

1. Does your agency give landowners big game permits or vouchers that they can use or sell to compensate landowners or offset crop damage? If so, are the permits for antlerless animals, bucks/bulls, or both? Please explain the details of these permits or vouchers?

Yes - Issuance of deer or antelope tags as compensation for damage to private property.
<https://www.leg.state.nv.us/NRS/NRS-502.html#NRS502Sec145>

An owner, lessee or manager of private land may apply to the Department for the issuance to him or her of one or more deer or antelope tags for damage caused by deer or antelope to the private land or to any improvements thereon. There is a requirement for the private property that, at the time the Department inspects the private property, it is planted, irrigated, or otherwise cultivated to produce a harvestable crop. These tags are valid for antlered deer or antelope with horns longer than their ears.

The complainant must notify the Department in writing of any damage within 10 days after it is discovered. The Department then has ten days to respond to the complaint. The Department will investigate the complaint and shall issue to the applicant not more than one tag for each 50 animals present on the private land owned, leased, or managed by the applicant at the time of the investigation. Both deer and antelope tags may be issued to an applicant. The tags may be used by the owner, lessee, or manager of the private land if the owner, lessee, or manager holds a valid Nevada hunting license, or may be sold by that person to any holder of a valid Nevada hunting license at any price mutually agreed upon. The tags issued must be used in the Hunt unit or units within which the private land is located. The tags may only be used during the open seasons for the species for which the tag is issued. As a condition of receiving a tag from the Department pursuant to this section, an owner, lessee, or manager who is lawfully in control of private land that blocks access to adjacent public land must provide access across private land to the adjacent public land during the hunting season to a person or hunting party with a tag for the purpose of hunting on the public land. Access across private land is only required during the open season for the specific species for which the compensation tag was issued. The maximum number of Landowner Deer and Antelope Compensation tags which may be issued annually by the Department must not exceed 2.5 percent of the total number of deer and antelope tags which are authorized for issuance annually throughout the State. These Depredation Compensation tags are nearly always valid for bucks.

2. Are landowners allowed to remove big game animals depredating on private lands in an effort to protect their agricultural resources? If so, under what circumstances?

- Yes - Only under the authority of a Landowner Depredation Permit.

3. Does your agency call depredation hunts to target populations on private lands?

Yes - Emergency Elk Depredation Hunts.
<https://www.leg.state.nv.us/NAC/NAC-503.html#NAC503Sec710>

The Department may enter into a cooperative agreement with a landowner for the approval of an emergency depredation hunt on private land. Regional Game Division staff shall contact the License Office with proposed season dates and tag numbers to determine reasonable start date(s) for hunt(s). Regional Staff will then develop a hunt plan (with landowner concurrence for

private lands) to include hunt boundaries, season dates, tag quotas, class of animal, and weapon; and a depredation hunt information sheet for distribution by the License Office to help the hunter understand the reason for the hunt, suggested hunting strategies, and any landowner contact requirements or private land use restrictions. The License Office will begin the process of selling tags as quickly as the procedure allows. The License Office will contact the regional office with tag-holder information as soon as the tag-sale process is completed.

Established Elk Depredation Hunt.

<https://www.leg.state.nv.us/NRS/NRS-501.html#NRS501Sec181>

The Wildlife Commission has the responsibility to set seasons proposed by the Department. In various areas around Nevada, elk are either restricted or have no population objective or elk sub-plan. In these areas, the Department has recommended elk depredation hunts intended to drastically reduce elk numbers. During the application period, hunters may apply for one of several Elk Depredation Hunts. Applications are available for both antlered and antlerless elk in multiple areas with varying season dates.

Mule Deer or Pronghorn Emergency Depredation Hunts

<https://www.leg.state.nv.us/nrs-501.html#NRS501Sec181>

As part of the Commission Regulation establishing Big Game Hunting Seasons, NDOW includes language authorizing emergency depredation hunts for mule deer and antelope. Hunts for deer can target antlered, antlerless, or either-sex animals. Hunts for antelope can target horns shorter-than-ears, horns longer-than-ears, or either-sex animals. Emergency hunts may occur between July 1st and June 30th of the following year. The tag quotas are not to exceed 2,000 tags statewide for the species listed. All applications must be submitted through www.ndowlicensing.com.

similar program that promotes hunting on private property?

Yes – Antlerless Elk Landowner Tag Program.

