



AGENDA MEMORANDUM

**Natural Resources
Department**

City Council Regular Meeting Date: February 3, 2026

To: City Council
From: Holly Milbrandt, Natural Resources Director
Date: January 27, 2026

SUBJECT: Consideration of a targeted lethal removal program for the purpose of reducing coyote depredation of sea turtle nests for the 2026 sea turtle nesting season

BACKGROUND: SCCF Coastal Wildlife Biologist Jack Brzoza and City of Sanibel Conservation Officer Rachel Rainbolt will present data on sea turtle nest depredation by coyotes, the numerous strategies previously used to limit the rate of depredation, and a summary of predation management practices for coastal wildlife. With past strategies to protect sea turtle nests from predation no longer proving effective, SCCF, the City of Sanibel Natural Resources Department, and USFWS/J.N. "Ding" Darling National Wildlife Refuge, on behalf of the Sanibel Coyote Working Group (CWG), are recommending the implementation of a targeted lethal removal program to reduce the depredation rate for the 2026 sea turtle nesting season. The powerpoint presentation and work plan provided by USDA APHIS Wildlife Services (WS) are attached to the agenda.

FUNDING SOURCE: No expenditure of City funds. Federal funding to be requested through the Florida Predation Management Working Group.

RECOMMENDED ACTION:

1. Authorize the City Manager to execute an agreement with USDA-Wildlife Services to conduct a targeted lethal removal program for the purpose of reducing coyote depredation during the 2026 sea turtle nesting season.
 - Nighttime removal of sea turtle nest-predating coyotes utilizing suppressed firearms equipped with night vision & thermal imaging technology
 - Operations to be conducted from City and County-owned lands in the vicinity of Bowman's Beach Park, subject to approval by Lee County
 - Areas of highest depredation during the 2025 nesting season
 - Subject to available funding (~\$20,000); no expenditure of City funds

2. Approve a limited exception to Sec. 74-182 (17) of the Sanibel Code to permit the discharge of firearms within or on the beach dune for the sole purpose of conducting the proposed USDA-WS predation management activities for 2026.

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