

Policy, Predators and The Public Trust

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Although frustrating for many biologists (public trust managers), legislators and commissions (public trustees) play a legitimate role in establishing policy and providing direction for wildlife management and conservation to benefit the public (beneficiaries of the trust). Professional wildlife biologists need to remain objective and remain unbiased amid the often emotional and highly contentious political fray to maintain our own credibility. Biological inputs are only one aspect of the considerations that decision makers use when making determinations that influence wildlife policy. Recent (and ongoing) political action about predator management may at times seem short sighted or ill informed, yet it is important to carefully evaluate the effects of policy changes. Direction to reduce or increase predator populations by decision makers is not inherently incorrect because biologists do not have a definitive “right” number of predators to manage towards. Predators and prey may be managed at relatively low or high abundance without inflicting harm on the natural communities in which they live. Political hyperbole is damaging to the credibility for all that use it, and wildlife biologists must maintain high professional standards to avoid irreparable harm to the profession. Based on the article with the same title from the Jan-Feb 2023 issue of *The Wildlife Professional*.