

Legislative Committee Update
by Amanda Duchardt, CBH/SAA Legislative Director

Greetings CBH/SAA friends and family! It was wonderful to see several of you at the CBH/SAA Annual Meeting! We had a robust discussion on Legislative issues on Friday afternoon, rolled through nearly 50 petitions on Saturday and Sunday, and celebrated the accomplishments of fellow archers and bowhunters at the Hall of Fame Banquet. It was a productive weekend and I look forward to the next annual meeting. Here is the latest news from the Legislative Team including Legislative Team updates from the Annual Meeting, ongoing efforts to oppose the eradication of mule deer on Catalina Island, updates from California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) and Fish and Game Commission (FGC), and the 2024 State Legislative outlook.

First, petitions related to the CBH/SAA Legislative Committee responsibility for administering the **State Unmarked 3D Championship Tournament** were approved at the annual meeting. We are actively seeking a host club/range for this year's shoot either as a stand-alone tournament or a piggy-backed shoot. Tournament profits will be split between the host club and the CBH/SAA Legislative Defense Fund with the percentage split negotiated between the club and the Legislative Team. Oranco Bowmen hosted this tournament for the last three years and is taking a step back. This is a great opportunity to showcase your range during a State Championship with the aid of the Legislative Team and support the important work that our team is doing.

The Legislative team continues to track the progress of the Catalina Island Conservancy's (CIC) application to CDFW to **eradicate all mule deer on Catalina Island**. As noted in last month's newsletter, the CIC held a Community Forum on January 31, 2024, to talk about the "Catalina Island Restoration Project", including the proposal to eradicate mule deer. Several CBH/SAA Legislative team members registered to attend online and a local CBH member attended in person. The CIC's presentations focused on the unique species present on Catalina Island and several examples of how eradication of deer, pigs, and goats on other similar islands in California and Mexico have resulted in significant benefits to the native plants. In principle, the eradication of deer from the island would benefit endemic plant species on Catalina that did not evolve natural defenses to deer browsing. However, many of the examples cited did not directly correlate to the situation on Catalina Island. Deer do not browse vegetation down to the roots like goats and they do not destroy habitat like wild pigs. Not discussed were contradictory studies that show that the importation of ungulates, even if not native to an area, can have a net positive benefit to plants because they help disperse seeds. Also of note, the CDFW provided a brief presentation where they cited regulations indicating that the proposed eradication under a Scientific Collection Permit would be the proper permitting mechanism for this effort. The clarification was appreciated and addressed one of our concerns. If you would like to view the recording of the information session and read the Q&A subsequently published by the CIC, visit <https://catalinaconservancy.org/restoration-project/>. Our request for an independent study to quantify the current impact of deer on Catalina flora and the Island's carrying capacity for deer stands. If you would like to contribute to our efforts to oppose the CIC proposal to eradicate deer on Catalina based on lack of science, please donate to the CBH Legislative Defense Fund here: <https://cbhsaa.net/Legislative/Donate> and join over 17,000 individuals that have signed the change.org petition here: <https://www.change.org/p/stop-the-slaughter-of-mule-deer-on-catalina-island>. You can also reach out to Assemblymember Josh Lowenthal (D) and Senator Benjamin Allen (D), who represent Catalina in the State Legislature and ask them to get involved and urge the governor to direct the CDFW to deny this permit.

Switching gears a bit, at the quarterly California Hunting and Conservation Coalition (CHCC) meeting on February 29, 2024, the CHCC Black Bear Management Subcommittee shared their final draft of the "Black Bear Hunting in California – A White Paper", which discusses the events and issues that threaten black bear hunting in California and provides a foundation and framework for consistency as CHCC member organizations engage in efforts to protect bear hunting. The CDFW also provided an update on the **Bear Management Plan**. The Plan is currently out for peer review with 2 sets of comments received by CDFW and another 2 sets of comments pending. The CDFW is also engaged in Tribal consultation and 14 Tribes have commented to date. Tribal consultation is expected to continue through the public review period, which the CDFW hopes will be in mid-April. The CDFW indicated that hunting will be addressed in the Bear Management Plan but dodged the question about hunting being proposed as a bear management tool. Regardless, the plan is expected to indicate a growing bear population in California and data in the Plan can be used to drive management decisions related to hunting through subsequent engagement with the FGC.

