April 27, 2020

Leslie Canyon National Wildlife Refuge

Attn: Assistant Manger

P.O. Box 3509

Douglas, AZ 85608

Re: Hunt Comments Leslie Canyon National Wildlife Refuge

Dear Ms. Harden,

Yuma Valley Rod & Gun Club (YVRGC) is a 501c-3 nonprofit organization dedicated to wildlife conservation, habitat restoration, youth recruitment, retention and educating activities and informing sportsmen and women on the issues important to their passions. YVRGC consists of 600+ organized members and is affiliated with Arizona Sportsman for Wildlife Conservation (AZSFWC) and Arizona Wildlife Federation (AWF).

YVRGC appreciates the opportunity to comment on the Leslie Canyon National Wildlife Refuge (LCNWR) draft Hunt Plan (HP), draft Compatibility Determination (CD) and draft Environmental Assessment (EA) dated January 2020. We concur the actions proposed in the draft EA and HP align with the goals and guiding principles of the Comprehensive Conservation Plan (CCP) and are compatible with the mission of the National Wildlife Refuge System (NWRS).

YVRGC supports the Proposed Action Alternative: Alternative B – Opening Hunting on LCNWR. Increased hunting opportunities on LCNWR will contribute to responsible and scientific management of wildlife located on the refuge. We believe the intent of Secretary of the Interior Order 3356 and Executive Order 13443 are reflected in Alternative B.

YVRGC recommends amending the draft EA and HP to include:

1. Further alignment with AZGFD hunt regulations and seasons to promote consistency and reduce accidental take of game.
2. Allowing the use of dogs for pursuit and recovery of migratory and upland game bird species: the effective recovery of downed game birds reduces the overall number game birds taken.

We commend the LCNWR staff for their close work with the Arizona Game and Fish Department (AZGFD). We believe the goals of each agency are largely aligned with the responsible and scientific management of Arizona’s wildlife. We also commend staff for recognizing these additional hunting opportunities and supporting their incorporation into the management strategy of the LCNWR.

Respectfully,

Patrick Headington

President