

PROJECT COYOTE

F O S T E R I N G C O E X I S T E N C E



Statement in Support of SB32—Wildlife Conservation & Public Safety Act

On behalf of Project Coyote Science’s New Mexico supporters, Advisory Board members and the undersigned, we express our support for SB32, also known as Roxy’s Law, to ban trapping on public lands in New Mexico. We support the prohibition of lethal trapping of wildlife for the purposes of recreation, commerce and nuisance/damage control. The signatories are scientists and ethicists who have looked at both types of evidence and arguments. We oppose trapping for those purposes, based on the following three premises:

—No method of killing an animal by trapping for recreation, commerce, or nuisance/damage control can avoid inflicting some level of pain and suffering, even if brief, before death.

—No method of killing an animal by trapping for recreation, commerce, or nuisance/damage control can avoid the potential of capturing, with the risk of injuring or killing, non-target animals.

—No method of killing animals by trapping for recreation, commerce, or nuisance/damage control can be supported by credible scientific data or evidence as serving a legitimate wildlife management or conservation objective that cannot be accomplished with more humane alternatives.

Our responsibility to mitigate the prolonged pain and suffering of target animals and decrease the risk of anthropogenic deaths to non-target animals (i.e., the claims of these nonhuman animals to life and well-being) trumps human claims to trapping for recreation, commerce, and nuisance/damage control. Because trapping with lethal intent using devices such as leghold and Conibear body-gripping traps and snares is inherently indiscriminate and can result in prolonged pain and suffering before death, we conclude that lethal trapping for recreation, commerce, and nuisance/damage control is not justified. Trapped animals can experience extreme stress, dehydration, hunger, panic-induced self-mutilation, exposure to weather, permanent physical damage (particularly loss of limbs), and predation—all of which constitute more than fleeting pain and suffering before death.

The high probability of indiscriminate trapping by unsupervised sport, commercial, and nuisance trappers combines with inadequate regulation and enforcement to generate unacceptable risks to companion animals, imperiled wildlife, and other non-target animals. Because of competing financial and non-financial interests in the animal-trapping community, we warn against policies for self-policing and voluntary enforcement of regulations protecting non-target animals. Authorized trapping of coyotes, foxes, bobcats and other species can threaten the recovery of imperiled species such as gray wolves and Canada lynx.

We are also opposed to lethal trapping when the objective is to control populations of mammalian predators. There is no credible evidence that trapping effectively manages populations of predators or their prey species. Most traps—and specifically their settings, lures or attractants—attract multiple non-target species, and therefore unsupervised trapping that is characteristic of recreational, commercial, and control trapping has the potential to indiscriminately catch, maim, and kill non-target animals including domestic dogs, imperiled species, and animals of the unintended sex, age class, or species. Science demonstrates that unexploited wolf and coyote populations self-regulate through dominant individuals defending territories and suppressing successful breeding in subordinate pack members. Killing an adult male cougar opens his territory to younger males and invites increased predation on native ungulates and livestock as a result. Additionally, a large body of science indicates that killing predators at the exploitation levels achieved by trapping does not reliably increase ungulate abundance. Factors such as habitat and climate are much stronger determinants of ungulate abundance.

The principles of wildlife management, and any sound evidence-based policy, require that the best-available science be paramount in determining whether the stated objectives of a management strategy achieve the desired outcomes. Because lethal trapping for recreation, commerce, nuisance, and population control is indiscriminate and ineffective at meeting wildlife management or conservation objectives, and cannot avoid unnecessary pain before death, such trapping should be prohibited. Instead, we recommend identifying and following principles for ethical management of human-wildlife interactions. We accept humanely managed and properly permitted scientific trapping when such programs are vetted and approved by institutional animal care and use committees.