<https://www.leg.state.nv.us/NRS/NRS-503.html#NRS503Sec595>

<https://www.leg.state.nv.us/NRS/NRS-501.html#NRS501Sec351>

The Department may enter into a cooperative agreement with a landowner to issue Antlerless Elk Landowner tags to quickly reduce elk damage on private lands. The landowner will notify the Department when elk start utilizing private land. The Department will assess the problem and recommend a course of action to the landowner. A map will be created defining the lands that are open to hunting. Each landowner may receive up to 25 tags and may distribute those tags among up to five separate hunts each year. The landowner will provide a list of hunters to NDOW, allow the Department to enter his or her property at times mutually agreed upon to evaluate damage, and allow hunters whom he or she has chosen to hunt on the identified property.

This program is not intended to be used as a compensation tool. It is intended to be used where a limited hunt has a high likelihood of solving private land issues. Unlike Special Incentive elk tags, which a landowner may sell for any price they can negotiate, Antlerless Elk Landowner tags are sold to hunters previously identified by the landowner directly by NDOW for the normal tag fee.

5. What type of landowner incentive programs does your agency have that promotes wildlife and allows public hunters on private property (e.g., ranching for wildlife in CO or programs where landowners financially benefit from big game)?

- N/A for Nevada

6. Does your agency provide damage payments or fencing for big game on private lands? If so, how much per year is paid and how is it funded?

Yes - Elk Damage Compensation Program.

<https://www.leg.state.nv.us/NAC/NAC-504.html#NAC504Sec350>

A claimant must notify the Department in writing of any damage within 5 days of discovery if he or she is to receive money or materials from the Department. The Department will assess the problem, recommend a course of action, carry out an orderly progression of action to alleviate the damage as agreed to by both parties, and/or provide monetary compensation to the claimant for damage if a preponderance of evidence proves that the loss was caused by elk. Serious attention is necessary to prevent an escalation of the elk problem and to prevent elk from habituating to an unwanted use of private property. The claimant agrees to enter into a cooperative agreement to allow the Department to enter his or her land to remove elk or prevent further damage by any method necessary, including but not limited to, hazing, hunting, shooting, and scaring; and to consult with the Department and consider its technical advice regarding damage relative to placement of stored crops, the relocation of stored crops and development of new agricultural fields. An Elk Depredation Damage or Loss Report will be filled out by the Department investigator in cooperation with the landowner. Maps showing the exact location of the damaged property and photos that will help assess the extent of damage may be included. The form is completed during the initial complaint, any time a landowner is requesting monetary compensation, or when elk damage or use is ongoing, and the Department and landowner have yet to agree on a method to alleviate or mitigate the elk use. Once an investigation has been made, the area biologist will consult with the supervising biologist to prepare and implement a short-term solution and evaluate and determine options for a long-term solution. A long-term solution should preclude the need for any more than two consecutive years of monetary compensation to a private landowner. A single damage claim must be limited to \$10,000, unless the Wildlife Commission determines that a landowner may be paid more and there is sufficient money to pay him or her. The Landowner may receive compensation for losses to crops; grazing reductions; and privately maintained improvements. The Department will not compensate a landowner if he or she is eligible to be reimbursed pursuant to an insurance policy. One or more of the following options shall be chosen to alleviate and/or mitigate the documented damage:

- Payment to landowner to compensate for damage and/or losses
- Loan fencing materials and have fence erected
- Hold an emergency or established depredation hunt
- Haze offending elk
- Landowner removal through a depredation permit
- Department removal by either capture or shooting

Elk arbitration panels may also be enacted to resolve disputes regarding elk damage claims.

7. What mitigation measures does your agency employ to reduce big game damage (e.g., provide temporary fencing, hazing animals, agency removals of big game)?

Elk Fencing Program.

<https://www.leg.state.nv.us/NAC/NAC-504.html#NAC504Sec350>

Fencing stored or standing crops is the preferred option for preventing elk damage and reducing costs associated with investigation and payment of compensation for chronic elk use. Fencing is also an option for protecting maintained improvements such as spring sources. The Department

collects a \$5.00 fee from each elk tag applicant which is deposited into the Wildlife Account in the State General Fund and used for the prevention and mitigation of damage caused by elk. A biologist shall evaluate the private land parcel and, with the concurrence of the landowner, develop an optimal fencing plan including a map depicting the length and perimeter of the fence, including gates, to exclude long-term elk use on stored and standing crops. The Department and the landowner will enter into a cooperative agreement with landowner for the purpose of loaning fence materials. The landowner is responsible for working with the Department representative, and the contractor to mark the fence line or indicate the existing fence to be replaced with the new elk-proof fence. Regional Game Division staff will complete a purchase requisition for the fencing materials and coordinate with the contractor on the logistics of fence construction based on the Department's elk exclusionary fence design specifications. The area biologist will maintain contact with contract crews and the landowner during construction to ensure timely and proper placement of fence. The landowner will assume responsibility for fence maintenance caused by livestock and the Department will assume maintenance responsibility for damage caused by wildlife. If the landowner fails to accept or use materials offered by the Department, the landowner is no longer eligible to receive further money or materials to prevent or mitigate elk damage. Temporary fencing or panels can be offered to alleviate use by elk on stored crops until the situation is fully assessed or a more permanent remedy is implemented.

