

CARSON CITY ADVISORY BOARD TO MANAGE WILDLIFE

Minutes of the May 3, 2000 Meeting

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A regular meeting of the Carson City Advisory Board to Manage Wildlife was held at 7:00 p.m. on Wednesday, May 3, 2000 in the Carson City Fire Department Conference Room, 777 South Stewart Street, Carson City, Nevada.

PRESENT: Chairperson Christopher MacKenzie
Larry Blank
Greg Davis
Norman Pedersen

STAFF: Kathleen King, Recording Secretary
(ABMW 05/03/00; Tape 1-0001)

NOTE: Unless indicated otherwise, each item was introduced by Chairperson MacKenzie. A tape recording of these proceedings is on file in the Clerk-Recorder's Office and is available for review and inspection during regular business hours.

- 1. CALL TO ORDER, DETERMINATION OF QUORUM (1-0022)** - Chairperson MacKenzie called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. A quorum was present. Member Mason was absent.
- 2. ACTION TO APPROVE MINUTES OF THE MAY 1, 2000 MEETING (1-0037)** - None.
- 3. POSSIBLE CONTINUANCE OF ITEMS FROM MAY 1, 2000 AGENDA (1-0038)** - Chairperson MacKenzie advised that these items would be addressed later in the meeting.
- 4. NEVADA DIVISION OF WILDLIFE REPRESENTATIVE PRESENTATION OF 1999-2000 BIG GAME STATUS AND QUOTA RECOMMENDATIONS FOR YEAR 2000-2001 (1-0039)** - Chairperson MacKenzie requested an update regarding the local deer herd. Walter Mandeville, of the Nevada Division of Wildlife ("NDOW"), provided information regarding the sheep and antelope herds for which he has responsibility. He advised that he had recently released 42 antelope on the Churchill Canyon side of the Pine Nut Mountain Range and that predator control measures had been employed to assist in increasing production during the initial introduction phase. Mr. Mandeville clarified that the antelope will eventually need to fend for themselves. He discussed the results of studies done on predator control and indicated that it doesn't work very well in the long-term.

With regard to unit 192, the Carson River mule deer herd, Mr. Mandeville advised that although the herd has experienced difficulties in the past, it seems to be recovering to some degree. He explained that the population had been underestimated last year and that the estimates for this year are more accurate. He reported a post-season buck ratio of 30:100 and an 81% general season success rate in the harvest. He referred to the report materials and advised of a general increase in the deer population over the past three years. He commented that the population peaks experienced in the mid-1980's will most likely not be seen again due to loss of habitat through fire and development. He provided the example of the Target and Home Depot stores located right next to one of the more important winter range areas in the Jacks Valley Wildlife Management Area. In response to a question, Mr. Mandeville provided historical information

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regarding migration routes which have since been “shut down” by development. He advised that the deer population has been thinned out as a result. He discussed adaptability of the resident deer and cooperative management of the unit 192 herd with California. Available tags are divided in a 30/70 split between Nevada and California.

Mr. Mandeville advised that available tags for units 194-196 are divided in a 50/50 split, and Nevada is awarded an additional 20 tags for managing the resident deer population from above Reno to Clear Creek. Mr. Mandeville explained the survey method used by California Fish and Game, discussed the differences between the California agency representative’s estimates and his estimates, and the resulting increase in available tags for this year. In response to a question, Mr. Mandeville clarified that units 194-196 were not underestimated to the same degree as unit 192. He reported a 9% decrease in the herd over the last year and advised that the Belli is beginning to produce forage following the fire there three years ago. Craig Mortimore, of NDOW, advised that the general season results are evenly split between units 194 and 196. Mr. Mandeville reported a 91% hunter success rate for last year. He acknowledged that the success rate is a general indicator that the population is higher than expected. Mr. Mortimore commented that the success rate is also due to the proximity of hunters which draw tags for units 194-196. He provided historical information on hunter success rates which have increased due to the cooperative agreement entered into with California Fish and Game in the early 1980s. He commented on the fact that unit 194 consistently has among the highest four point harvests in the state.