Most recently at the FGC meeting on February 14, the FGC adopted CDFW's proposed regulations for exotic game mammals and **wild pig validations** including (1) Establishing baseline regulations for exotic game mammals, including definitions, shooting hours, authorized take methods, and prohibitions on feeding; (2) Reclassifying wild pig as an exotic game mammal; (3) Striking wild pig from various sections associated with big game mammals; (4) Adding the exotic game mammal classification to general hunting regulations and establishing a wild pig validation and reporting framework; (5) Extending the validity of depredation permits for wild pig from one year to five years; and (6) Replacing tags with a validation for the take of wild pigs. To review the Commission staff summary regarding exotic game mammals and wild pig validation, click [FGC Staff Summary – Wild Pigs](#) or visit <https://fgc.ca.gov/Meetings/2024> to view the recording of the FGC meeting and review additional information.

CBH/SAA Legislative Team and Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation (RMEF) continue to work with the CDFW on proposals to add **additional archery only elk tags** targeting areas of high human-elk conflict (Northwestern, Siskiyou, and Mendocino Counties) and the new Tehachapi hunt zone where CDFW is interested in limiting elk populations to prevent the hybridization with native Tule elk. The key challenge to meeting these objectives is that these hunt areas are predominantly comprised of private land. CDFW has one individual responsible for outreach to private landowners and getting them signed up under the Shared Habitat Alliance for Recreational Enhancement (SHARE) program. We've also met with CDFW on multiple occasions in an effort to increase public hunting opportunity on both public and private lands via: adding general draw tags; offering to assist DFW with enrolling new landowners into SHARE by way of hosting "townhall" meetings and other outreach activities; adding "archery only" (AO) tags within "conflict zones" where firearms may not be appropriate; and possibly adding additional general draw AO tags and hunt periods in the Tehachapi hunt zone, Marble Mountains, San Luis Reservoir and elsewhere. In addition to trying to enroll landowners in SHARE, CDFW is also working to address elk problems in conflict areas via other means. These include site consultation visits, assisting with exclusionary methods (such as fencing), and habitat restoration projects to promote elk moving into desirable areas (such as public lands). Further, to reduce elk populations in these conflict areas, CDFW is proposing the following changes to the Cooperative Elk Area Landowner (LO) Tags program: (1) Reduce qualifying landowner criteria from 640 acres to 60 acres; (2) Increase antlerless tag distribution relative to public tags from 20% to up to 100%; (3) Extend the landowner season through November; and (4) Increase SHARE tags in tandem to also offer more public hunt opportunity on private property. We will continue to work hard to secure additional elk hunting opportunities in 2024 prior to final adoption of the 2024 mammal regulations at the FGC's April 2024 meeting and beyond.

Wrapping up with key legislation in 2024... Friday, February 16, 2024, was the last day to introduce new bills into the State Legislature. Approximately 2,100 new bills were introduced but if this sounds like a lot... it's actually less than 1/3 the number of bills introduced last year! The State budget deficit is a key driver for the low number of bills, and we expect many bills will "die" for this reason. Here are some of the top priorities for the CBH/SAA Legislative Team:

- **AB 262 Children's Camps: Safety and Regulation** - As amended September 1, 2023, AB 262 by Assembly Member Chris Holden (D/41-Pasadena) is a "two year" bill that would require the Department of Social Services (DSS) to convene and consult with a stakeholder group on children's camp safety. Further, the bill would require the stakeholder group make recommendations to address, among other things, a definition for a children's camp and child supervision requirements – including appropriate qualifications and training for camp staff that oversee activities that carry an "inherent or heightened risk", including "gun ranges". Of primary concern, AB 262 does not require that the CDFW or wildlife conservation or recreational shooting groups be included in the stakeholder group. Given that DSS has no history of working with CDFW, or with conservation or shooting organizations, the CHCC is very concerned that if our interests are not specifically called out in the bill we will not be at the table. Without our representation, we believe AB 262 would result in unnecessary and costly regulations being placed on camps, while not appropriately educating youth on wildlife conservation, or our hunting, fishing, and archery pastimes, and firearms safety. To address these concerns, Gaines & Associates, Ducks Unlimited (DU), and California Rifle and Pistol Association (CRPA) met with the author's office several times during the 2023 Session to try to secure amendments to the bill. In early January 2024 in another attempt to seek necessary amendments to the bill this group was told that AB 262 had been handed over to the Governor's office at their request and that they should coordinate any future discussions regarding the legislation with them. In February 2024, Gaines & Associates and DU met with the Governor's office to discuss our concerns. According to Bill Gaines, the meeting appeared to go well, and he is hopeful that, should the bill move forward, it will be amended to address our concerns. During the 2023 Session, AB 262 easily passed

