

FINAL BILL REPORT

SHB 1353

C 244 L 17
Synopsis as Enacted

Brief Description: Commissioning an elk management pilot project that focuses initially on the Colockum elk herd.

Sponsors: House Committee on Agriculture & Natural Resources (originally sponsored by Representatives Dent, Blake, Buys and Hayes).

House Committee on Agriculture & Natural Resources
Senate Committee on Natural Resources & Parks
Senate Committee on Ways & Means

Background:

Game Management Plans.

The Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) maintains, and regularly updates, a game management plan for the various game species in Washington. The purpose of the plan, according to the WDFW, is to guide the WDFW in the management of hunted wildlife in six-year time frames. The declared focus of the plan is the scientific management of game populations, harvest management, and other significant factors affecting game populations. The overall goals are: protecting, sustaining, and managing hunted wildlife; providing stable, regulated recreational hunting opportunities; protecting and enhancing wildlife habitat; and minimizing adverse impacts to residents, other wildlife, and the environment.

Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife Colockum Herd Plan.

One component of the game management plan is a herd plan for each of the state's 10 elk herds. The Colockum elk herd is currently being managed under a 2006 herd management plan. The plan's three primary goals are: (1) to manage the elk and their habitat to ensure healthy, productive populations; (2) to manage the elk for a variety of recreational, educational, and cultural uses; and (3) to manage the elk herd for a sustainable yield.

Deer and Elk Collision Impacts.

According to the Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT), more than 1,100 deer and elk collisions with motor vehicles are reported to the Washington State Patrol (WSP) annually. The WSDOT removes an average of nearly 3,500 deer and elk carcasses each year. Collisions between wildlife and motor vehicles result in an average of 1,190 human injuries and two fatalities per year in Washington.

This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not a part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.

Summary:

Subject to the availability of funds appropriated for this specific purpose, the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) must conduct an elk management pilot project to evaluate wildlife management actions to reduce elk highway collisions and to reduce elk damage to crops. The pilot project must focus initially on lands within the range of the Colockum herd. The WDFW must invite the Yakama Nation to participate in all aspects of the project.

The WDFW must work with the Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) to evaluate wildlife management actions to reduce elk highway collisions.

The pilot project must include direct wildlife management efforts, including:

- the increased use of special depredation hunts and general hunting opportunities of the Colockum herd;
- a prohibition on the feeding of elk within the pilot project area by persons other than WDFW personnel; and
- the use of managed livestock grazing to attract elk away from roads and private property.

The WDFW and the WSDOT must report the results of the pilot project to the Legislature by October 31, 2020. The report must address how the information gained from the pilot project will be used to manage the Colockum herd and other similarly situated elk herds.

Votes on Final Passage:

House	96	1	
Senate	48	1	(Senate amended)
House	96	0	(House concurred)

Effective: July 23, 2017