In response to a question, Mr. Mortimore and Mr. Mandeville discussed the elements of the cooperative agreement between NDOW and California Fish and Game. Mr. Mortimore acknowledged that copies of the memorandum of understanding are available, and invited the Board members to attend the upcoming joint Commission meeting on Friday, June 16, 2000. Mr. Mandeville suggested waiting to get copies of the memorandum of understanding until after the joint Commission meeting. In response to a question, Mr. Mortimore explained that the decrease from last year’s quota has to do with the increased post season buck ratio objective. NDOW biologists are attempting to increase the buck ratios within the herds so that those fortunate enough to draw tags have a good experience. Mr. Mandeville discussed current drought conditions which have driven the herds to higher altitudes earlier in the year in order to find food. Discussion regarding buck ratio management followed.

At the request of Chairperson MacKenzie, Mr. Mortimore explained NDOW’s statement that the deer populations have been over estimated for the past six years. Mr. Mortimore referred to the graph on page SS-1, reflecting the probable trend in deer numbers. He explained that NDOW’s estimates are based on a multi-year/multi-variant mathematical model which results in the ability to recognize changes which should have been instituted in previous years. He reviewed the graph, and explained that higher adult mortality rates should have been interjected into the years depicting significant fawn mortality rates. He acknowledged that the computer model estimates the total population, and explained that observed data, including hunter return and composition data, is “fed” into the model, which includes variables. Mr. Mandeville provided examples of the variables, such as the severity index which covers harsh weather. Mr. Mortimore clarified that NDOW biologists never claim to know the exact population because the model is not an exact science. He discussed the unreliability of harvest data because of a certain percentage of less than honest hunters, and the method by which this had come to light.

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Member Davis inquired as to a status report for the Pine Nut Mountains. Mr. Mandeville advised that he had conducted a post-season survey and found deer in the higher elevations and in the brush areas which he had not seen before; however, the survey and composition is difficult because the animals are difficult to locate. In the lower areas, however, he has counted up to sixty in the field along River Road and up to 110 on the Quilici property. Member Davis further inquired as to the amount of cooperation between NDOW and the Washoe Tribe. Mr. Mortimore explained that NDOW had a good relationship with the Tribe's Hunting and Fishing Committee for two to three years; however, its membership changed and the relationship subsequently deteriorated. He discussed work done on behalf of the Tribe. (1-2214 - At this point the recording equipment malfunctioned and a new tape was started.) (2-0001) Discussion took place regarding the Washoe Tribe's effect on the herd, the reason for the decrease in the proposed quota for unit 291, the buck ratio in the Pine Nut Mountains, and the status of negotiations between the Bureau of Land Management and the owners of the Rollin' A Ranch.

Mr. Mortimore explained the new format for the recommendations and status reports. Mr. Mandeville discussed updates to NDOW's web site and plans for features such as an interactive map.

With regard to statewide deer, Mr. Mortimore discussed the 1.6 million acres burned in wildfires last year, including 340,000 acres of winter range. He explained that winter range is very important to the survival rate of fawns. Because of last year's mild winter, the fawn loss was fairly low and the deer population handled the winter very well. He referred to a graphic representation of the deer population in 1988 and advised that the numbers would never be as high again. He explained that 42 fawns to 100 does is a reasonable profile, and that since 1989 there have only been three years in which the statewide fawn ratios have been 42 or above. When the post hunt composition surveys were done last year, the statewide buck ratio was 29 bucks per 100 does. He advised that this is an unprecedented high and is a result of continuously decreasing recommended tags. He stated that a considerable mortality is expected on the winter range this year if there is a regular harvest.

Mr. Mortimore provided historical information on the recommendations provided by NDOW biologists and the options available to the county advisory boards. He explained that in recent years the county boards have expressed a desire to provide more input in development of recommendations. NDOW subsequently developed deer arrays which depict the number of animals in the population, the demand/success data, and how the demand/success data is applied to the population estimates. The county boards select a post season buck ratio objective and tags are calculated based on the objective. Mr. Mortimore explained that each of the arrays has a grey line on it which follows a mathematical formula. NDOW cannot deviate from the grey line, but the county advisory boards can. Mr. Mortimore referred to page R-12 and advised that NDOW's recommendation for resident mule deer, hunt 1131, is 18,528 tags. He explained that this is approximately a ten percent increase over what was recommended last year (16,849 tags), and the Commission then reduced the number further to 13,328 tags. In response to a question, he explained that the reason for the increase in tags is because of the increase in the ratio of males to females. Discussion ensued regarding the overestimation error which occurred 5-6 years ago and its impact on the increase in tags for this year. Mr. Mortimore explained that last year's overall deer estimate, on which quota computations were based, was reported as 136,000. In retrospect, after reviewing the multi-year/multi-variant model, there were probably only 134,000 deer. He explained that because the Commission