through the Assembly and the Senate. Passing off the Senate Floor in early September, AB 262 was immediately sent back to the Assembly for their vote of approval of amendments placed in the bill in the Senate. However, prior to being brought up for that vote, AB 262 was ordered to the inactive file at the request of the author and became a “two-year” bill.

- **AB 828 Sustainable Groundwater Management: Managed Wetlands** - SGMA currently requires a groundwater sustainability agency (GSA) to consider the interests of environmental users of groundwater and GSPs to describe impacts on groundwater dependent ecosystems and beneficial users of groundwater – including managed wetlands. Despite these provisions, SGMA does not protect against wetland losses or ensure availability of historic wetland groundwater supplies. Further, management actions in initial GSPs have shown a significant net loss of managed wetlands in the relatively short period since SGMA implementation. GSAs have begun to impose one-size-fits-all caps on groundwater pumping, regardless of whether land uses provide public beneficial uses, and hefty fees, including up to \$500 per acre-foot for additional pumping. As amended January 11, 2024, AB 828 by Assembly Member Damon Connelly (D/12-San Rafael) would, among other things, prohibit a GSA from using their authority to limit groundwater extraction by those who must rely upon groundwater for managing wetland habitats. AB 828 would also prohibit a GSA from imposing a fee upon “managed wetland extractors”, provided the water use for each user does not increase above the extractor’s average annual extraction from 2015 to 2020. As amended, AB 828 would sunset on January 1, 2028. CBH/SAA and our partners in the CHCC support this legislation.
- **AB 1889 General Plan: Wildlife Connectivity Element** - Existing law requires cities or counties to adopt a comprehensive general plan that includes various elements, including land use and housing elements. As introduced, AB 1889 by Assembly Member Laura Friedman (D/44-Burbank) would require a general plan to include a wildlife connectivity element that considers the effect of development within the jurisdiction on fish, wildlife, and habitat connectivity. AB 1889 would require local jurisdictions to identify and analyze habitat connectivity areas, and to implement measures to remediate barriers to wildlife connectivity within their boundaries to the maximum extent feasible. The bill would require cities or counties to adopt or review the wildlife connectivity element upon the adoption or next revision of their general plan on or after January 1, 2025.
- **AB 2320 Wildlife Connectivity and Climate Adaptation Act of 2024: Wildlife Corridors** - As introduced, AB 2320 by Assembly Member Jacqui Irwin (D/42-Thousand Oaks) would require the Natural Resources Agency to identify key wildlife corridors, connections between large blocks of natural areas and habitats, progress on protecting wildlife corridors, and set goals for wildlife corridor protection in the next 5 years. AB 2320 would additionally make it the policy of the state to preserve, protect, and restore wildlife habitats by acquiring and restoring large blocks of habitat and the lands and infrastructure to provide wildlife corridors for connectivity of habitat. The bill would require the state to identify priority projects for the acquisition, restoration, protection, and expansion of wildlife corridors, and to give priority to projects that protect wildlife corridors.
- **AB 3064 Firearms: Safety Devices** - Existing law requires the Department of Justice (DOJ) to compile and maintain a roster listing of all the firearm safety devices that have been tested by a certified testing laboratory, have been determined to meet DOJ’s standards for firearm safety devices, and thus may be sold in this state. As introduced, AB 3064 by Assembly Member Brian Maienschein (D/76-San Diego) would, commencing on January 1, 2026, authorize DOJ to charge an annual fee to each entity that manufactures or imports into the state for sale any firearm safety device listed on the roster. Among many other things, AB 3064 would also require that any device newly added to the roster have the name of the manufacturer, the model number, and the model name, as they appear on the roster, engraved or otherwise permanently affixed to the device. Because AB 3064 would impose a tax, it would require for passage the approval of two thirds of the membership of each house of the Legislature.
- **AB 3067 Residential Property Insurance: Firearms** - As introduced, AB 3067 by Assembly Member Mike A. Gipson (D/65-Gardena) would require an insurer of residential property to include questions on their application for homeowner’s or renter’s insurance regarding the presence and storage of any firearms kept in the household, in accessory structures, or in vehicles kept on the property that are subject to any applicable insurance policy. AB 3067 would go into effect on January 1, 2026, and require an insurer to annually report this information to the Department of Insurance and the Legislature beginning on January 1, 2027.
- **SB 53 Firearms Storage** - Existing law imposes storage requirements to prevent children from gaining access to firearms. As introduced, SB 53 by Senator Anthony J. Portantino (D/25-Glendale) would prohibit a person from

