



## WYOMING GAME AND FISH DEPARTMENT

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January 15, 2020

Gopaul Noojibail  
Acting Superintendent  
Grand Teton National Park  
P.O. Box 170  
Moose, WY 83012

Dear Mr. Noojibail,

I write to express the Wyoming Game and Fish Department's (Department) thoughts regarding Grand Teton National Park's (GTNP) Mountain Goat Management Plan and current mountain goat removal actions.

We appreciate the National Park Service's (NPS) efforts to address the expansion of mountain goat populations in the Teton Range. This objective has biological merit as the potential for pathogen transfer from mountain goats to bighorn sheep, particularly the Targhee herd, poses a risk to bighorn sheep populations.

However, we have serious concerns with the method of removal NPS is proposing to utilize. I strongly recommend you reconsider your decision to use aerial lethal removal to achieve your objective. As we have indicated in past conversations and correspondence, the Department recommends NPS use skilled volunteer hunters to lethally remove mountain goats from the affected area. The Department uses this approach to remove bighorn sheep under circumstances where bighorn sheep have the potential to contract pathogens from domestic sheep and goats, and we believe applying this approach to the removal of mountain goats in the Teton Range would be successful. This method of removal may also allow volunteer hunters to remove carcasses from the landscape more quickly than is possible when utilizing aerial lethal removal. We reserve agency aerial removal only for urgent situations where removal must be timely to prevent disease transmission.

Our recommendations are, and have been, based in our belief that removal should align with public desires for acceptable methods of removal. Our assessment of public value for mountain goats and the use of public hunters to manage wildlife is corroborated through citizen feedback. I strongly recommend you discontinue your plans to use lethal removal of mountain goats by aerial gunning.

Once again, the Department appreciates GTNP's efforts to address this shared management objective.

Sincerely,

Brian R. Nesvik  
Director