

FINAL BILL REPORT

SHB 2424

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Synopsis as Enacted

Brief Description: Updating cooperative agreements between the state and federally recognized tribes for the successful collaborative management of Washington's wildlife resources.

Sponsors: House Committee on Agriculture & Natural Resources (originally sponsored by Representatives Kretz, Lekanoff, Springer, Schmick, Dent and Chapman).

House Committee on Agriculture & Natural Resources

Senate Committee on Agriculture, Water, Natural Resources & Parks

Background:

Confederated Tribes of the Colville Reservation.

Indian Tribes in the United States hold both the right and authority to manage fish and wildlife on lands which were retained by Tribes or were set aside for Tribal use by treaties, statutes, judicial decisions, executive orders, or agreements. These lands are managed by Tribes in accordance with their respective goals, objectives, and vision within the framework of federal laws.

The original Colville Indian Reservation was established by Presidential Executive Order on April 9, 1872. The reservation was subsequently divided into north and south halves and, in 1892, the Confederated Tribes of the Colville Reservation (Colville Tribes) ceded the North Half of the reservation to the United States while reserving rights to hunt and fish on those lands.

Department of Fish and Wildlife.

The Department of Fish and Wildlife (DFW) is tasked with managing the state's fish and wildlife resources. This responsibility includes establishing the time, place, manner, and methods by which to harvest or enjoy fish and wildlife.

Cooperative Management Agreement.

The DFW and the Colville Tribes entered into a cooperative agreement in 1998 that

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addresses a variety of fishery and wildlife management issues including wildlife protection and preservation and strategies for addressing problem wildlife on the current Colville Reservation and the North Half through a variety of strategies including joint and cooperative surveying and information sharing.

Endangered Species Designations.

The federal Endangered Species Act (ESA) provides protection for threatened and endangered species. The ESA generally prohibits taking protected species, which includes harassing, harming, or killing such species. The United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) has primary responsibility for administration of the ESA with regard to threatened and endangered terrestrial wildlife.

The State Fish and Wildlife Commission (Commission) may also designate, by rule, species as protected or endangered within the state. A wildlife species may be removed from state listing when, based on the preponderance of scientific data available, its populations either: are no longer in danger of failing, declining, or are no longer vulnerable due to certain factors including limited numbers, disease, predation, exploitation, or habitat loss or change; or meet target population objectives set out in a DFW-developed and Commission-adopted recovery plan.

Gray Wolves.

Both the state and federal governments maintain designations for the gray wolf in Washington as endangered or protected. Federal law lists the gray wolf as an endangered species for the portion of the state located west of highways 97, 17, and 395 that run through Central Washington, and the Commission has classified the gray wolf as an endangered species statewide.

The Commission adopted the Gray Wolf Conservation and Management Plan (Conservation and Management Plan) in December 2011, which identifies target population objectives, management tools, reclassification criteria, an implementation plan, and a species monitoring plan. The Conservation and Management Plan identifies three wolf recovery regions: the Eastern Washington region; the North Cascades region; and the Southern Cascades and Northwest Coast region. The recovery objectives identified in the Conservation and Management Plan to allow the gray wolf to be removed from the state's endangered species list are based on target numbers and species distribution.

Summary:

The DFW must engage with the Colville Tribes on a government-to-government basis to update the 1998 cooperative management agreement with respect to wildlife management on the area known as "North Half." Before the DFW engages with the Colville Tribes on the update, the Commission must approve a plan of engagement. The update of the agreement must address the "Wildlife Protection and Preservation" section of the agreement, challenges to implementing the "Problem Wildlife" section of the agreement,

and recommendations for managing the gray wolf and other species that have been listed under the State Endangered Species Act since adoption of the 1998 agreement.

Any updates to the agreement must be ratified by both the Commission and the Colville Tribes, and the DFW must provide any updates or modifications in a report to the Legislature by June 30, 2025.

Votes on Final Passage:

House	94	3	
Senate	49	0	(Senate amended)
House	93	3	(House concurred)

Effective: June 6, 2024