

# WHY MANAGE BIG GAME POPULATIONS?

Jeffrey Cole, Wildlife Manager

[jcole@nndfw.org](mailto:jcole@nndfw.org)

928-871-6595

The Department of Fish and Wildlife was established in 1970's The two main purposes were to restore the mule deer population and to manage predators.

Mule deer were over-hunted to near extinction after the livestock reductions.





Big Game Species that occur on the Navajo Nation are mule deer, elk, black bear, mountain lion, antelope, bighorn sheep and Merriam's turkey





Predators are mountain lions, black bears, grizzly bears, Mexican wolves, coyotes, foxes and bobcats. Grizzly bears and wolves no longer occur on the Navajo Nation



Predators occasionally attack livestock, damage property and crops, and rarely enter homes. There have been no attacks on humans that were not provoked







Most Predators do not cause human conflicts

You should not attempt to deal with predators on your own unless they are in the act of attacking livestock

People have been killed trying to deal with predators on their own

Call Fish and Wildlife Dispatch immediately at

928-871-645

Do not remove any livestock killed they may be used to lure the predator back to be killed or to start tracking dogs from to capture the predator.

A man was shot by his own family members by accident when they waited in the dark for a bear to return to a sheep kill in the Chuska Mountains. They never called us.

A cowboy was bitten by a bear in Canoncito when he decided to try and rope the bear.





Wildlife Populations need to be monitored and managed to ensure that they do not become endangered, diseased, over-populated or cause too many human conflicts

We need to ensure that the species and their parts that are important for food and cultural reasons will always be available for use by the public





# Wildlife Populations are monitored for diseases



Mule Deer herds were at their highest numbers in the 1970's. Today their numbers are lower. Many things have caused this. No timber management for 20 years. A lack of predator management for several years. Humans moving into deer habitat. Feral livestock and unregulated grazing. Drought has also impacted the deer .





Desert bighorn sheep were almost wiped out in the early 1900's. Today there are over 400 sheep in 3 populations on the Navajo Nation.



Pronghorn antelope were much more widespread throughout the Navajo Nation in the grasslands. They were over-hunted in the mid 1900's. The current fair to poor range conditions in the grasslands have made pronghorn introductions a low priority for the Department. We currently have a huntable population only on New Lands





The Department enhances big game habitat with woodland and forest treatments



We also install water catchments



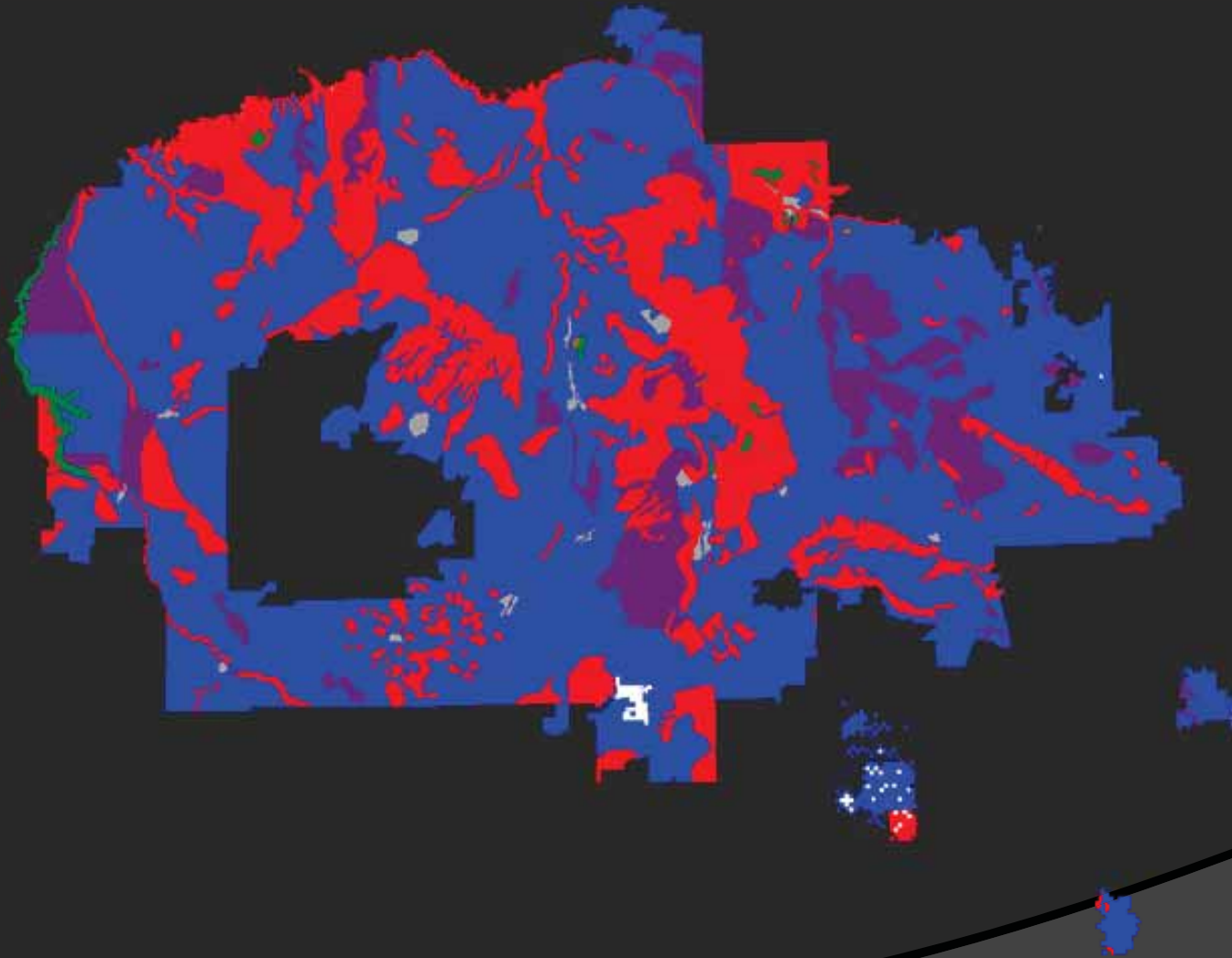
WILDVIEW 04-07-2009 20:54:36



# We repair Earthen Dams



We also protect habitat by being involved in land-use planning and review of Environmental Assessments







Big Game and Predator Management Were the reasons for the creation of our Department

We have grown to have a fisheries management program, a law enforcement program, an endangered species program and the Navajo Nation Zoo

We have a Fish Hatchery in Toadlena, NM





We enforce navajo nation and federal wildlife laws





# We conduct an Annual Youth Hunt





# We operate a Fish Ladder on the San Juan River



# We raise endangered fish for stocking into the San Juan River





We maintain recreation facilities and pick up trash at Wheatfields, Ganado, and Berland lakes on a regular basis. We removed 24,124 pounds of trash from our fishing lakes in FY' 2013.







We have also gotten into the business of maintaining restrooms

Vandalism, graffiti and maintenance is expensive



With over 40 years of experience,  
the Navajo Nation has one of the  
best wildlife management programs  
in Native America

It all started with big game and  
predator management