David Parsons, MS

Carnivore Conservation Biologist, Rewilding Institute
Science Advisory Board, Project Coyote
Albuquerque, NM, USA

Adrian Treves, PhD

Associate Professor, University of Wisconsin-Madison
Science Advisory Board, Project Coyote
Madison, WI, USA

Bradley J. Bergstrom, PhD

Professor of Biology, Valdosta State University
Science Advisory Board, Project Coyote
Valdosta, GA, USA

Paul Paquet, PhD

Senior Scientist Carnivore Specialist, Raincoast Conservation Foundation
Science Advisory Board, Project Coyote
Meacham, Saskatchewan, Canada

George Wuerthner, MS

Oregon Director, Western Watershed Project
Science Advisory Board, Project Coyote
Bend, OR, USA

Marc Bekoff, PhD

Professor Emeritus of Ecology and Evolutionary Biology, University of Colorado-Boulder
Science Advisory Board, Project Coyote
Boulder, CO, USA

Chris Mowry, PhD

Associate Professor of Biology, Berry College
Science Advisory Board, Project Coyote
Mt. Berry, GA, USA

Michelle L. Lute, PhD

National Carnivore Conservation Manager, Project Coyote
Santa Fe, NM, USA

Rick A. Hopkins, PhD

Senior Conservation Biologist, Live Oak Associates, Inc.
Science Advisory Board, Project Coyote
San Jose, CA, USA

Shelley M. Alexander, PhD

Professor, University of Calgary
Science Advisory Board, Project Coyote
Calgary, Alberta, Canada

Jennifer Wolch, PhD

Dean - College of Environmental Design, University of California-Berkeley
Science Advisory Board, Project Coyote
Berkeley, CA, USA

Brad Purcell, PhD

Dingo ecologist
Science Advisory Board, Project Coyote
Penrith, New South Wales, Australia

References

- Andreasen, A.M., Stewart, K.M., Sedinger, J.S., Lackey, C.W. and Beckmann, J.P., 2018. Survival of cougars caught in non-target foothold traps and snares. *The Journal of Wildlife Management*, 82(5), 906-917.
- Armstrong, J. B., & Rossi, A. N. (2000). Status of avocational trapping based on the perspectives of state furbearer biologists. *Wildlife Society Bulletin*, 28(4), 825- 832.
- Artelle, K.A., Reynolds, J.D., Treves, A., Walsh, J.C., Paquet, P.C. & Darimont, C.T. (2018). Hallmarks of science missing from North American wildlife management. *Science Advances*, 4, eaao0167.
- Brainerd, S. M., Andrén, H., Bangs, E. E., Bradley, E. H., Fontaine, J. A., Hall, W. & Wydeven, A. P. (2008). The effects of breeder loss on wolves. *The Journal of Wildlife Management*, 72(1), 89-98.
- Collins, G.H., R. B. Wielgus, And G. M. Koehler. (2002). Effects of sex and age on American black bear conifer damage and control. *Ursus* 13:231–236.
- Connolly, G. E., and W. M. Longhurst. (1975). The effects of control on coyote populations: A simulation model. Division Agricultural Science, University of California, Davis, Bulletin 1872.
- Cooley, H.S., Wielgus, R.B., Koehler, G.M., Robinson, H.S. & Maletzke, B.T. (2009) Does hunting regulate cougar populations? A test of the compensatory mortality hypothesis. *Ecology*, 90, 2913–2921.
- Côté, S. D., Rooney, T. P., Tremblay, J. P., Dussault, C., & Waller, D. M. (2004). Ecological impacts of deer overabundance. *Annual Review of Ecology, Evolution, and Systematics*, 113-147.
- Coulson, T., Milner–Gulland, E. J., & Clutton–Brock, T. (2000). The relative roles of density and climatic variation on population dynamics and fecundity rates in three contrasting ungulate species. *Proceedings of the Royal Society of London. Series B: Biological Sciences*, 267(1454), 1771-1779.
- Crabtree, R. L., and J. W. Sheldon. (1999). Coyotes and canid coexistence. In *Carnivores in ecosystems: The Yellowstone experience*, ed. T. W. Clark et al., 127–163. New Haven: Yale University Press.
- Creel, B.S., Becker, M., Christianson, D., Dröge, E., Hayward, M.W., Loveridge, A., et al. (2015) Questionable policy for large carnivore hunting. *Science*, 350, 1473–1475.
- Dubois, S., Fenwick, N., Ryan, E.A., Baker, L., Baker, S.E., Beausoleil, N.J., et al. (2017) International consensus principles for ethical wildlife control, *Conservation Biology* 31, 753–760.
- Elbroch, L.M. & Fitzgerald, J. (2017). Contrasting bobcat values. *Biodiversity and Conservation*, 26, 2987–2992.
- Forchhammer, M. C., Stenseth, N. C., Post, E., & Landvatn, R. (1998). Population dynamics of Norwegian red deer: density–dependence and climatic variation. *Proceedings of the Royal Society of London. Series B: Biological Sciences*, 265(1393), 341-350.
- Gipson P.S. (1975). Efficiency of trapping in capturing offending coyotes. *Wildlife Management* 39, 45-47.