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ultimately decreased the tags from the recommended quota, the number of bucks which would have been shot based on the 134,000 estimate were not shot. In response to a question, Mr. Mortimore advised that the recommended number of doe tags for last year was 3780 and the Commission decreased the number to 2834. This year, the recommended number is 3526. Discussion regarding doe tags followed.

Mr. Mortimore referred to page 87, and discussed the recommended rate of doe kill for unit 032 (10%). He advised that the preseason buck ratios are 48:100 and that 316 tags have been allotted based upon the post season buck ratio objective of 27. In response to a question, he explained that the deer are becoming less migratory and more sessile around the alfalfa fields. Discussion regarding hunting on private property followed.

Member Pedersen inquired as to areas 071-079. Mr. Mortimore referred to Joe Williams' report and advised of a post season buck ratio of 25, which is an improvement from the previous year and on the long-term average. He commented that the mature bucks in the population had diminished to 52% from the average of 60%, and advised that this population was affected by the increase in adult mortality in 1992-93. The herd is presently in a growth mode with 55 fawns per 100 does each spring. He discussed the poor deer habitat in Northern Washoe County. Discussion regarding developing elk herds followed.

Chairperson MacKenzie inquired as to the Douglas County advisory board's recommendations, and Mr. Mortimore indicated that they had recommended moving the grey line down to a 25 post season buck ratio objective for unit 291 in order to increase tags. He referred to page 291 and advised that decreasing the post season buck ratio objective to 25 from 27 increased the number of tags to 35. In response to a question, he explained that the post season buck ratio objective of 27 was an arbitrary number chosen for every unit in the region with the exception of the interstate herds. Mr. Mortimore explained that muzzle loader tags for deer, elk and antelope are all calculated on a demand/success formula after selection of an objective. Demand rates are applied and the number is divided between weapons groups, which are then applied to hunter success rates to calculate tags. He commented that muzzle loaders are increasingly more successful in Nevada, and that elk muzzle loaders are very successful.

With regard to the archery hunt 1141, Mr. Mortimore advised that a total quota of 3884 was recommended. Last year, NDOW recommended 2454 and the Commission approved 3180. He pointed out that the Commission has the prerogative to "step outside the bounds" of the demand/success formula; the advisory board has the same prerogative. The total number of tags recommended for the antlerless hunt is 3526, down from 3780 recommended last year and up from the 2834 approved by the Commission. The total proposed quota for the junior hunt 1107 is 4798. For unit 291, 8 tags have been allotted; for unit 192, 12 tags have been allotted.

Mr. Mortimore referred to page SS-2 and discussed the statewide antelope population. He advised that a total of 6700 prong horn antelope had been classified last year. These yielded a buck/doe/fawn ratio of 34:100:43. The buck ratio has increased from 32 and the fawn ratio has increased by 9 from the previous year. He commented that some of the units in eastern Nevada have been very productive while western Nevada is still a "sink hole." He expressed the opinion that the antelope had dropped below threshold levels and it will take some time for their numbers to begin increasing. He advised that White Pine County

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now issues the greatest number of tags by unit in the state. Pershing County reported a 94% hunter success rate last year and is recommending an increased number of tags this year. Overall hunter success rate increased from 74% in 1998 to 83% in 1999. He advised that a number of prong horn antelope had been moved from Oregon to Elko County. Nye County received a complement of antelope from Utah, and he referred to Mr. Mandeville's earlier comment about recently releasing 42 antelope in Churchill County.

