
UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Bill No: SB 1135
Author: Blakespear (D), et al.
Amended: 8/13/26
Vote: 21

SENATE NATURAL RES. & WATER COMMITTEE: 5-1, 4/14/26

AYES: Becker, Allen, Cabaldon, Cortese, Stern

NOES: Seyarto

NO VOTE RECORDED: Grove

SENATE APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE: 6-1, 5/14/26

AYES: Cervantes, Cabaldon, Dahle, Grayson, Richardson, Wahab

NOES: Seyarto

SENATE FLOOR: 29-2, 5/22/26

AYES: Archuleta, Arreguín, Ashby, Blakespear, Cabaldon, Caballero, Cervantes, Cortese, Dahle, Durazo, Gonzalez, Grayson, Jones, Laird, Limón, McGuire, McNerney, Menjivar, Ochoa Bogh, Pérez, Reyes, Richardson, Rubio, Smallwood-Cuevas, Umberg, Valladares, Wahab, Weber Pierson, Wiener

NOES: Seyarto, Strickland

NO VOTE RECORDED: Allen, Alvarado-Gil, Becker, Choi, Grove, Hurtado, Niello, Padilla, Stern

ASSEMBLY FLOOR: 58-17, 8/19/26 - See last page for vote

SUBJECT: California Wildlife Coexistence Act

SOURCE: Defenders of Wildlife
National Wildlife Federation

DIGEST: This bill establishes the California Wildlife Coexistence Act, establishes state policy requiring an emphasis on the safe coexistence of humans and wildlife in the management of wildlife, and requires the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (department), upon appropriation, to establish a Wildlife

Coexistence Program, the Wolf-Livestock Coexistence and Compensation Program, and the Wildlife Coexistence Technical Advisory Committee to perform certain duties to support coexistence, as provided, among other provisions.

Assembly Amendments authorize the department to adopt regulations to avoid or minimize human-wildlife conflict; authorizes the pursuit of wolves by dogs guarding livestock or crops; and additional minor and conforming changes.

ANALYSIS:

Existing law:

- 1) Establishes the department in the California Natural Resources Agency. States that the department's mission "is to manage California's diverse fish, wildlife, and plant resources, and the habitats upon which they depend, for their ecological value and for their use and enjoyment by the public," and provides that its core programs include biodiversity conservation, enforcement, and hunting, fishing, and public use, among others. (Fish and Game Code (FGC) §712.1).
- 2) Authorizes the department to take for scientific, propagation, public health or safety, the prevention or relief of suffering, or law enforcement purposes, fish, amphibians, reptiles, mammals, birds, or any other plant or animal, as specified (FGC §1001).
- 3) Makes it unlawful to take a bird, mammal, fish, reptile, or amphibian except as provided in the Fish and Game Code or in a regulation adopted pursuant to the code, as provided (FGC §2000).
- 4) Requires the department in certain circumstances to issue permits to take particular animals due to depredation, as provided (FGC §§4150 *et seq.*).

This bill:

- 1) Establishes the California Wildlife Coexistence Act (act).
- 2) Establishes the state policy that the management of wildlife shall include an emphasis on the safe coexistence of humans and wildlife through department-led efforts to reduce, minimize, and mitigate conflicts. Requires these efforts to also seek to align with the state's conservation and other goals, and to be accomplished through coordination and cooperation between the department and wildlife coexistence partners, as provided.

- 3) Authorizes the department to adopt regulations to avoid or minimize human-wildlife conflict or to implement this act, as specified.
- 4) Requires the department, upon appropriation by the Legislature, to establish:
 - a) The Wildlife Coexistence Program (coexistence program) to manage and promote wildlife coexistence.
 - b) The Wolf-Livestock Coexistence and Compensation Program (renamed Wolf-Livestock Compensation Pilot Program) (compensation program) to provide resources to eligible participants.
 - c) The Wildlife Coexistence Technical Advisory Committee (advisory committee) to provide technical guidance, public input and programmatic recommendations related to the department's wildlife coexistence efforts.
- 5) Requires the coexistence program to conduct activities such as managing, tracking, and responding to wildlife conflict calls, reports, and incident responses related to human-wildlife conflict, depredation, animal welfare, and wildlife health issues; avoiding, minimizing, and mitigating conflicts between humans and wildlife proactively; and continuously implementing best practices, among other provisions, as provided.
- 6) Requires the compensation program to provide resources to eligible participants for providing equipment, information and resources on practices used to proactively and nonlethally deter wolf attacks on livestock (at least 50% of funds, except when the balance of funds is less than \$1,000,000, as provided); compensation for confirmed or probable losses of livestock verified by the department to have been caused by wolves; and compensation for indirect impacts on livestock from the presence of wolves, among others.
 - a) To be eligible for loss or indirect impact compensation, requires a participant to have adopted, implemented, and documented, as practicable, proper and ongoing deployment of proactive nonlethal conflict reduction measures in a department-defined area of wolf activity or pack territory. Additionally, participants outside an area of wolf activity or pack territory are eligible to receive compensation for two losses per 12-month period, as provided.
 - b) Requires the department to consider all relevant factors in evaluating eligibility for compensation program participation, as provided.

