



# American Association of Wildlife Veterinarians

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To Whom It May Concern:

Please accept this note as the American Association of Wildlife Veterinarian's (AAWV) unequivocal support for the Catalina Island Conservancy's (CIC) Catalina Island Restoration Project; specifically, for the complete removal of mule deer (*Odocoileus hemionus*) from Catalina Island, California. As an anthropogenically introduced, non-native species, mule deer populations have brought about profoundly negative impacts on the natural ecosystems of Catalina Island. Moreover, the effects associated with the presence of this non-native species have not been limited to the landscape. Since their introduction in the 1930s, mule deer populations on Catalina have exceeded the ecosystem's carrying capacity; a situation that now frequently results in starvation and associated welfare issues for these animals. Anthropogenic interventions in response to these pressures, such as supplemental feeding, have failed to curtail browsing, and have often proven only to exacerbate the situation by creating artificial densities of mule deer, thus increasing the risks of disease transmission and suffering.

In response to the destructive pressures applied to the island's habitat by non-native mule deer, the CIC has put forward a program of lethal removal of this species. Following an exhaustive investigation assessing the benefits and costs of various removal methodologies; e.g., the installation of fencing, recreational hunting, the introduction of predators, translocation, and reproductive management, the CIC's informed conclusion to employ lethal removal via aerial sharpshooting has the support of the AAWV. This method of lethal removal is time-tested in the field of wildlife management, and affords the CIC the greatest opportunity to achieve total extirpation of mule deer from Catalina; especially in the context of animal welfare, human safety, efficiency of resources, and time management. It is the express view of the AAWV that the CIC's mule deer removal plan is scientifically well-grounded, informed, safe, humane, and urgently needed.

Sincerely,

John A. Bryan, II, DVM, MS  
President, American Association of Wildlife Veterinarians