

Wildlife

Overview. The control of rodents and predators is important to farmers and ranchers. Rodents, such as prairie dogs, can be a nuisance to agricultural operations, however, several citizen groups are interested in their protection and relocation. A bill attempted to govern how rodents are released in counties. Losing livestock to predators, such as coyotes and mountain lions, can be expensive for ranchers. A bill would have to increase funding for state-wide predator control programs. The Colorado Division of Wildlife recommended legislation to fund a study to determine if predators impact the state's deer populations. An act also designated the Division of Wildlife as an enterprise and authorized the Wildlife Commission to issue revenue bonds.

Rodent pest control. House Bill 01-1350 would have required that county commissioners be notified at least 30 days before destructive rodent pests are released within the county, and that county commissioners receive a destructive rodent pest management plan. If destructive rodent pests are released and the pests become a nuisance, the county would have to notify the responsible person and ask him or her to alleviate the nuisance. If the responsible person does not comply, the county would have to alleviate the nuisance. The bill would have authorized the county commissioners to collect from the responsible person the amount spent on the abatement or assess the amount as a tax lien against the person's property. The bill would have provided a process for the responsible person to appeal the amount charged by the county. The bill was postponed indefinitely.

Predator control. House Bill 01-1233 would have required the Colorado Division of Wildlife, subject to recommendations made by the Predator Management Advisory Committee, to conduct a controlled predator management study. The study would have focused on the effectiveness of the division's predator control measures; whether predator control is possible, effective, and economical; and if the predator management methods will impact other wildlife populations. The bill would have appropriated \$365,000 from the Wildlife Cash Fund to the Department of Natural Resources for the study, but was postponed indefinitely. **House Bill 01-1162** would have appropriated \$500,000 from the state General Fund to the Predatory Animal Fund. The Predatory Animal Fund, which is administered by the Colorado Department of Agriculture, funds state-wide efforts to control predatory animals. Current law authorizes the department to help other state agencies, counties, associations, and corporations fund the control of predatory animals. The bill was postponed indefinitely.

Designate the Division of Wildlife an enterprise. House Bill 01-1012 designates the Division of Wildlife and the Wildlife Commission as an enterprise for purposes the state constitutional spending limit. The bill authorizes the Commission, with approval of the General Assembly and the Governor, to issue revenue bonds in an amount not to exceed \$10,000,000. The bill clarifies that the Division is authorized to continue to spend its revenues consistent with current laws, and that the Division and the Commission have all the powers and duties authorized by current law. The bill was signed into law.