- 7) Authorizes the department, upon appropriation by the Legislature, to provide resources to wildlife coexistence partners to support efforts required for the coexistence program and the compensation program including the costs of implementation.
- 8) Requires the advisory committee to advise the department on multiple topics, including best available science, and indigenous knowledge, among others.
- 9) Requires the advisory committee to consist of between 11 and 15 members, appointed by the department director, representing expertise or experience in one or more areas, such as wildlife biology or ecology, public safety, and animal behavior or veterinary science, among others, with no more than two people from each category.
- 10) Requires members of the advisory committee to serve three-year terms, authorize reappointments and that initial appointments may include shorter terms to ensure staggering of terms. Requires members of the advisory committee to serve without compensation, and to meet at least twice per year, as provided. Requires the department to consider, but not adopt, recommendations made by the advisory committee.
- 11) Authorizes the pursuit of wolves by dogs that are guarding or protecting livestock or crops on property owned, leased, or rented by the owner of the dogs if the dogs are maintained with and in reasonable proximity to the livestock or crops, as provided.
- 12) Defines “wildlife coexistence partners” to mean local, state, and federal agencies, nonprofit organizations, federally recognized tribes, non-federally recognized California Native American tribes included on the contact list maintained by the Native American Heritage Commission, other entities, and academic programs.
- 13) Requires the department to include on a publicly accessible location on its internet website all of the following on or before July 1, 2028 with annual updates on or before each January 31:
 - a) The annual number, general locations, and species involved in reported human-wildlife conflicts and department responses pursuant to the coexistence program.
 - b) An inventory of known types of proactive wildlife coexistence activities available within each region and statewide, including community-based and tribal efforts.

- c) Descriptions of resources provided pursuant to the compensation program, including recipients, regions, and dollar amounts.
- d) Depredation permits issued by species, damage type, and regions.
- e) The outcomes of the compensation program including a list of any resources funded by activity, county, and wolf pack.

[NOTE: For additional background information on this bill, please see the Senate Natural Resources and Water Committee's analysis]

FISCAL EFFECT: Appropriation: No Fiscal Com.: Yes Local: No

According to the Assembly Appropriations Committee:

CDFW estimates costs of approximately \$28.1 million in FY 2027–28 and \$23.2 million in FY 2028–29 and ongoing for 83 permanent positions (environmental scientists and specialists, fish and wildlife technicians, supervising laboratory assistants, veterinarians, fish and game wardens, fish and game lieutenant supervisors, warden pilots, research scientists, attorneys, information officers, interpreters, information technology supervisors, various analysts, and personnel specialists), 14 limited-term fish and wildlife scientific aid positions, 46 vehicles, and equipment (such as live traps, animal transport crates, wildlife health and disease surveillance supplies, and diagnostic testing).

Tasks include, among other things, conducting wildlife incident responses; developing and providing subject matter expertise, technical assistance, and consultation; developing and using tools to reduce human–wildlife conflict; and conducting investigations, enforcement actions, public education, outreach, research, data management, health and disease surveillance, genetic and forensic interpretation of samples, validation of scientifically defensible results, and evaluation of measurable performance objectives.

CDFW notes its estimate does not include additional costs associated with providing eligible participants (through the [compensation program]) with equipment and information on practices used to proactively and nonlethally deter wolf attacks on livestock, compensation for confirmed or provable losses of livestock verified by CDFW to have been caused by wolves, and compensation for indirect impacts on livestock from the presence of wolves. The Appropriations Committee notes CDFW's existing [compensation program] – which this bill codifies – received \$3 million in FY 2021–22, \$600,00 in FY 2024–25, and \$2 million in FY 2025–26.

CDFW further notes its current wildlife health lab facility is over 50 years old, lacks adequate space to perform the lab's functions, and limits the CDFW's capacity to provide wildlife care. Utilizing one-time funding provided in FY 2022–23, CDFW has started evaluating existing and ongoing needs. However, CDFW has not yet finalized the costs associated with upgrading or establishing an appropriate wildlife care facility – which may be necessary should this bill go into effect.

Until recently, the CDFW maintained a [HWC] program, which helped communities develop tools and provided statewide support for human-wildlife conflict management. The program received one-time funding in the 2021 budget; however, most of the limited-term positions created for the program were eliminated in 2024. The author of this bill, along with dozens of organizations, have submitted a request for \$48.8 million in FY 2026–27 to establish and sustain a Wildlife Coexistence Program and fund a comprehensive Wolf-Livestock Coexistence and Compensation Program at CDFW. However, the FY 2026–27 budget includes only \$1 million in one-time funding (Fish and Game Preservation Fund) to allow CDFW to use existing Environmental License Plate Fund moneys to fund temporary resources to support its Coexisting with Wildlife Initiative, which CDFW argues will allow for proactive mitigation of human-wildlife conflict and foster safe coexistence with native wildlife in California.

