\*Elk herds in the blue mountain are failing to thrive due to minimal calf recruitment primarily due to predation.

\*Deer herds impacted by blue tongue and EHD will struggle to recover when faced with high predation.

\*Conflict will only continue to rise as prey numbers decline further and predator numbers rise.

\*At the recent commission retreat Director Susewind asked commission Baker if she applied more intrinsic value to one species over the other, particularly predators vs prey. I think this is an important item to point out. Assigning intrinsic value to predators over prey creates an imbalance in wildlife management and will hurt Washington State's biodiversity.

1. A 2nd Mountain lion tag is a step in the right direction. Elk and ungulate numbers have declined and the science and data points to mountain lion being largely responsible for the decline as displayed in the recent Blue Mnt Elk Herd analysis. However, if Washington really wants to sustain a healthy number of elk then method of take must be looked at in order to regain or sustain healthy numbers of ungulates. It seems unwise to “protect” one species over the other when the balance is intertwined.
2. How much do we care about elk herds? How much do we care about the fact that only 9 out of 125 elk calves survived last winter? What is the logical reason to place hierarchy of one animal over the other when their balance is directly connected to each other? More mountain lion equals more elk will be killed by mountain lion and when elk numbers dwindle to unsustainable amounts mountain lion will move to another species, another herd or move even closer to human development. Washington’s overall predator management is in dire need of an overhaul but starting with a 2nd mountain lion tag is a step in the right direction if we care about the overall health of Washington’s wildlife as a whole.
3. Depredation calls come in nearly everyday regarding mountain lion in Washington. It’s a huge problem that stems from irresponsible bans on method of take and misinformation. The irony is that those who say they care about wildlife but want to ban hunting outright are actually advocating for killing more animals than ever before. A sad example of this is made clear with the Blue Mnt Elk Herd losing 77 out of 125 elk calves due to predation and overall, only 9 calves surviving. You see, this irresponsible idea takes the balance and management out of the equation of sustaining healthy wildlife numbers. However hunting is the tool and method to keep wildlife numbers healthy and WDFW biologists provide the quotas and data that set the boundaries to keep the balance that actually protects wildlife. The 2nd Mountain lion tag is a step in the right direction albeit there is much more work to be done to save Washington’s Wildlife.
4. Only nine of 125 young elk survived this past winter, according to GPS tracking that began last spring, with 77 of their deaths attributed to predation, mostly by mountain lions. To save the elk populations in the Blue mountain Herd, a second mountain lion tag, amongst many other moves to protect wildlife is required. Furthermore, because Bear, Coyote, Wolves, and Bobcat are responsible for many of the elk calf mortality, Washington’s general predator management needs to be addressed, dissected, and improved. This is required to sustain healthy numbers of all Washington Wildlife.
5. Essentially, the proposal for a 2nd mountain lion tag would allow the best cougar hunters to take a second one. The real issue is there are no effective or efficient methods of take available, such as hunting with hounds, and the mountain lion quota as it stands today is not high enough to be effective for proper balance & management of Washington's wildlife. I do see the 2nd mountain lion tag as an important first step to protecting our wildlife numbers however I want to be clear that much more is needed. If the commission cares about sustainable, healthy wildlife numbers then the commission and department will move on these important and strategic decisions ASAP.