcement issues. It increases certain penalties, including those for unlawful trafficking and taking protected birds, and creates new penalties and crimes while reclassifying some crimes as infractions. Unlawful intentional or negligent feeding of a large wild carnivore is added as a new crime.

**Bills Carried over from the 2011 Legislative Session That Did Not Pass in the 2012 Session**



**HB 1107, Preparing for the Epidemiological Consequences of Diseases Related to Wolf Populations**

**Status:** Referred to the House Agriculture & Natural Resources Committee in 2011. No further action was taken on the bill in the 2011 or 2012 legislative sessions.

**Companion Bill:** None

**Purpose:** The bill would require the Washington State Department of Health, with the assistance of

the WDFW and the state veterinarian, to develop and implement a program to detect, interdict, and assess the epidemiological consequences of diseases that may afflict or may be carried by wolves and the actual and potential impact of wolves' role in such diseases upon human health in the state.

**HB 1108, Concerning the State's Management of Wolves**

**Status:** Referred to the House Agriculture & Natural Resources Committee in 2011. No further action was taken on the bill in the 2011 or 2012 legislative sessions.

**Companion Bill:** None

**Purpose:** The bill would void all wolf management plans existing on the bill's effective date. It would establish new policies for wolf management that reflect the perception of wolves as having an unacceptable negative impact on game herds, hunting opportunities, livestock, public health and safety, and Washington's economy.

**HB 1109, Concerning Legislative Review of Gray Wolf Conservation and Management**

**Status:** Referred to the House Agriculture & Natural Resources Committee. A hearing was held in that committee in March 2011. No further action was taken on the bill in the 2011 or 2012 legislative sessions.

**Companion Bill:** None

**Purpose:** The bill would require the state legislature to approve any gray wolf conservation and management plan before WDFW submits that plan to the Fish and Wildlife Commission for final review and approval.

**HB 1137, Concerning Body-Gripping Traps**

**Status:** Referred to the House Agriculture & Natural Resources Committee in 2011. No further action was taken on the bill in the 2011 or 2012 legislative sessions.

**Companion Bill:** None

**Purpose:** The bill would revise the conditions and circumstances under which body-gripping animal traps are allowed and prohibited.

**HB 1138, Concerning Animal Trapping**

**Status:** Referred to the House Agriculture & Natural Resources Committee in 2011. No further action was taken on the bill in the 2011 or 2012 legislative sessions.

**Companion Bill:** None

**Purpose:** The bill would modify state law regarding animal trapping. The bill addressed: the authority of WDFW to manage the trapping of wild animals; requirements for WDFW-issued trapping licenses; requirements for instruction in trapping techniques; trapping on private property; prohibited traps; identification to be attached to traps; revocation of trapping licenses; and trapping license fees.



**HB 1226, Creating the Companion Animal Safety, Population Control, and Spay/Neuter Assistance Program**

**Status:** Referred to the House Early Learning & Human Services Committee in 2011. A hearing was held in that committee in March 2011. No further action was taken on the bill in the 2011 or 2012 legislative sessions.

**Companion Bill:** None. However, this bill is very similar to **SB 5151** which was referred to the Senate

Government Operations, Tribal Relations & Elections Committee. No further action was taken on SB 5151 in the 2011 or 2012 legislative sessions.

**Purpose:** HB 1226 would create a companion animal spay/neuter assistance program within the Department of Social and Health Services to pay for spaying and neutering of dogs and cats owned by low income individuals, and spaying and neutering of feral and free roaming cats. The bill would establish a spay/neuter assistance account funded by a fee of \$50 per ton of cat and dog food distributed in Washington. The fee would be paid by pet food distributors.

Approximately \$10 million per year would be generated by the fee, an amount sufficient to support the costs of surgical sterilization of up to 65,000 eligible animals each year.



**HB 1755, Concerning the Humane Treatment of Dogs**

**Status:** Referred to the House Judiciary Committee in 2011. No further action was taken on the bill in the 2011 session. In the 2012 legislative session the House Judiciary Committee passed a substitute bill and referred the bill to the House Rules Committee. The House Rules Committee referred the bill for second reading on the house floor. No further action was taken on the bill in the 2012 legislative session.