CDFW has experienced longstanding budget challenges despite repeated efforts over many years to address them. CDFW's service-based budgeting (SBB) analysis for FY 2023–24 indicates CDFW (including its species and habitat conservation program, where most of the tasks associated with human-wildlife coexistence are likely to be located) is funded for only one-third of its mandated program work. The SBB effort highlights the degree to which CDFW operates with significant gaps between what is required to achieve its mandated mission and the level at which it is currently funded.

SUPPORT: (Verified 8/14/26)

Defenders of Wildlife (co-sponsor)
National Wildlife Federation (co-sponsor)
American River Conservancy
Animal Legal Defense Fund
Animal Welfare Institute
Audubon California
California Association of Zoos and Aquariums
California Native Plant Society, Alta Bates Chapter

California State Association of Counties
California Wolf Foundation
Center for Biological Diversity
Center for Environmental Health
Citizens for Los Angeles Wildlife
CleanEarth4Kids.org
County of Nevada
County of Placer
Eastern Sierra Land Trust
Endangered Habitats League
Environmental Center of San Diego
Environmental Protection Information Center
Feather River Land Trust
Friends of Rose Creek
Humane World for Animals
In Defense of Animals
Los Cerritos Wetlands Land Trust
Los Padres ForestWatch
Mid Peninsula Regional Open Space District
Mountain Lion Foundation
National Parks Conservation Association
Natural Resources Defense Council
Occidental Arts and Ecology Center
Office of Kat Taylor
Oswit Land Trust
Pacific Forest Trust
Placer Land Trust
Project Coyote
Resource Renewal Institute
San Diego Humane Society/ Project Wildlife
San Diego Zoo Wildlife Alliance
Sierra Business Council
Sierra County Land Trust
Sierra Foothill Conservancy
Sierra Nevada Alliance
Social Compassion in Legislation
Team Wolf
The Honorable Brooke Laine, Supervisor, District 5, County of El Dorado
The Nature Conservancy
The Wildlife Crossing Fund

Truckee Donner Land Trust
Urban Wildlife Research Project
Western Watersheds Project
Wholly H₂O
WildFutures
Wildlife Conservation Network
Women for Wolves

OPPOSITION: (Verified 8/14/26)

California Rifle & Pistol Association
Shasta County Board of Supervisors

ARGUMENTS IN SUPPORT: According to the author, “Californians are seeing more wildlife entering our communities in search of food, water and habitat. These encounters can threaten public safety, damage property and physically harm both people and wildlife. We know that proactive, non-lethal strategies, such as increasing public education and improving waste management, can prevent or temper these encounters. SB 1135 takes a practical, science-based approach by establishing a statewide Wildlife Coexistence Program that gives communities the tools they need to help prevent conflict before it happens. This bill will protect residents, support our agricultural communities and ensure California leads with smart, humane wildlife management.”

ARGUMENTS IN OPPOSITION: The County of Shasta, writing in opposition, notes that the goals of the bill are “well-intentioned,” but that “the bill creates substantial statewide responsibilities and makes them entirely dependent on future funding. Many rural counties are already experiencing growing wildlife-related challenges, particularly involving wolves, mountain lions, and other large predators, and this bill offers no guaranteed or sustainable funding to meet the requirements it imposes or the increased expectations of reporting and coordination.”

“Shasta County’s livestock producers already face significant pressure from expanding wolf activity.” The County also argues that centralizing authority at the state level leaves “counties with [a] limited role in shaping policy despite being most directly affected by human-wildlife conflicts and livestock losses.”

ASSEMBLY FLOOR: 58-17, 8/19/26

AYES: Addis, Aguiar-Curry, Ahrens, Alvarez, Arambula, Ávila Farías, Bains, Bauer-Kahan, Bennett, Berman, Boerner, Bonta, Bryan, Calderon, Caloza, Carrillo, Connolly, Elhawary, Fong, Gabriel, Garcia, Gipson, Jeff Gonzalez,

Mark González, Haney, Harabedian, Hart, Irwin, Jackson, Kalra, Krell, Lee, Lowenthal, McKinnor, Muratsuchi, Nguyen, Ortega, Pacheco, Papan, Patel, Pellerin, Petrie-Norris, Quirk-Silva, Ramos, Ransom, Celeste Rodriguez, Michelle Rodriguez, Rogers, Schiavo, Schultz, Sharp-Collins, Solache, Stefani, Ward, Wicks, Wilson, Zbur, Rivas

NOES: Alanis, Chen, Davies, DeMaio, Dixon, Ellis, Flora, Hadwick, Hoover, Johnson, Lackey, Macedo, Patterson, Sanchez, Ta, Tangipa, Wallis

NO VOTE RECORDED: Castillo, Blanca Rubio, Soria, Valencia

Prepared by: Katharine Moore / N.R. & W. / (916) 651-4116
8/19/26 15:19:02

**** **END** ****