



Protect Colorado's wild cats from trophy hunting

Thousands of Colorado's wild cats, including mountain lions and bobcats, are killed every year for nothing more than a trophy or to sell their fur. It's time for this cruel and needless practice to end.

Trophy hunters needless kill thousands of Colorado's wild cats every year

In Colorado and across the western U.S., trophy hunting is the number one cause of death for mountain lions and bobcats. Thousands of these wild cats are killed every year in Colorado, simply for sport, trophy and bragging rights.

Trophy hunters kill about 500 mountain lions annually in Colorado. They often use hounds, a cruel practice that involves chasing a lion until the exhausted animal is cornered or treed, then shot and killed at close range.

Trophy hunters kill about 2,000 bobcats each year in Colorado, often using live traps (also known as "cage" or "box" traps). Bobcats are drawn into the trap by bait and are left suffering for hours until the hunter returns to kill them. Their furs are often sold on international markets.

Trophy hunting harms other wildlife and habitats

While trophy hunters knowingly kill thousands of wild cats each year in Colorado, an unknown number of kittens also die when their mothers are killed. When these kittens lose their mothers, they are left to die from starvation, dehydration or predation. If they manage to survive, they lack the basic life skills needed to fend for themselves and may end up in human communities or in livestock areas in search of food.

Traps set for bobcats are indiscriminate and often catch non-target wildlife, such as federally protected Canada lynx which look nearly identical to bobcats, as well as golden eagles, and even people's companion animals.

Wild cats are vital for maintaining the health and balance of their habitats and they boost biological diversity. We know that ecosystems are healthier when these animals are present in stable, resilient numbers. Trophy hunting removes these critical animals from our wild spaces, harming entire ecosystems.



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Most Coloradans oppose trophy hunting of wild cats

Statewide surveys show that the majority of Coloradans oppose the trophy hunting of mountain lions and bobcats, including a majority of hunters, livestock operators and people living throughout Colorado's West Slope.

Coloradans highly value these iconic, wild cats and want to see them protected. Most Coloradans support humanely reducing conflicts with native carnivores rather than allowing the ongoing trophy hunting of these animals.

Most Coloradans oppose the unnecessary killing of mountain lions in response to sightings and perceived "conflicts," and would prefer to see additional public education about coexisting with native carnivores.

In fact, the majority of Colorado's livestock operators oppose the trophy hunting of mountain lions and bobcats as a means of preventing conflicts with livestock.

Statewide surveys also show that most Coloradans support a ban on trapping because they see it as cruel and inhumane, and especially oppose trapping of wildlife for recreation, fur clothing or money. Even a 2019 survey sponsored by a pro-hunting group, the National Shooting Sports Foundation, found that most Westerners do not support the trapping of wildlife for recreation, fur or for profit.

Ending the trophy hunting of Colorado's wild cats upholds the values and interests of the public rather than appeasing the small segment of hunters who participate in this cruel and unnecessary practice.



Protecting wild cats protects people, pets and livestock

Research finds that the trophy hunting of wild cats is associated with increased conflicts with humans, pets and livestock. We can make our communities safer by ending the trophy hunting of wild cats and adopting commonsense, non-lethal strategies to prevent these issues from occurring in the first place.

Trophy hunting does not reduce incidents with wild cats because it is nonselective. Randomly killing these animals usually will not remove the individual cat involved. In fact, it will likely worsen matters by orphaning inexperienced kittens and opening territories to subadults or "teenagers" who are more prone to conflicts.

Wild cats kill few livestock and most of these incidents are preventable. Livestock producers can use a range of non-lethal strategies to better coexist with the cats, including prompt livestock carcass removal, lights, air horns, range riders and livestock pens.

Colorado's wild cats are worth far more alive than dead

Colorado's wild cats have significant ecotourism value and trophy hunting only diminishes this benefit to our economy. Wildlife watching activities generate triple the amount of money for Colorado's economy compared to hunting revenue, which comes primarily from deer and elk rather than wild cats.

A study found that one bobcat in Yellowstone National Park generated \$308,105, a figure 1,000 times greater than their pelt price of \$315. That bobcat supported photographers, wildlife-watching guides and hospitality services.

Yet, trophy hunting of wild cats makes up a drop in the bucket for Colorado Parks and Wildlife's (CPW) annual budget. In 2019, CPW generated more than \$230 million in funds, with only about 0.1% of this from mountain lion license sales.

Small game and furbearer license sales, which cover more than 30 different species, generated \$15 million for CPW in 2019. Hunting of bobcats likely accounts for a miniscule portion of these funds.



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