keeping or storing a firearm in their residence unless the firearm is stored in a locked box or safe that is listed on the DOJ's list of approved firearms safety devices and properly engaged to render the firearm inaccessible to anyone other than the owner or other authorized user. SB 53 would go into effect beginning on July 1, 2025.

- **SB 921 Animal Welfare** - Existing law makes it a crime to inflict unnecessary cruelty or to abuse an animal in any manner, including, but not limited to, maliciously and intentionally maiming, mutilating, torturing, or wounding an animal. Existing law also requires a person who is convicted of misdemeanor or felony abuse of an animal, and who is granted probation, to successfully complete counseling. As introduced, SB 921 by Senator Richard D. Roth (D/31-Riverside) would additionally make it a crime for a person to maliciously and intentionally mistreat any animal even if the mistreatment does not cause physical injury. Further, SB 921 would expand that requirement to require a person convicted of an infraction for abusing an animal to complete counseling. The bill would make failure to complete counseling a misdemeanor. The CHCC is concerned that the lack of a specific definition of the term "mistreat", and adding the provision that the mistreatment does not have to "cause physical injury", could open the door for animal-rights interests to place law-abiding individuals who are safely training a dog for sporting purposes or other reasons at risk.
- **SB 922 Animal Cruelty** - Existing law makes it a crime to leave or confine an animal in an unattended motor vehicle under conditions that endanger the health or well-being of an animal due to heat, cold, lack of adequate ventilation, lack of food or water, or other circumstances that could reasonably be expected to cause suffering, disability, or death to the animal. Existing law makes a first conviction for the crime punishable by a fine not exceeding \$100, or if the animal suffers great bodily injury, by a fine not exceeding \$500, imprisonment in a county jail, or both. Existing law makes a subsequent conviction punishable by a fine not exceeding \$500 dollars, imprisonment in a county jail, or both. Existing law requires a person who is convicted of specified crimes related to animal abuse, and who is granted probation, to successfully complete counseling. As introduced, SB 922 by Senator Richard D. Roth (D/31-Riverside) would increase those fines to \$500 for a first offense and \$2,000 for a subsequent offense or if the animal suffers great bodily injury. SB 922 would also expand the requirement to require a person convicted of leaving an animal in an unattended motor vehicle to complete counseling, an education program on the dangers of leaving an animal inside of an unattended motor vehicle, or both. The bill would make failure to complete the counseling or education program a misdemeanor. The CHCC is concerned that – given the loose language of existing law and the significant increase in fines and penalties that this bill proposes – SB 922 could also embolden animal-rights interests to attempt to place well meaning, law-abiding individuals at unreasonable risk.
- **SB 1160 Firearms: Annual Registration of Firearms** - As introduced, SB 1160 by Senator Anthony J. Portantino (D/25-Glendale) would require firearms to be annually registered with DOJ. The bill would also require registrants to annually pay a "yet to be determined" registration fee to fund DOJ's administration and enforcement of the firearm registry. The bill would require DOJ to establish and maintain a system for the annual registration of firearms and create the Registered Firearm File – a searchable database of registered firearms that shall be made available through the California Law Enforcement Telecommunications System for law enforcement purposes. SB 1160 would exempt antique firearms, as well as firearms used in service by a peace officer, firearms owned by any department or agency of the state or federal government, or any firearm owned by the Armed Forces of the United States, California National Guard, or California State Guard. Firearms personally owned by any employee or appointee of these entities would not be exempted. SB 1160 would require that all guns be registered as of July 1, 2025.
- **SB 1163 Wildlife-Vehicle Collisions: Wildlife Salvage Permits** - As introduced, SB 1163 by Senator Brian Dahle (R/01-Beiber) would improve public safety and greatly promote the health of California's deer and other wildlife by reducing the frequency of vehicle-wildlife collisions on our roadways. SB 1163 is sponsored by the wildlife conservation community. According to researchers at the University of California at Davis Road Ecology Center (UCDREC), as many as 100,000 deer alone may be hit each year on California roads. In addition to causing injury or often death to the deer, these accidents often also cause injury and sometimes death to motorists. To address this very serious concern, in 2019, the California Deer Association (CDA) sponsored SB 395, "The Wildlife Traffic Safety Act", authored by Senator Bob Archuleta (D/30-Norwalk). Signed into law by Governor Newsom in October 2019, SB 395 authorized DFW to establish a user-friendly cell phone app which would allow motorists to report the location, animal type, date, time, and characteristics of vehicle-wildlife collisions. Armed with this critically needed data, DFW, California Highway Patrol, Caltrans, and other state agencies could better predict road-kill hotspots, measure contributing factors, and evaluate the placement of wildlife road crossings and other

