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**HOUSE BILL 1848**

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**State of Washington 65th Legislature 2017 Regular Session**

**By** Representative Koster

AN ACT Relating to initiating proactive steps to address elk hoof disease; amending RCW 77.12.047 and 77.12.240; adding new sections to chapter 77.12 RCW; and creating a new section.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF WASHINGTON:

NEW SECTION. **Sec.**  The legislature finds that elk hoof disease poses a significant threat to the state, including elk populations and livestock. While the legislature recognizes the efforts of the department of fish and wildlife thus far, more aggressive steps are necessary to achieve a better understanding of the hoof disease epidemic facing the state's elk populations and to ensure proactive management and treatment actions are pursued. Additionally, the legislature finds that immediate measures are necessary to ensure the humane treatment of severely diseased and suffering elk.

**Sec.**  RCW 77.12.047 and 2001 c 253 s 14 are each amended to read as follows:

(1) The commission may adopt, amend, or repeal rules as follows:

(a) Specifying the times when the taking of wildlife, fish, or shellfish is lawful or unlawful.

(b) Specifying the areas and waters in which the taking and possession of wildlife, fish, or shellfish is lawful or unlawful.

(c) Specifying and defining the gear, appliances, or other equipment and methods that may be used to take wildlife, fish, or shellfish, and specifying the times, places, and manner in which the equipment may be used or possessed.

(d) Regulating the importation, transportation, possession, disposal, landing, and sale of wildlife, fish, shellfish, or seaweed within the state, whether acquired within or without the state. However, the rules of the department must prohibit any person, including department staff, from translocating a live elk from an area with elk affected by hoof disease to any other location. The department may not issue a permit allowing such an action.

(e) Regulating the prevention and suppression of diseases and pests affecting wildlife, fish, or shellfish.

(f) Regulating the size, sex, species, and quantities of wildlife, fish, or shellfish that may be taken, possessed, sold, or disposed of.

(g) Specifying the statistical and biological reports required from fishers, dealers, boathouses, or processors of wildlife, fish, or shellfish.

(h) Classifying species of marine and freshwater life as food fish or shellfish.

(i) Classifying the species of wildlife, fish, and shellfish that may be used for purposes other than human consumption.

(j) Regulating the taking, sale, possession, and distribution of wildlife, fish, shellfish, or deleterious exotic wildlife.

(k) Establishing game reserves and closed areas where hunting for wild animals or wild birds may be prohibited.

(l) Regulating the harvesting of fish, shellfish, and wildlife in the federal exclusive economic zone by vessels or individuals registered or licensed under the laws of this state.

(m) Authorizing issuance of permits to release, plant, or place fish or shellfish in state waters.

(n) Governing the possession of fish, shellfish, or wildlife so that the size, species, or sex can be determined visually in the field or while being transported.

(o) Other rules necessary to carry out this title and the purposes and duties of the department.

(2)(a) Subsections (1)(a), (b), (c), (d), and (f) of this section do not apply to private tideland owners and lessees and the immediate family members of the owners or lessees of state tidelands, when they take or possess oysters, clams, cockles, borers, or mussels, excluding razor clams, produced on their own private tidelands or their leased state tidelands for personal use.

(b) "Immediate family member" for the purposes of this section means a spouse, brother, sister, grandparent, parent, child, or grandchild.

(3) Except for subsection (1)(g) of this section, this section does not apply to private sector cultured aquatic products as defined in RCW 15.85.020. Subsection (1)(g) of this section does apply to such products.

NEW SECTION. **Sec.**  A new section is added to chapter 77.12 RCW to read as follows:

(1) The department must request recommendations from the state veterinarian and Washington State University college of veterinary medicine for department actions to prevent hoof disease from being transmitted from elk to domestic animals.

(2) The state veterinarian must transmit any recommendations that are jointly agreed upon by the state veterinarian and Washington State University college of veterinary medicine to the department, and may provide both initial recommendations and supplemental recommendations on an ongoing basis.

(3) The department must implement any recommendations jointly agreed upon by the state veterinarian and Washington State University college of veterinary medicine.

**Sec.**  RCW 77.12.240 and 2009 c 333 s 63 are each amended to read as follows:

(1)(a) The department may authorize the removal or killing of wildlife that is destroying or injuring property, or when it is necessary for wildlife management or research.

(b) While on duty, department staff in possession of a firearm must humanely euthanize an elk that is exhibiting a severe limp and is located in an area where hoof disease is present.

(2) The department shall dispose of wildlife taken or possessed by them under this title in the manner determined by the director to be in the best interest of the state. Proceeds from sales shall be deposited in the state treasury to be credited to the state wildlife account created in RCW 77.12.170.

(3)(a) An authorized person, as identified in (c) of this subsection, may humanely euthanize an elk that the person reasonably believes is exhibiting a severe limp and is located in an area where hoof disease is present. An authorized person may humanely euthanize an affected elk the person encounters without regard to hunting season dates and areas and no tag is required. An authorized person may retain the animal, at their discretion.

(b) An authorized person humanely euthanizing an elk under this subsection (3) must, except for a tribal member, notify the department of that action within forty-eight hours after taking that action.

(c) Those authorized to humanely euthanize an elk under this subsection (3) are a landowner humanely euthanizing an elk on their land, a person with a valid hunting license under chapter 77.32 RCW, and a person with a tribal identification card from a federally recognized tribe.

NEW SECTION. **Sec.**  A new section is added to chapter 77.12 RCW to read as follows:

(1) The department must maintain the elk hoof disease public working group, with a substantially similar structure and purpose to the way it exists on the effective date of this section, as a forum to advise the department on elk hoof disease issues statewide, and to discuss relevant research, management, and public outreach efforts.

(2) The department must hold working group meetings at least quarterly and ensure that the department both: (a) Keeps the working group informed of current information; and (b) seeks input and recommendations from the working group at each meeting.

(3) The department must provide a status report to the commission and legislature every six months, on a cycle determined by the department to be most efficient and effective. The status report must include a summary of: Relevant research and management activities and results; outcomes from working group meetings; and any additional recommendations from the department.

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