Mr. Mortimore advised that the recommendation for the antelope hunt 2151 is 1219, which is an increase over last year's recommendation of 1154. The archery hunt recommendation is for 189 total tags, which represents an increase from 140 last year. He indicated that non-residents typically receive 5% of the tags. In response to a question, Mr. Mortimore advised that last year's recommended quota for units 012 through 014 was 125; this year's recommendation is 76. Member Davis inquired as to unit 011, and Mr. Mortimore advised that this unit is considered to be one of the poorest performing populations. The area where the fawns will be born was recently gunned for coyotes, but NDOW biologists are curious as to the reason that predation is having such an impact on these herds. He discussed the Heart Mountain Study on predator/prey relationships, conducted by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. The consensus is that synchronous parturition, which is linked to doe nutrition intake, has not been occurring in recent years.

Mr. Mortimore reported that the elk population has been a "definite bright spot in Nevada." He discussed their adaptability, and advised that 1274 tags were issued last year. Of the 576 elk that were killed, 225 were bulls and 72% of those were six pointers or larger. This indicates a "huge" proportion of older age class males in the population. NDOW has received 15,751 total applications this year and Mr. Mortimore commented that the proportion of applicants to tags in the general bull hunt is the highest of any other in the state. The survey conducted in January 2000 counted 3600+ animals in Elko County, White Pine County and central Nevada. The sample size yielded a ratio of 36:100:45. Mr. Mortimore expressed a concern over the fact that many of the populations have risen to the point that they are at or exceeding the management objective for the population subplans. He discussed the Elk Species Management Plan written a few years ago, the continuous reduction of NDOW recommendations by the Commission, the resulting increase in bull ratios, and NDOW's recommendation for split seasons this year. He advised of the depredation hunt for bulls on the Ruby Mountain Range. The cow depredation hunt has been changed to a regular, antlerless hunt.

Mr. Mortimore explained that muzzle loader tags are allotted on a demand/success basis with a proposed quota of 20. Forty-six archery tags have been proposed this year. Antlerless proposals for all weapons groups are as follows: Rifle - 620 tags have been proposed for this year compared to 634 last year; muzzle loader - 112 tags proposed this year compared to 62 last year; and Archery - 317 tags proposed this year compared to 192 last year. Mr. Mortimore advised that non-residents are allotted 5% for available units. In response to a question, Mr. Mortimore explained that previous depredation hunts had been changed to regular hunts. He indicated that the Ruby Mountain Range could probably have the highest elk population in the State if NDOW was allowed to manage the area; however, the Ruby Valley land owners have demanded prevention of population expansion. At the request of Member Blank, Mr. Mortimore explained the reason for limiting the quota is that allowing the elk to be shot without a tag was not a very "palatable way for the Commission to do business." Mr. Mandeville indicated that purchasing tags seems to translate

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to a reasonable expectation of success. Mr. Mortimore explained that the 15-tag quota is based upon the success rate. Discussion regarding the possibility of expanding the elk population followed.

(3-0001) - Mr. Mortimore reviewed the big horn sheep status reports, discussed mortalities within the sheep population, and provided information on the recommended number of tags. He provided the goat status reports, and commented that they had been affected by the same disease that "overran" the Rocky Mountain Big Horn Sheep in the Ruby Mountains. The goat population has recovered more successfully and their numbers have increased. Eleven goat tags have been recommended for the Ruby Mountains; five for the east Humboldts and a new unit in the southern Ruby Mountains, 103, will be opened this year. A PIW tag will be issued as well. Mr. Mortimore advised that NDOW biologists believe that mountain lion numbers are decreasing in Nevada. He discussed the poor conditions existing during last year's hunting season, and provided the statistics from last year.

Member Davis expressed a concern for the elk population in the Ruby Mountains being viewed as a problem species. He inquired as to the basis for establishing the quota. Mr. Mortimore explained that the quota is established after reviewing the ratio of males to females and applying the computation in accordance with Commission policy. He pointed out that the Board can change the recommendation. Mr. Mandeville discussed the possibility of reviewing the management plans to increase the quota recommendations. Discussion followed regarding damage caused by high bull ratios, the possibility of separate hunts for younger age class bulls and trophy class bulls, and the effects of wild horse populations on game species habitat.

Chairperson MacKenzie thanked Mr. Mortimore and Mr. Mandeville for their presentations. Member Davis commended them on a job well done.

5. DISCUSSION AND ACTION ON BIG GAME STATUS AND QUOTA RECOMMENDATIONS FOR YEAR 2000-2001 (3-3395) - The Board reviewed and discussed the 2000-2001 Big Game Quota and Harvest Management Objective Recommendations.

