

Washoe County Advisory Board to Manage Wildlife –  
March 9, 2026 minutes

1. **PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE** [Non-action item]
2. **CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL** [Non-action item]

*Members in Attendance*

1. Ryan Browne, Chairman
2. Coby Rowe, Vice Chairman
3. Steve Robinson
4. Kristie Marchese
5. Matt Melarkey

*Others in Attendance*

1. Mel Belding
2. John Ewanyk, NDOW
3. Daniel Koss, USFWS
4. Sean Espinosa, NDOW
5. Larry Johnson

3. **PUBLIC COMMENTS**-[Non-action item]

George Forebush said that he and his organization were opposed to the proposed regulations regarding thermal imaging.

4. **Approval of January 20, 2026 minutes** - [For possible action]

**Vice Chair Rowe motioned for approval of January 20, 2026 CAB minutes. Chair Browne seconded. The motion carried unanimously.**

5. **BOARD MEMBER MEETING ASSIGNMENT**-[Non-action item]

Chair Browne asked who would be able to attend the upcoming Commission meeting. Board members noted they would be able to be in attendance for the upcoming Commission meeting.

6. **COMMITTEE, MEMBER AND LIAISON UPDATES**-[Non-action items]

There were no updates or communications from members of the public since the January meeting.

7. **PRESENTATION FROM USFWS** - [Informational]

Chair Browne opened the agenda item to hear a presentation regarding the Lahontan National Fish Hatchery. Daniel Koss, USFWS, provided members of

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the CAB a presentation that touched on Lahontan Cutthroat Trout management in the lower Truckee River-Pyramid Lake system.

**8. First Reading – Commission Policies – [For possible action]**  
**A. Commission Policy 1 – General Guidelines for the Commission**

Members of the CAB chose to take agenda item 8 and vote to approve as a block.

Chair Browne opened the item to discuss the first reading of Commission Policy 1. There was no discussion or public comment.

**B. Commission Policy 4 – Petition Process and Adoption of Regulations**

Chair Browne opened the item to discuss the first reading of Commission Policy 4.

**C. Commission Policy 51 – Kirch Award**

**Vice Chair Rowe moved to approve agenda items 8 a, b, c as written. Member Robinson seconded. The motion carried unanimously.**

**Chair Browne moved to approve the Draft Fiscal Year 2027 Predation Plan as written. Vice Chair Rowe seconded. The motion carried unanimously.**

**9. Elk Management Committee Report and Recommendations – Desired Elk Herd Population Objective Adjustments – [For possible action]**

Chair Browne opened the item to consider adopting recommendations for adjustments to annual elk population objectives as outlined in Addendum 2 to the Elk Species Management Plan. Sean Espinosa, NDOW, directed the CAB to the population objectives table. Member Robinsons asked about the status of the state elk management plan. Mr. Espinosa said that while the state plan is not finalized, the population objectives will be included in the plan. Members of the CAB continued discussion regarding their concerns with approving population objectives without additional information.

During public comments, Larry Johnson said that the population objectives were arbitrary. He said he was strongly in favor with the Departments proposal, however. Mel Belding said that he would like the CAB to ask for more rather than less.

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**Vice Chair Rowe moved to approve the Elk Management Committee Report and to continue to implement plus 10% for all units. Chair Browne seconded. The motion carried unanimously.**

**10. Draft Fiscal Year 2027 Predation Management Plan – [For Possible Action]**

Chair Browne opened the item to discuss the second draft of the proposed Fiscal Year 2027 Predation Management Plan. Comments and revisions from the State Predatory Animal and Rodent Committee (PARC), the Wildlife Damage Management Committee, County Advisory Boards to Manage Wildlife and any other interested entity will be compiled and shared with the Commission for consideration. Overall, members of the CAB were happy with the directions the plan as taken. Mr. Espinosa detailed two projects and their success. He said that mule deer enhancement projects have shown good results and there have been significant amounts of lions removed from those areas. Member Melarkey said he appreciated NDOW's acknowledgement of the success that has happened to date. Member Robinson asked about Project 46. Mr. Espinosa said there was a final report, and he would send that to members of the CAB.

During public comment, Larry Johnson said that he had talked about recent success with predation plans in Unit 014 and those did result in measurable success for mule deer survivability. He also complimented Joe Bennett for the new plan and NDOW has improved the plans under Mr. Bennetts leadership.

**Vice Chair Rowe moved to approve the Draft Fiscal Year 2027 Predation Management plan as written. Member Melarkey seconded. The motion carried unanimously.**

**11. Petition – Mr. Christian Reilly – Adoption/Public Comment– [For Possible Action]**

Chair Browne opened the item to consider a petition removing the freshwater stingrays (Potamotrygon spp.) from Nevada's Prohibited Aquatic Species List or reclassification of the species to a regulated/controlled species category. Members of the CAB discussed the rationale for the petition. There was no public comment.

**Member Robinson moved to deny the petition from Mr. Christian Reilly. Vice Chair Rowe seconded. The motion carried unanimously.**

- 12. Appeal – Mr. Daniel King - [For Possible Action] - REMOVED**
- 13. Appeal – Mr. Tyrel Hubbard– [For Possible Action] - REMOVED**
- 14. Appeal – Mr. Paul Padilla– [For Possible Action] – REMOVED**
- 15. Commission Regulations– [For Possible Action]**

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**A. Commission Regulation 26-10, Migratory Game Bird Seasons, Bag Limits, and Special Regulations for Waterfowl and Webless Migratory Game Birds; Public Hunting Limited on Wildlife Management Areas and Designated State Lands – 2026-2027 Season**

Chair Browne opened the item to consider recommendations for seasons, bag limits, and special regulations for migratory game birds for the 2026-2027 season and adopt regulations consistent with the proposed regulation framework for the 2026-2027 hunting seasons on certain migratory game birds established by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. There was no discussion or public comment.

