



25st August 2015

The Australasian Wildlife Management Society (AWMS) is the peak representative body for professional wildlife ecologists in Australia. We have a membership of over 200 scientists and wildlife management practitioners in Australia, New Zealand and the Oceania region. AWMS understands you have introduced California Assembly Bill 1188 in the State Legislature to allow the ongoing sale of kangaroo products permitted under Australian and United States law. This is, of course, likely to generate a good deal of public debate and comment. The purpose of this letter is to inform you directly and clearly about the attitude of AWMS toward this industry and perhaps to give you access to some information that might otherwise be overlooked.

AWMS has a long term Position Statement in support of commercial harvesting of kangaroos. It can be viewed in full at:

<http://www.awms.org.au/assets/docs/PositionStatements/awms%20position%20on%20the%20commercial%20harvesting%20of%20macropods.pdf>

It states in part that:

AWMS SUPPORTS IN PRINCIPLE the idea of achieving a conservation benefit from a government regulated, high value, sustainable kangaroo industry.

The Californian government is about to be asked to make a crucial decision in support of sustainable resource use. AWMS unequivocally supports the sustainable and scientifically based exploitation of wildlife, including the large, commercially-harvested kangaroos that are the subject of the upcoming bill.

AWMS also has a more general position statement on the sustainable commercial use of wildlife which is also supportive of the kangaroo industry:

<http://www.awms.org.au/assets/docs/PositionStatements/awms%20position%20on%20sustainable%20commercial%20use%20of%20wildlife.pdf>

AWMS believes that the management of the Australian kangaroo industry is an example that could be followed elsewhere when designing and regulating a large-scale commercial harvest of wildlife. AWMS further believes that there are strong environmental reasons for supporting a wild harvest because it necessitates preservation of suitable habitat for that wildlife. Hence by supporting a sustainable harvest, consumers are supporting preservation of these species in the wild.



AWMS closely monitors the activities of the kangaroo industry. In 2014 we were party to public discussions and a review of the Queensland Macropod Management Plan and we supported the proposed amendments to that plan. Likewise, our members monitor the annual kangaroo counts, management plan and quotas in New South Wales. Since 1992, when survey methods were standardised, the harvest has averaged just 66% of the quota. Kangaroo population sizes in NSW are related to prevailing primary productivity and rainfall deficits and not the harvest.

There has been a wide-scale commercial harvest of large macropods (kangaroos) in Australia for more than 40 years. Careful examination of the data on population trends of the harvested species over that time shows large fluctuations in population numbers that can largely be explained by the equally large fluctuations in rainfall over much of the continent. There is no evidence in the data of any long-term or systematic decline in the numbers of wild kangaroos over time.

As an organisation concerned with the promotion of scientific principles and evidence to the management of wildlife (<http://www.awms.org.au/>), AWMS supports the continuation and expansion of the commercial kangaroo harvest in Australia and believes that there are considerable conservation benefits that may be gained for kangaroos by attaching a value to them. Of concern to AWMS is that misguided attempts to prevent harvest of our large and abundant species detract focus from our unharvested smaller and endangered macropod species, which do need positive management.

I would be happy to provide more information, or to respond to any questions you may have.

Sincerely,

Greg Baxter (PhD)

President