(4-0006) Member Davis moved to agree with the recommendation provided by NDOW for Resident Antelope - Horns Longer than Ears - Any Legal Weapon Hunt 2151. Member Pedersen seconded the motion. Motion carried 4-0.

Member Blank moved that the Board agrees with the NDOW recommendations for Hunts 2161, 2251, 2261, 2181. Member Davis seconded the motion. Motion carried 4-0.

With regard to the Resident Elk - Antlered - Any Legal Weapon Hunt 4151, Member Blank commented that he was persuaded by the NDOW representatives' presentation. He expressed understanding for the desire of some counties to preserve the bull elk population but expressed a concern that this may be detrimental at some time in the future. He recommended strongly supporting NDOW's recommendation. Chairperson MacKenzie commented that Washoe County had recommended reducing the 4151 tags in units 111-115, 221, 222 from 224 to 170 for rifles. For muzzle loaders, the Washoe County Board recommending reducing the total number of tags to 40, and total archery tags to 25. Member Davis advised

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that for the non-resident bull hunt, the Washoe County Advisory Board had recommended reducing the number of tags in unit 111 to 8. Chairperson MacKenzie indicated that the non-resident ratio adjusts as the quotas for residents are adjusted. He noted that the total proposed muzzle loader tags are 20 and archery are 46 which indicates that the Washoe County Board opted to shift tags from archery to muzzle loader. Discussion ensued regarding the recommendations of the White Pine County Advisory Board for this section. **Member Davis moved to agree with the NDOW recommendation for Resident Elk - Antlered- Any Legal Weapon Hunt 4151. Member Pedersen seconded the motion. Motion carried 4-0.**

With regard to the Resident Elk - Antlered - Any Legal Weapon Depredation Hunt 4102, Chairperson MacKenzie commented that a recommendation had been made last year to request a transplant rather than trying to wipe out the population. Discussion ensued with regard to the same. **Member Blank moved to agree with the NDOW recommendation regarding Resident Elk - Antlered - Any Legal Weapon Depredation Hunt 4102. Member Pedersen seconded the motion. Motion carried 4-0.**

Member Pedersen moved to agree with NDOW's recommendations for the remaining elk hunts (4102, 4156, 4161, 4181, 4176, 4111, 4251). Member Davis seconded the motion. Motion carried 4-0.

Member Davis moved to accept NDOW's recommendations for all bighorn sheep, desert, California, Rocky Mountain (3151, 3251, 8151, 8251, 9151). Member Pedersen seconded the motion. Member Davis amended his motion to include mountain goats. Member Pedersen continued his second. Member Blank expressed a concern over the one Rocky Mountain Bighorn Sheep tag allotted for unit 74 and discussion ensued with regard to the same. Chairperson MacKenzie called for a vote on the pending motion. **Motion carried 4-0.** In response to a question, Member Davis acknowledged that a PIW tag had been allotted for area 103 for a total of 17.

Discussion took place regarding the Resident Mule Deer - Antlered - Any Legal Weapon Hunt 1131. Member Blank expressed appreciation for the significant increases NDOW recommended for units 192 and 195, and supported NDOW's recommendations for units 192, 194, 195, and 196. With regard to area 291, Member Blank discussed Douglas County's recommendation to lower the post-hunt buck ratio to 25 which results in quotas equal to last year's. He suggested that the Board match Douglas County's recommendation or recommend a lower ratio. Member Pedersen concurred with Member Blank's comments, and discussion followed. Member Blank moved that specifically for unit group 291, the Pinenuts, the Board recommend a post-hunt buck ratio of 22 for the Any Legal Weapon Hunt 1131, which would increase the quota from 29 to 44. Chairperson MacKenzie pointed out that this would leave the muzzle loader tags at the recommended number and the archery tags would increase by 6. Member Davis expressed favor for the tag ratio remaining low because of the area and the location of the deer. **Member Blank withdrew his previous motion, and moved that the Board recommend a post-hunt buck ratio of 25, which is what Douglas County has recommended, resulting in the same quotas for the rifle hunt as last year. Member Davis seconded the motion.** Member Blank clarified that his motion specifically applied to unit 291. Member Davis pointed out that the proposed motion would cause an increase of 6 rifle tags, muzzle loader would remain the same, and archery tags would increase by 3; total tags would increase from 41 to 50. **Member Blank amended his motion to move everything to the 25**

