

Gulf Islands National Park Reserve

2220 Harbour Road

Sidney, British Columbia V8L 2P6

Email: stephanie.coulson@pc.gc.ca

August 4, 2023

Attention: **Gulf Islands National Park Reserve**

The B.C. Wildlife Federation has deep concerns about the federal government and Parks Canada's plan to control deer populations on Sidney Island using airborne sharpshooters. We believe there are more cost-effective ways to reduce the population of fallow deer.


Although the shooters may be highly trained, the risk to both property and persons on the ground from those that are shooting from a moving helicopter increases exponentially versus ground hunting in such a small area. We understand the need to control invasive species and we recognize that these animals have been a pest to the residents of Sidney Island since they were first introduced, and the ongoing damage they do.

The black-tail deer cull on Haida Gwaii cost nearly \$6 million over three years. In 2017, fewer than 600 animals were culled, which resulted in a cost of \$3,177.26 each, if the numbers in the years after remained consistent. We believe that local resident hunters could do this job more effectively and more accurately from the ground. Further, this could be a positive revenue opportunity rather than a cost to taxpayers.

A paid draw system like the one used by the Government of British Columbia to distribute species tags to hunters would likely produce significant revenue. Such a plan would draw local, licensed hunters to the islands where they would contribute to the local tourism economy through expenditures on ferries, lodging, dining, and game processing. This draw system could help further regulate the number of deer harvested and utilize a reporting system so there is reliable data collection as well.

We are already seeing a significant push-back on this approach, through our membership and other channels. There is a large contingent of people who are willing to take part in a draw system. Please reconsider any plans to allow this plan to move forward as proposed, a scheme that is certain to attract negative media attention. Resident hunters are available and qualified to humanely remove fallow deer, by hunting from the ground. They are more than willing to pay for the opportunity to do so.

In conservation,



David Lewis

President, B.C. Wildlife Federation

president@bcwf.bc.ca



Steve Hamilton

Advocacy Coordinator, B.C. Wildlife Federation

steve.hamilton@bcwf.bc.ca

CC

Minister Steven Guilbeault, Steven.Guilbeault@parl.gc.ca
Minister of Environment and Climate Change

Minister Blaine Calkins blaine.calkins@parl.gc.ca
Shadow Minister for Hunting, Angling, and Conservation
Chair of the Conservative Hunting and Angling Caucus

Minister Bruce Ralston, FOR.Minister@gov.bc.ca
Minister of Forests

Minister Mike Bernier, mike.bernier.MLA@leg.bc.ca
Critic for Forestry