



# Washington for Wildlife

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Washington Department of Fish & Wildlife  
Wildlife Managers  
600 Capitol Way N.  
Olympia, WA 98501-1091

Dear WDFW Wildlife Managers,

The WDFW is currently considering changes for the 2012-2014 hunting season regulations and according to the Governor's rules moratorium the WDFW can only consider changes that are for conservation or that have been specifically requested by hunters. Washington for Wildlife (WFW) polled Washington's hunters asking what changes they would like to see for small game seasons, methods and limits. You can see the poll and its results here:

<http://hunting-washington.com/smf/index.php/topic,82518.0.html>

Washington for Wildlife would like to formally request the following changes for small game be considered for the 2012-2014 season.

**1. Increase in the length of crow hunting season:** The majority of hunters polled would like to see crow season be more in line with other small game seasons. Washington hunters understand that the current season length is imposed at the federal level but would like to request that the WDFW exhaust all avenues available to get a longer season like some other states have. Crows are a predatory bird that some studies have found to have significant impacts waterfowl nests. While killing crows is allowed while in the act of depredation, calling and using decoys is not allowed and makes managing their numbers very difficult outside of hunting season.

**2. Allow high powered air rifles to be used to hunt some small game species:** With the advancement in the power and accuracy of air rifles, most hunters polled would like to see them legalized for hunting. Air rifles can be a valuable tool for managing and harvesting some small game especially in areas that might not welcome firearms. They are also a great way to recruit youths or persons not comfortable with firearms into hunting. Currently the WDFW recommends any semi high-powered pellet rifle with a pellet velocity of 800 fps or more for the lethal control of pigeons. Washington hunters see no reason they could not be used for hunting other small game as well.

**3. Extend the season for bobcat, raccoon and fox to the end of March to match trapping season:** Washington hunters would like to see an increase in bobcat, fox and raccoon season to the end of March. This increase in season length is unlikely to have a significant impact on harvest numbers but would provide more hunting opportunity in a prime winter month.

**4. Open a season on non-threatened tree squirrels:** Currently hunters are allowed to hunt Eastern grey squirrels and Fox squirrels in Washington as well as some ground squirrels. Hunters would like to see hunting opportunity on other non-threatened tree squirrels as well. Douglas and Red squirrels are abundant and occupy large portions of Washington.

**5. Eliminate the restriction of hunting coyotes with the aid of dogs:** Hunters in Washington have made it very clear that this restriction is unacceptable and offensive to hunters everywhere. For this department to decide that a form of hunting is now considered "socially unacceptable" not only goes against its legislative mandate but is a slap in the face of hunters. WFW would like to take this time to remind you of the legislative mandate for the WDFW and the Wildlife Commission. Simplified it mandates that the WDFW and the Wildlife commission should authorize the taking of wildlife in ways that do not impair the resource and "shall attempt to maximize the public recreational hunting opportunities of all citizens". Nowhere in this mandate does it say that the WDFW should limit hunting opportunity for being "socially unacceptable". Eliminating the use of dogs for hunting coyotes is not only wrong but also eliminates the incidental taking of coyotes while in the field with upland bird and waterfowl dogs. Washington hunters insist that this restriction be removed.

On behalf of Washington for Wildlife,

Naithan Kain  
Washington for Wildlife  
Predator and Small Game Committee Chairman