**Companion Bill: SB 5649.** In the 2011 legislative session, SB 5649 was referred to the Senate Judiciary Committee which passed a substitute bill and referred the bill to the Senate Rules Committee. No further action was taken on SB 5649 in the 2011 or 2012 legislative sessions.  
**Purpose:** The bill would establish humane standards for tethering of dogs.

**HB 1800, Requiring Registration of Animal Abusers**

**Status:** Referred to the House Judiciary Committee in 2011. No further action was taken on the bill in the 2011 or 2012 legislative sessions.

**Companion Bill: SB 5144.** SB 5144 was referred to the Senate Judiciary Committee in 2011. No further action was taken on SB 5144 in the 2011 or 2012 legislative sessions.

**Purpose:** The bill would establish a registry of people convicted of animal abuse crimes. Information identifying offenders listed in the registry would be made available to the public.

**SB 5201, Regarding Issues that Impact the Department of Fish and Wildlife**

**Status:** In 2011, passed the senate and passed the House Agriculture & Natural Resources and House General Government Appropriations & Oversight Committees and was referred to the House Rules Committee. No further action was taken on the bill during the 2011 or 2012 legislative sessions.

**Companion Bill: HB 1282.** HB 1282 was referred to the House Agriculture & Natural Resources Committee in the 2011 session. The committee passed a substitute bill that was referred to the House General Government Appropriations & Oversight Committee which held a hearing on the bill in February 2011. No further action was taken on the bill in the 2011 or 2012 legislative sessions.

**Purpose:** The bill addressed many wildlife management issues. It would establish a peer-review process for WDFW or Fish and Wildlife Commission decisions; make it unlawful to feed or attempt to feed bears, cougars, or wolves in most circumstances; change the conditions for and duration of hunting license revocation; and add penalties for taking of protected fish and wildlife.

**SB 5264, Requiring a Study of Mazama Pocket Gophers**

**Status:** Passed the senate and passed the House Agriculture & Natural Resources Committee in 2011. Referred to the House General Government Appropriations & Oversight Committee; the Senate Rules Committee; and back to the Senate Energy, Natural Resources & Marine Waters Committee in 2011. No further action was taken on the bill in the 2011 or 2012 legislative sessions.

**Companion Bill:** None

**Purpose:** The bill would require WDFW to conduct a biological status update of the Mazama pocket gopher to determine if protection or management of the species is still warranted.

**SB 5356, Establishing Seasons for Hunting Cougars with the Aid of Dogs; Revised for First Substitute Bill: Allowing the Use of Dogs to Hunt Cougars**

**Status:** In 2011, SB 5356 was referred to the Senate Natural Resources & Marine Waters Committee which passed a substitute bill. The substitute bill passed the senate. The bill then moved to the house, where it passed the House Agriculture & Natural Resources Committee and was referred to the House Rules Committee. The bill was returned to the Senate Rules Committee in April 2011. No further action was taken on the bill in the 2011 or 2012 legislative sessions.

**Companion Bill: HB 1124.** This version of the bill would have created a permanent program for hunting cougars with the aid of dogs. In 2011, HB 1124 was referred to the House Agriculture &



cougars with the aid of dogs in 2004, with extensions to the pilot programs added in 2007 and 2008.

Natural Resources Committee which passed a substitute bill and referred the bill to the House Rules Committee. No further action was taken on the bill in the 2011 or 2012 legislative sessions.

**Purpose:** The bill would authorize the continued use of dogs to hunt cougars through a five-year pilot program extension through July 2016.

**Notes:** Initiative 655, passed in 1996, prohibited the use of dogs to hunt cougars. However, the legislature began authorizing pilot programs for hunting

## **Bills Introduced in the 2012 Legislative Session That Did Not Pass**

### **HB 2214, Concerning the Regional Management of Mammalian Apex Predators**

**Status:** Referred to the House Agriculture & Natural Resources Committee which held a hearing on the bill in January 2012. No further action was taken on the bill.

**Companion Bill:** **SB 6136**. SB 6136 was referred to the Senate Energy, Natural Resources & Marine Waters Committee which held a hearing on the bill in February 2012. No further action was taken on the bill.

