

MEASURE 18: COMMISSION STATEMENT

March 13, 1995

Oregon Fish and
Wildlife Commission

We think Measure 18 is one of the most unfortunate incidents that has happened to wildlife management in this state, this century. Oregon has one of the biggest success stories in wildlife management, especially with the cougar. We went from 250 animals to in excess of 2,500 animals, and provided substantial recreational opportunity for a number of people - both hound owners and hunters. Now, the recreational aspect of hunting cougars is gone.



What is unfortunate, is that these animals are going to continue to reproduce. Because of good management, we have pretty well fully seeded the available habitat and are now seeing animals out of their appropriate habitat; as a result, we are going to see more and more livestock and human conflict with these animals. These animals are going to continue to die, and they are going to continue to die with the utilization of hounds. The difference is, rather than providing a recreational opportunity for hunters and houndsmen, we have created a cost to the department and our hunters by having to contract with someone to take care of damage complaints. The only way these damage complaints are going to be taken care of is with hounds, so we have not changed anything. These animals are going to die, and they are going to die as a result of being pursued by hounds; because we can not stand an unlimited population expansion.

As a result, we applaud any reasonable attempt to go to the Legislature and obtain some sort of renewed ability to manage these animals. We are in a situation right now that really does not meet the goals of the major proponents of Measure 18, which was to stop hunting; and certainly does not meet our goal of being able to manage. We are in an unfortunate situation, and we hope that we are not at the start of a trend where wildlife management occurs at the ballot box. We think that is a risk and a concern that we all should have.

(Statement made by Vice Chair Jim Habberstad at the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife Commission Hearing, December 14, 1994 and endorsed by Commissioners March 10, 1995.)