**Vice Chair Rowe moved to approve Commission Regulation 26-10 as written. Chair Browne seconded. The motion carried unanimously.**

**16. Commission General Regulations– [For Possible Action]**

**A. Commission General Regulation 516 – Boating Equipment and Operation Revisions**

Chair Browne opened the item to consider regulation language amending Nevada Administrative Code (NAC) that is mandated by the United States Coast Guard on the requirements of fire extinguishers and clean up language for operating at a flat wake. There was no discussion or public comment.

**Vice Chair Rowe moved to approve Commission Regulation 516 as written. Member Robinson seconded. The motion carried unanimously.**

**B. Commission General Regulation 517 – Automatic Range Finding Scopes**

Chair Browne opened the item to consider regulation language amending Nevada Administrative Code (NAC) that would prohibit the use of range finding scopes that automatically adjust the sight reticle or aiming point while hunting certain species with a firearm, bow, or crossbow. John Ewanyk, NDOW, said this is a product of the emerging technology meeting and it is trying to balance a fair chase with ethical kills. Chair Browne worried that this would lead to hunters who were ill-equipped to shoot at long ranges because the technology was too good. Member Melarkey said that the problem is this technology is evolving too quickly and he said he didn't believe there should be this type of technology

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being used. Member Robinson said he was fully in support of the improving technology. Member Marchese said that this type of technology gave more opportunities for hunters who may have otherwise not been able to be out hunting anymore.

During public comment, Mel Belding said that he was against more regulations. He said he would like to see the Department spend more time on managing wildlife instead of adding more restrictive regulations.

**Member Robinson moved to not approve Commission Regulation 517. Vice Chair Rowe seconded. The motion carried 3 – 2.**

**C. Commission General Regulation 526 – Thermal Imaging Equipment**

Chair Browne opened the item to consider regulation language amending Nevada Administrative Code (NAC) that would amend dates and set location or possession restrictions when the use of thermal imaging equipment is unlawful. Chair Browne said he was still against the use of thermal imaging equipment. John Ewanyk, NDOW, said people were using thermal during the daytime to find deer. By using thermal you can identify many more deer than without using it and the debate is whether the use of this equipment was ethical. Member Robinson said this regulation would be very difficult to enforce and there is already laws on the books that prevent the illegal use of thermal. Vice Chair Rowe said he was against the use of thermal for big game, but there were other uses including predator hunting where the use of thermal can be effective. He also agreed with Member Robinson that it would be difficult to enforce. Member Melarkey said this CAB had done many things to help predator hunters and the use of thermal was something he was not willing to support. He also noted that if thermal use continues to be allowed for predator hunting, then hunters who may be using it for big game would say they were using it for predators only. There was no public comment.

**Chair Browne moved to approve Commission General Regulation 526 as written. Vice Chair Rowe seconded. The motion carried 3 - 2**

**D. Commission General Regulation 529 – Disability Permit Program Revisions**

Chair Browne opened the item to consider regulation language amending Nevada Administrative Code (NAC) that would update business rules and requirements related to the archery, visual and special assistance disability permit.

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During public comment, Larry Johnson said he was not in support of the regulation because it would eliminate the use of crossbows. Even though there has been some abuse of the permit program, that abuse should not outweigh the overall benefits of the program. He said he would like to see this proposal delayed so additional information could be gathered.

John Ewanyk, NDOW, said he had heard about some of the same concerns that were raised during public comment. He noted there should be additional research into draw locks which helps contain the effective ranges.

Member Melarkey said that he supports the programs for disabled hunters. He noted that he would like to see language to require only medical doctors or licensed doctors.

**Vice Chair Rowe moved to approve Commission General 529 to consider crossbows for permanently disabled people. Member Robinson seconded. The motion carried unanimously.**

**E. Commission General Regulation 530 – Master Guides – REMOVED**

**F. Commission General Regulation 531 – Shed Antler Revisions**

Chair Browne opened the item to consider regulation language amending Nevada Administrative Code (NAC) that creates different seasons for shed antler collection, adding certain private lands and definitions. Member Robinsons noted that statute recently passed allows a person to take shed antlers if the carcass is exposed. He was unclear how the Commission could override the legislature. He said he was not in support of this proposed regulation. Members of the CAB discussed if the proposed regulation could override the law.

During public comment, Larry Johnson said the “deadhead” issue has been contentious for a long time. He said there had been a deal with the Department and the Legislature would handle the issue, but nothing came of that. This is when Senator Hansen introduced the bill. He said the proposed regulations have been proposed due to commercial shed hunters to locate and stockpile sheds before the shed season begins. He said this was an honest attempt through regulation to halt the commercial shed hunters. Mel Belding said he was not in favor of the shed hunting laws. He said this proposal appeared inconsistent.

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John Ewanyk added that LCB noted there were two conflicting laws and there could still be a season. The dates are in NAC, but the Authority is with NRS.

**Member Robinsons moved to recommend Commission General Regulation 531 be denied. Vice Chair Rowe seconded. The motion carried 4-1.**

**17. Future Meeting Agenda Items – Informational only- Public Comment Allowed**

There was no future agenda items.

**18. Public Comment [Non-action item]**

There was no public comment.

**19. Adjournment [Non-action item]**

Chair Rowe adjourned the meeting at 7:58 p.m.