remedial actions to greatly reduce future vehicle-wildlife collisions. To encourage data reporting, SB 395 also authorized the Fish and Game Commission to create a pilot program that allows motorists to salvage edible portions of deer, elk, antelope, and/or wild pig meat that had been accidentally killed via a vehicle collision – provided they obtain a permit which would require they provide the above noted information to DFW. SB 395 also required the Commission to promulgate the regulations necessary to commence the program by no later than January 1, 2022. Lastly, SB 395 would “sunset” on January 1, 2029, to allow DFW, other relevant agencies, and the Commission to evaluate the results and consider next steps. Unfortunately, to pass SB 395 out of fiscal committee we had to take language into the legislation which required a special appropriation by the Legislature for the bill’s programs to be enacted. Each Session since the passage of SB 395, CDA and our partner conservation organizations fought to secure the special appropriation necessary to implement the important programs called out in the bill. Unfortunately, the funding necessary to implement SB 395 was never appropriated, leaving California as one of the very few western states without such a program. Unsuccessful in those efforts, and with the deadline for implementing the programs now passed, follow-on legislation was necessary. If passed, SB 1163 would streamline and fund the pilot program codified by the passage of SB 395 in 2019. SB 1163 would delete the requirement that implementation of the pilot program be predicted upon a special appropriation by the Legislature, and require, rather than just authorize, DFW and the Commission to develop the pilot program. Further, SB 1163 would extend the deadline for the Commission to establish the pilot program to January 1, 2027, and extend the sunset date for the pilot program to January 1, 2034.

- **SB 1253 Firearms Safety Certificates** - Existing law requires any person who purchases or receives a firearm to possess a firearm safety certificate. Further current law requires an applicant to pass the written test to obtain or renew a firearm safety certificate and the payment of a \$25 fee. Current law also provides that a firearm safety certificate shall expire 5 years after the date of issuance. However, existing law expresses the intent of the Legislature not to require a firearm safety certificate for the mere possession of a firearm. As introduced, SB 1253 by Senator Lena A. Gonzalez (D/33-Huntington Park) would, commencing on January 1, 2026, prohibit a person from possessing a firearm without the possession of a valid, unexpired firearm safety certificate.

There is always a danger that bills will be gutted and amended as the legislative season progresses and we will remain vigilant and keep you informed via Legislative Alerts and Voter Voice. Make sure you are signed up for these notices at <https://cbhsaa.net/Legislative/LegHome>.

Reminder: Whether you’ve been involved in archery or hunting your whole life, or are new to this sport, **you have something of value to add to the conversation and I encourage you to reach out to me and the CBH Legislative Committee and share your knowledge and experience!** We look forward to hearing from you soon!