8. Does your agency have an urban deer program? If so, what does that entail?

- Currently, Nevada does not have an urban deer program; however, we do have guidelines on how to respond to issues that arise with urban deer. We educate the public on how to live with deer using methods like planting deer resistant species and creating fencing that limits deer browsing. We often receive calls about injured deer. We take these calls on a case-by-case basis to determine the next steps for the report. We educate the public via our Urban Wildlife program where members of the public speak directly to our staff to learn how to mitigate their current situation and prevent future issues. We also offer educational events whether at an HOA meeting, a community gathering or via webinar. Additionally, we utilize multiple social media platforms to offer more practical advice on living with wildlife. One platform we have recently been utilizing more is NextDoor. This platform allows us to target specific neighborhoods that have issues with deer and other wildlife to provide tailored information that neighbors can utilize.

9. What other programs does your agency have in place to promote tolerance of big game on private lands?

Issuance of Special Elk Incentive Tags.

<https://www.leg.state.nv.us/NRS/NRS-502.html#NRS502Sec142>

An owner, lessee or manager of private land may apply to the Department to receive elk tags as an incentive to support elk use on private land. These tags are not intended to compensate for damage caused by elk. Private lands eligible for special elk incentive tags include private rangelands or private native hay meadows. The applicant will enter into an agreement with the Department to allow Department personnel access to the private property for the purpose of monitoring elk use. The formula used to calculate the number of tags that a landowner qualifies for is based on the number of elk that used the private land for the year, the elk population in the hunt unit group containing the private land, the number of days elk used the private land, the total number of antlered elk tags issued in the unit group the previous year, and the total number of spike elk harvested in the unit group during spike only hunts the previous year. The tags may be

used by the owner, lessee, or manager of the private land if the owner, lessee, or manager holds a valid Nevada hunting license, or may be sold by that person to any holder of a valid Nevada hunting license at any price mutually agreed upon. Special Incentive elk tags are valid only during the normal open season for elk in the unit or units in which the private land is located. If the enrolled private land blocks reasonable access to adjacent public land, reasonable access through the private land must be provided to a person or hunting party possessing a valid elk tag to hunt elk on the adjacent public land. The number of special elk incentive tags issued in each calendar year must not exceed one-half of the bull elk tags issued in the hunt unit or units in which the private land is located.

The statute also provides for the appointment of an arbitration panel to resolve disputes between persons who apply for special incentive elk tags and the Department regarding the issuance of such tags.

10. Does your agency respond to all wildlife conflict calls or is it limited to specific species or guilds of species?

- Yes – In Nevada we respond to all calls that involve protected wildlife as well as many calls involving non-protected wildlife to protect public safety. In instances of complaints about nuisance furbearing animals, NDOW personnel may respond or refer those people to various private nuisance companies.

<https://www.leg.state.nv.us/nrs/nrs-503.html#NRS503Sec595>;
<https://www.leg.state.nv.us/nrs/nrs-501.html#NRS501Sec331>;

- The level of response required for wildlife conflict calls depends on the issue that is presented by the public. We respond to conflicts with educational material and advice on how to limit conflicts. Habitat modification is encouraged as a long-term solution to many conflicts instead of animal removal. We receive several calls each year on injured animals and assist when possible. Unfortunately, we do not have a robust animal rehabilitation model in place in the state of Nevada, and only have one licensed rehab facility in Southern Nevada and one in Northern Nevada.

11. What program(s) in your agency provide response to negative wildlife interaction (wildlife conflict) complaints and depredation. If the responsibility is split or shared between programs (i.e., Wildlife Program/Enforcement Program) or contracted or referred to another agency or private party, please describe how the work is assigned or shared. (e.g., by species, commercial agriculture versus residential, public safety versus property damage, etc.)

