

Arizona Game and Fish Plans to Kill Mountain Lions

Environmentalists have come out against plans to kill at least 10 big cats in the Lake Mead National Recreation area.

The Arizona Game and Fish Department has announced it plans to kill at least 10 mountain lions at the Lake Mead National Recreation Area to prevent them from preying on desert bighorn sheep.

The plan, which has already drawn opposition from environmentalists, calls for catching and killing individual mountain lions until a recent spate of sheep kills is reduced. The area has about a thousand bighorn, but the number has dropped by at least 50 percent in recent years. At least seven bighorns have been killed this year.

Jim deVos, research branch chief for the Arizona Game and Fish Department, attributes the sheep being targeted to the toll that a drought has taken on the population of the mule deer, the mountain lions more common prey.

According to deVos, mountain lions will be caught and killed one at a time until predation is under control. A start date for the program has not yet been set. Posted: April 10, 2006, 5:00 a.m. EST