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post-hunt buck ratio with the exception of the muzzle loader, to increase that from one to two for resident mule deer. Member Pedersen seconded the amendment. Member Blank further amended his motion to decrease the rifle tags by one and increase the muzzle loader tags by one. Member Davis seconded the amendment. Member Blank clarified his motion as follows: in unit group 291, Hunt 1131, to increase the quota from NDOW's recommendation of 29 to 34; to increase Hunt 1171 Muzzleloader Resident quota from 1 to 2; Hunt 1141 Archery, the recommended quota will be 14; Hunt 1231, the recommended quota would be 3; Hunt 1271, the recommended quota will be 1; Hunt 1241, the recommended quota would be 2. Chairperson MacKenzie called for a vote on the pending motion. **Motion carried 4-0.** Member Blank noted, for the record, that he had not applied in unit 291.

Member Pedersen moved to accept NDOW's recommendation for the remaining units as presented. Member Davis seconded the motion. Motion carried 4-0.

Board consensus was that the previously made motion had covered Resident Mule Deer - Antlered - Muzzleloader Hunt 1171. The Board members acknowledged that their recommendation was for the 25:100 ratio for Resident Mule Deer - Antlered - Archery Hunt 1141.

Member Pedersen moved to approve the NDOW recommendations for the remaining mule deer hunts. Member Davis seconded the motion. Motion carried 4-0.

Member Pedersen moved to approve NDOW's recommendation for Hunt 1107. Member Davis seconded the motion. Motion carried 4-0.

Chairperson MacKenzie read the allotted tags into the record for the Partnership in Wildlife Hunts, and discussion ensued regarding the process for applying for a PIW tag. **Member Pedersen moved to agree with NDOW's recommendation for the Partnership in Wildlife Hunts Nos. 1000 through 8000. Member Davis seconded the motion. Motion carried 4-0.**

Member Pedersen moved to agree with NDOW's recommendation for Hunts 5132 and 5232. Member Davis seconded the motion. Motion carried 4-0. Board consensus was to make no further recommendations.

6. CARSON CITY ADVISORY BOARD TO MANAGE WILDLIFE BUDGET FOR 07/01/00 TO 06/30/01 (4-1999) - (This item was continued from the May 1, 2000 meeting.) Chairperson MacKenzie advised of the expenditures to date for FY99/00 and the remaining balance in the budget as provided by Shannon Evans of the City Finance Department. He was unaware of what Member Mason submitted for the FY00/01 budget. Discussion ensued regarding missed meetings, and Member Blank estimated the remaining budget to be approximately \$400 if the meetings hadn't been missed. One additional meeting is scheduled for Las Vegas, and one for Fallon during FY99/00 and he estimated a remaining budget after these meetings to be approximately \$200.

He reiterated the discussion at Monday's meeting regarding the Commission increasing their annual meetings from six to nine. He pointed out that the Board will not meet again until June and suggested that

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the possibility of falling short in the budget needed to be discussed at the May 5, 6 and 7 Commission meeting. Chairperson MacKenzie suggested that a budget report may be available at the Commission meeting.

Member Davis advised that he had discussed the increase in annual Commission meetings with Member Mason and discussion ensued regarding a budget supplement. **Member Blank moved to authorize Member Pedersen, assuming he can determine the budget which was filed, to make whatever contact possible at the Commission meeting to ensure a budget of at least \$1400. Member Davis seconded the motion. Motion carried 4-0.**

7. DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION TO RESCHEDULE REGULAR MEETING DATE (4-2420) - Chairperson MacKenzie advised that the next meeting is scheduled for Thursday, June 8 and discussion ensued regarding an alternate location. Member Blank advised of five new addresses to which notices of the meetings should be sent.

8. PUBLIC COMMENT (4-2525) - None.

9. ADJOURNMENT (4-2528) - Member Pedersen moved to adjourn the meeting at 11:14 p.m. Member Blank seconded the motion. Motion carried 4-0.

The Minutes of the May 3, 2000 meeting of the Carson City Advisory Board to Manage Wildlife are so approved this _____ day of June, 2000.

CHRISTOPHER MacKENZIE, Chairperson