**Purpose:** The bill would require the Fish and Wildlife Commission to consider any petitions for removing a species from classification or changing the classification of the species on a regional basis, for mammalian apex predators only, if the commission has listed a species statewide as endangered, threatened, or sensitive; and suspend any management plan or planning process, under certain circumstances, for a mammalian apex predator species listed as endangered, threatened, or sensitive.

### **HB 2272, Concerning Antifreeze Products**

**Status:** Passed the house and passed from the Senate Labor, Commerce & Consumer Protection Committee to the Senate Rules Committee. No further action was taken on the bill.

**Companion Bill:** None

**Purpose:** The bill would expand requirements that engine coolant and antifreeze products sold in Washington contain an aversive agent to render the antifreeze or engine coolant unpalatable. The intent of this bill was to reduce the likelihood of antifreeze ingestion by children, wildlife, and pets.

### **HB 2365, Regarding Large Wild Carnivore Conflict Management**

**Status:** Passed the house and passed from the Senate Energy, Natural Resources & Marine Waters Committee to the Senate Rules Committee. No further action was taken on the bill.

**Companion Bill:** **SB 6139**. SB 6139 was referred to the Senate Energy, Natural Resources & Marine Waters Committee which passed the bill and referred it to the Senate Rules Committee. No further action was taken on the bill.

**Purpose:** The bill addressed a number of issues related to large wild carnivore management. Elements of the bill included the following: limited payments from the state wildlife account for claims and assessment costs for injury or loss of livestock; prohibited a person from negligently or intentionally feeding or attempting to feed large wild carnivores (bears, cougars, or wolves) or negligently or intentionally attracting large wild carnivores to land or a building; and allowed for

certain persons to kill a gray wolf, regardless of state classification, when there is physical evidence that the wolf is in the act of attacking livestock.

**HB 2549, Regarding State Bounties for Invasive Species**

**Status:** Referred to the House Agriculture & Natural Resources Committee. No further action was taken on the bill.

**Companion Bill:** None

**Purpose:** The bill would require WDFW to establish a program to assist with the eradication of invasive species by paying cash bounties to citizens in exchange for their participation in eradication efforts. Invasive species were defined to include certain aquatic, avian, and mammalian predator species.

**HB 2674, Regarding Animal Care Standards**

**Status:** Referred to the House Agriculture & Natural Resources Committee. No further action was taken on the bill.

**Companion Bill:** None

**Purpose:** The bill would create the livestock care standards board and authorize the board to adopt minimal standards governing the care of livestock and poultry.

**SB 6122, Concerning Unattended Pet Animals with a Choke Chain**

**Status:** Referred to the Senate Judiciary Committee which passed a substitute bill and referred it to the Senate Rules Committee. No further action was taken on the bill.

**Companion Bill:** None

**Purpose:** The bill would prohibit a person licensed under chapter 18.92 RCW (veterinary medicine, surgery, and dentistry) or chapter 18.240 RCW (animal massage practitioners) from leaving a pet animal unattended while the animal is secured around the neck with a choke chain.

**SB 6137, Providing an Affirmative Defense to the Unlawful Taking of Endangered Fish or Wildlife When the Incident Involves a Gray Wolf; Revised for First Substitute Bill: Protecting Livestock When Attacked by Wolves**

**Status:** Referred to the Senate Energy, Natural Resources & Marine Waters Committee which passed a substitute bill and referred it to the Senate Rules Committee. No further action was taken on the bill.

**Companion Bill:** None

**Purpose:** The original bill provided an affirmative defense to the unlawful taking of endangered fish or wildlife when the incident involved a gray wolf. The substitute bill required the State Fish and Wildlife Commission's rules to allow for certain persons to kill a gray wolf, regardless of state classification, when there is physical evidence that the wolf is in the act of attacking livestock.

**SB 6271, Removing State and Local Protections for the Mazama Pocket Gopher**

**Status:** Referred to Senate Energy, Natural Resources & Marine Waters Committee. No further action was taken on the bill.

**Companion Bill:** None

**Purpose:** The bill would prohibit the Fish and Wildlife Commission from classifying the Mazama pocket gopher as a threatened or endangered species. The bill would also prohibit cities and counties from applying critical areas ordinances to protect the Mazama pocket gopher.