



THE WILDLIFE SOCIETY

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In accordance with TWS policy, The Wildlife Society Council seeks member review and comment on the following revised position statement prior to renewing it. Comments must be received by **15 July 2009** to be considered in a final position statement. Please send comments to: **Laura Bies, Director of Government Affairs, The Wildlife Society, 5410 Grosvenor Lane, Suite 200, Bethesda, MD 20814-2144, or via email to laura@wildlife.org.**

Revised Position Statement

Hunting

Hunting co-evolved with the needs and cultures of mankind. Archaeological evidence indicates that early cultures hunted and depended on wild animals for subsistence. As skills in animal husbandry and agriculture were acquired, dependence on hunting for subsistence decreased in most cultures. Today hunting has many social values, including recreation, subsistence, heritage, utilization of the harvestable surplus to benefit people, and to control wildlife populations. Sociologists have documented that hunting provides deep, central life meanings for many participants. Among themes that have been identified are a historical connection to a time they value, an honest relationship with nature, and pursuit of the ideal of self-reliance.

Most wild animal populations produce more young than their habitats can support. These surplus animals are removed by mortality factors that regulate population numbers within the limits of the habitat. Hunting can be used to remove a portion of these excess animals that would otherwise be lost to other human-caused or natural mortality.

Professional wildlife managers are charged with the responsibility of managing wildlife populations in a scientific, sustainable, and socially acceptable manner. Hunting, when based on biological information and properly regulated, can be used effectively to help meet this responsibility. In addition, hunting regulated through licenses and taxes provides a major source of financing for habitat acquisition, law enforcement, research, and management programs for all wildlife.

The policy of The Wildlife Society in regard to hunting is to:

1. Endorse the principle that hunting, when properly regulated following biological principles, is an appropriate means of managing wildlife populations.
2. Explain to decision makers the biological and societal considerations when making decisions on hunting and the welfare of wildlife.
3. Encourage hunter education programs that allow hunters to increase their knowledge of wildlife ecology and management and to emphasize hunter ethics and responsibilities.

4. Support greater education of the public about the cultural importance of regulated recreational hunting.
5. Support access management that increases opportunities for hunting and other compatible uses.