

Hunting Threatened In Mojave National Preserve

The Center for Biological Diversity (CBD), in concert with the Sierra Club and other anti-hunting organizations, has filed a petition with the California Fish and Game Commission to ban most hunting in the Mojave National Preserve, including rabbit and varmit hunting. What hunting remains (resident game birds, deer, and bighorn sheep) would be restricted.

The "Petition for Rulemaking Regarding Hunting in the Mojave National Preserve" blames hunters for the declining population of the desert tortoise, a threatened species under the state's Endangered Species Act. CBD filed a similar petition in 2003, but the Commission did not act on it. The Commission will likely consider the CBD's petition next week and could schedule a hearing on it early next year.

The petition contains the flimsiest of evidence that hunting in the Preserve is the cause or even a contributing factor of the decline in the tortoise population. Contrarily, statistics confirm that vehicular traffic and increased tourism within the designated critical habitat of the tortoise have increased substantially since 1994 when the Preserve was established. Those activities are believed to be the leading causes of tortoise mortality. Further, there is sufficient research to suggest that predation by ravens and coyotes is also taking its toll on this protected species. The objective of the petition is not to protect and enhance the tortoise population; rather it is an attempt by this coalition of anti-hunting organizations to permanently ban hunting from the Mojave National Preserve. CBD was behind the ban imposed on the use of lead ammunition for hunting big game within the range of the California condor. Earlier this year, CBD attempted unsuccessfully to extend that ban to all game species.

Please take a few minutes to write a letter requesting that the Commission deny the petition and address and mail it to:

John Carlson, Jr., Executive Director
California Fish and Game Commission
1416 Ninth Street, Room 1320
Sacramento, CA 95814
fgc@fgc.ca.gov

Hunters are continually being harassed with restrictions on hunting and access to hunting areas for reasons not based on science. Please do not let CBD impose their pseudo science on those who hunt in the Mojave National Preserve.

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