



March 12, 2022

Bill Brake, Chairman  
Arizona Game & Fish Commission  
5000 W. Carefree Hwy  
Phoenix, Arizona 85086

**Submitted Via Email**

**RE: Mandatory Reporting for Big Game Hunts**

Mr. Chairman, Commissioners, and Director:

Arizona Sportsmen for Wildlife Conservation (AZSFWC) has had several discussions on the subject of mandatory reporting amongst our Board, as well as discussions that included Department personnel. There were, and in some cases still are varying opinions on the necessity of making reporting of big game hunts/harvest mandatory, so we polled our member organizations on what they would like the Commission and Department to do.

The Department's voluntary hunt and harvest surveys have produced mixed results over the years. Only a few species have a mandatory check in requirement of some sort. All of this data is coupled with surveys and modeling to develop hunt recommendations. Arguably, if the reported information were more comprehensive and complete, the scientific management and assessment would be more accurate and reliable.

Many factors can impact hunt recommendations including; the drought's impact on populations, more people recreating, fractured habitat and the impact of wildfires to name a few. It's also more important than ever for all hunters to understand what impacts our wildlife population dynamics, species conservation, as well as the role they play in the process.

Here is a link to the February 14, 2022 Hunting Wire feature story sums it up nicely.  
<https://www.huntingwire.com/features/ee44d05a-809a-4e79-8afd-e58a849d5dd1>

An excerpt from the author's article said this:

"I would be remiss not to note that when hunters hit the woods every year, they immediately become part of the scientific data collection machine that state and federal agencies use to manage hunting activities. Information gathered from hunters, such as number of days hunted, how many individuals seen or heard, whether and when a hunter harvested an animal represents a significant data source used by state wildlife agency biologists to inform and adjust wildlife policy."

The Department has solicited voluntary hunt reports for many years. The effort has had mixed results for different species and different hunts. We have heard a variety of reasons

AZSFWC Comments on Mandatory Reporting for Big Game Hunts in AZ – 3-12-22

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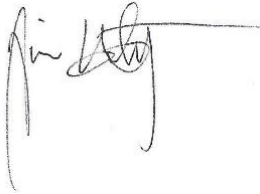
from hunters on why that is, ranging from don't care and don't have time, to not going to say where or whether they were successful. We also learned that many Arizona hunters who venture out of state participate in mandatory reporting and have no qualms or issues surrounding those requirements.

In the absence of complete information, the Department has relied on various means to fill in the blanks such as; modeling, surveys, projections, historical data, and other tools to assess the what and how much.

AZSFWC and 30 of our members (list attached) believe it is paramount in the time we are in to ensure both the Commission and Department have the most accurate data and information available to them in order to make the best decisions possible when it comes to the scientific management of big game species while assessing populations, numbers, and the viability of hunting opportunities.

Therefore, we would encourage you to initiate a mandatory reporting requirement into the system as soon as is possible!

Yours in Conservation,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jim Unmacht", with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Jim Unmacht  
Executive Director