

I have received numerous phone calls from EWA members about the posting of the final rule, the **April 4th** deadline and the future of the "Three Species". To keep our members up to date on the latest involving your association's position I hope the following will assist you in making decisions involving your ranch and your animals.

In finalizing the rule, the USFWS gave breeders 90 days or until **April 4th** to either legally dispose of their animals or apply for a permit. After meeting with Fish and Wildlife officials this past Friday we have now learned nothing has changed with the permit process. The same arduous process of obtaining a captive breeders permit and a take permit for other animals currently listed as endangered will also be applied to these three species.

All the rhetoric of helping the rancher and breeder with a much easier permitting process and something the ranchers would embrace was nothing more than governmental smoke and mirrors.

There are those in the industry that have sold their animals for pennies on the dollar and that is certainly your right as a small business operator. Now that we know what the process will be, what to do with your animals is a decision that you, as a small business person, have to decide for yourself and what is best for your ranch.

In an effort to help with that decision our members need to understand that this battle is far from being over. Your association, as well as several other powerful associations, refuse to admit defeat and are more committed than ever in taking this fight directly to the USFWS. Without going into specific details the legal battles have just begun. EWA attorneys as well as other association's attorneys are working diligently to stop this rule from being enforced.

There are also congressional leaders who have pledged their support ending this governmental madness once and for all. Your association has given the USFWS several remedies none of which they have used. Our legislative effort will remove these U.S. captive bred animals out of the control of the Federal Government and put them under the individual state's Agriculture Departments where they should have been all along.

This fight is not just about the "Three Species" but the next 20 animals the animal activists are targeting. As an association we cannot afford to allow anyone, especially our own government, to stifle or severely cripple our industry. Your EWA board and I refuse to simply give up and let a federal agency that has been overrun with environmentalist; restrict the private ownership of our livestock.

I will ask our membership these questions. Where do we draw the line? Are we, as an industry, going to keep accepting everything this government keeps trying to ram down our throats? There are so many others who are willing to accept whatever happens for the sake of political correctness, wring their hands and simply say there is nothing we can do. Your association refuses to accept this.

Folks, what we do as ranchers is morally and ethically right and we do not apologize to anyone, especially these animal rights activists and federal bureaucrats. It was not these ideologues or any federal regulation that saved these three species or any species for that matter, but was the private ownership of hard working men and women that brought them from near extinction to the thousands that exist today. I am asking our members to be patient and let the process we have in motion work. Your association and others are willing to stand up for what is right and fight these bureaucrats and animal activists to the end. It is just the right thing to do.

Charly Seale
Executive Director
Exotic Wildlife Association