

Wildlife Services Directive

2.340

June 17, 2013

FERAL, FREE-RANGING, AND HYBRID DOG DAMAGE MANAGEMENT

1. PURPOSE

To establish guidance for Wildlife Services' (WS) response to requests for assistance in reducing damage problems or health and safety threats associated with feral, free-ranging, and hybrid dogs.

2. REPLACEMENT HIGHLIGHTS

This is a new directive. This directive replaces content related to feral dogs that is contained in WS Directive 2.320, Invasive Species Damage Management, dated February 6, 2004.

3. AUTHORITY

Authority to assist Federal, State, local, and foreign agencies and individuals with regard to wildlife damage and control is pursuant to Title 7 Code of Federal Regulation (7 CFR) § 371.6.

4. POLICY

- a. The WS State Director shall establish a State-level policy that is approved by the WS Regional Director, and that recognizes and includes those elements as prescribed in Section 7 Implementation, prior to conducting feral, free-ranging, or hybrid dog damage management.
- b. WS personnel may conduct feral and free-ranging dog damage management to protect agriculture and animal husbandry (e.g., livestock, poultry), and natural resources (e.g., threatened and endangered species, forestry, wildlife), in both urban and non-urban areas, according to guidelines and requirements in their State-level policy.
- c. WS personnel may conduct feral and free-ranging dog damage management to protect property or human health and safety in non-urban areas, according to guidelines and requirements in their State-level policy.
- d. WS personnel may conduct feral and free-ranging dog damage management to protect property or human health and safety in urban areas, according to guidelines and requirements in their State-level policy and when meeting the additional requirements contained in Section 7e.

Feral and free-ranging dog damage management on airports/airfields is exempt from Section 7e requirements.

e. WS personnel may conduct hybrid dog damage management to protect agriculture and animal husbandry, natural resources, property, or human health and safety, in urban and non-urban areas, according to guidelines and requirements in their State-level policy. Requests for assistance in urban areas must meet the requirements contained in Section 7e.

5. BACKGROUND

State, local, or tribal authorities have jurisdiction over feral, free-ranging, and hybrid dogs. However, dog-related laws and regulations vary according to the jurisdiction. Most State, local, or tribal laws and regulations require that dog owners comply with leash laws and trespassing ordinances. Generally, owners must maintain direct control of their pets so that they do not pose health and safety threats to humans, other animals, or themselves.

6. DEFINITIONS

- a. Feral Dog: an ownerless or homeless wild dog.
- b. Free-ranging Dog: a dog that is not under the owner's direct control.
- c. Hybrid Dog: a canid that is the progeny of a domestic dog (*Canis familiaris*) and a wild canid (e.g., gray wolf, coyote), or its subsequent progeny.
- d. Urban Area: a city or town with a population greater than 50,000 inhabitants and the urbanized area contiguous and adjacent to such city or town.
- e. WS Personnel: any Federal employee, State employee, student intern, or volunteer working under the auspices of a WS-sanctioned program.

7. IMPLEMENTATION

- a. WS personnel shall conduct feral, free-ranging or hybrid dog damage management in coordination with State, local, or tribal authorities with jurisdiction over dog control.
- b. Each WS State Director shall develop a State-level policy prior to conducting feral, free-ranging, or hybrid dog damage management. At a minimum, the WS State-level policy must:
 - (1) Identify implementing procedures that satisfy requirements of this national-level WS policy; and,
 - (2) Require that WS personnel consult with, and gain concurrence from, the State and local authorities with jurisdiction over feral, free-ranging, or hybrid dogs before conducting dog

damage management actions, if such local authorities with jurisdiction exist. WS personnel may gain general concurrence for specified types of situations and actions, and are not required to acquire case-by-case concurrence, unless required by State or local authorities.

c. WS State Directors shall ensure that WS take or handling of feral, free-ranging, or hybrid dogs on tribal land is conducted in collaboration with tribal authorities and that tribal authorities either approve of, or request WS actions related to feral, free-ranging, or hybrid dogs.

d. Where WS personnel determine that a captured dog is a pet, WS personnel shall inform the land/resource owner as soon as is practicable.

e. In urban areas where local animal control offices or authorities exist, WS personnel shall collaborate with them to determine if WS action is necessary to solve the property or human health and safety problem associated with the feral, free-ranging or hybrid dogs. If WS action is necessary and requested by the local authority, WS personnel must achieve/conduct the following: (1) Written approval of the WS Regional Director; (2) Notification to the WS Deputy Administrator; and, (3) Written request from the State, local, or tribal authority with jurisdiction over feral, free-ranging or hybrid dogs, if such local authorities with jurisdiction exist. WS personnel shall ensure that written requests for assistance include: (1) a statement of the problem; (2) the location and time frame for WS activities; and (3) sufficient details regarding the scope of the assistance requested.

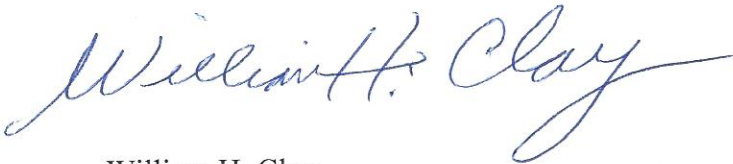
f. This policy does not in any way preclude WS personnel from appropriately defending themselves, their working animals, or restrained animals captured pursuant to official WS actions, from dog attacks.

8. APPLICABILITY AND SCOPE

This policy applies to WS personnel acting in their official capacity.

9. REFERENCES

- a. The Act of March 2, 1931 (7 USC 426-426b)
- b. The Rural Development, Agriculture, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act of 1988 (7 USC 426c)



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