- In Nevada, response to complaints about big game animals are the responsibility of the Game Division. The Game Division employs two Landowner Compensation Tag biologists that are responsible for all mule deer and antelope private land complaints. Complaints about elk damage are the responsibility of the local area game biologist.
- Complaints involving bears may be handled by the two game biologists in the Game Division who specialize in bears, both of whom also have Karelian Bear Dogs. Bear complaints may also be handled by several Law Enforcement personnel who also specialize in bear complaint response. NDOW has a specific Human-Wildlife Conflict

Policy that is followed to protect public safety. Bear complaints are placed into four categories:

Category 1: No harm – Advise reporting party to avoid feeding, etc.

Category 2: Habituated and/or food conditioned bear – This level of conflict may require an onsite response depending on circumstances.

Category 3: Habituated and/or food conditioned bear causing property damage – Response by Game or Law Enforcement personnel required. Determination of action will involve Bear Conflict Team whenever possible.

Category 4: Imminent Public Safety Threat – The Bear Conflict Team will be immediately notified and will determine actions taken. Every Category 4 conflict requires and immediate Department on-site response.

- The Game and Law Enforcement divisions typically respond to complaints about Mountain Lions. In instances where livestock are involved, we refer complainants to Wildlife Services. If human health or safety is involved, NDOW personnel will respond.
- NDOW also employs two urban wildlife biologists in Las Vegas and Reno who respond to the vast number of minor complaints that arise in the large urban areas. In rural areas, Department personnel from every division may be called upon to respond to wildlife complaints.
 - Urban wildlife calls can often be resolved with education. Most individuals want to know what they can legally do to dissuade conflicts or know more about the animals that live in their backyards. We regularly give out educational materials to individuals and offer community presentations to those interested in learning how to effectively live with wildlife.
 - We also receive calls about injured wildlife. Depending on the circumstance we may respond to the call or refer the caller to a local rehabber, though these resources are limited.
 - In cases where there may be a significant threat to human health and safety, we review the complaint with our Game and Law Enforcement division. We can also contract with Wildlife Services if needed to remove potentially dangerous wildlife.
 - When issues arise with unprotected species, callers are often referred to private critter removal companies that can be hired to either remove the animal or assist in preventing further conflicts.

12. Please describe what funding sources support wildlife conflict response and depredation payments if applicable in your agency. Please include specifics regarding where the funding comes from for expenses such as staff and equipment, commercial crop loss compensation, livestock predation compensation, non-lethal deterrent programs, outreach and education, or any other services or materials provided in response to wildlife conflict issues.

- NDOW receives a small percentage of our budget from the General Fund (taxpayer dollars), which supports some of the bear and urban wildlife program.
- Every application for Nevada elk tags is charged a \$5 fee that is used for the elk damage compensation and fencing program.
- Landowners pay a \$50 fee for each mule deer and/or antelope tag they qualify for.
- NDOW does not pay for loss of livestock by predators, although we do have a predator management program which is paid for by \$3 fee added to every big game application. This money also funds the statewide predator management biologist.
- Staff and equipment for depredation programs are funded by sportsman dollars matched by Pittman-Robertson funds.

- NDOW also receives donations supporting the Karelian Bear Dogs used by the two game biologists who specialize in bear conflict.
- The Nevada Department of Wildlife, Urban Wildlife program was created in 2015 to handle large volume of calls regarding human wildlife conflict. The positions cover the southern and western portions of the state. General fund is the funding source for two Urban Wildlife Coordinator positions. The Urban Wildlife Coordinators are the single point of contact for the public with wildlife complaints, questions, or concerns. Our Urban Wildlife Educators record calls in a log that documents the amount of time spent on that call, the location of the problem and the steps taken toward a resolution. This information is also used to create a map in ArcGIS, which allows them to create visual representations of areas that generate the most calls and the species in the area that frequently cause conflicts. Program coordinators use this information to tailor their education efforts to the areas where the most issues are seen.
- When the coordinators are not responding to calls, their time is spent developing outreach programs to educate people in their communities to get ahead of the common conflicts in the area.
- One of the initial challenges of the Urban Wildlife program involved creation of an agency-wide response matrix for dealing with reports of wildlife concern or human-wildlife conflict. Historically, there had been attempts to create response matrices; however, they tended to be regional in nature and were often incomplete. That is no longer the case as NDOW now has a new online data base response program. NDOW employees who have contact with Urban Wildlife Conflict now can access data collection online.
- The Urban Conflict Positions prevent wildlife related issues by taking proactive steps such as presentations covering a wide range of species with focus on addressing the most common conflict in the specific area, such as bears, deer, or coyotes. Additional publications, including flyers about deer and the importance leaving wildlife alone were distributed as well. These brochures are crucial because many people who live in urban settings believe they are “saving” animals when their actions do more harm than good.