Guthery, F.S. and Beasom, S.L., 1978. Effectiveness and selectivity of neck snares in predator control. *The Journal of Wildlife Management*, 42(2), 457-459.

Haber, G. C. (1996). Biological, conservation, and ethical implications of exploiting and controlling wolves. *Conservation Biology* 10:1068-1081.

Iossa, G., Soulsbury, C.D., and Harris, S. 2007. Mammal trapping: A review of animal welfare standards of silling and restraining traps. *Animal Welfare* 16:335-352.

Kreeger, T. J., P. J. White, U. S. Seal, and J. R. Tester. 1990. Pathological responses of red foxes to foothold traps. *Journal of Wildlife Management* 54:147–160.

Kuehn, D. W., T. K. Fuller, L. D. Mech, J. P. William, S. H. Fritts, and W. E. Berg. 1986. Trap-related injuries to gray wolves in Minnesota. *Journal of Wildlife Management* 50:90–91.

Manfredo, M.J., Pierce, C.L., Fulton, D., Pate, J. & Gill, B.R. (1999). Public Acceptance of Wildlife Trapping in Colorado. *Wildlife Society Bulletin*, 27, 499–508.

Manfredo, M. J., Sullivan, L., Don Carlos, A. W., Dietsch, A. M., Teel, T. L., Bright, A. D., & Bruskotter, J. (2018). America's Wildlife Values: The Social Context of Wildlife Management in the U.S. National report from the research project entitled "America's Wildlife Values". Fort Collins, CO: Colorado State University, Department of Human Dimensions of Natural Resources.

Muth, R.M., Zwick, R.R., Mather, M.E., Organ, J.F., Daigle, J.J. & Jonker, S.A. (2006) Unnecessary Source of Pain and Suffering or Necessary Management Tool: Attitudes of Conservation Professionals Toward Outlawing Leghold Traps. *Wildlife Society Bulletin*, 34, 706–715.

National Shooting Sports Foundation and Responsive Management. (2019). Americans Attitudes Toward Hunting, Fishing, Sport Shooting and Trapping. Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies.

Olsen, G. H., S. B. Linhart, R. A. Holmes, G. J. Dasch, and C. B. Male. 1986. Injuries to coyotes caught in padded and unpadded steel foothold traps. *Wildlife Society Bulletin* 14:219–223.

Parker, K. L., Barboza, P. S., & Gillingham, M. P. (2009). Nutrition integrates environmental responses of ungulates. *Functional Ecology*, 23(1), 57-69.

Peebles, K.A., Wielgus, R.B., Maletzke, B.T. & Swanson, M.E. (2013) Effects of remedial sport hunting on cougar complaints and livestock depredations. *PLoS ONE*, 8, e79713.

Phillips, R.L., 1996. Evaluation of 3 types of snares for capturing coyotes. *Wildlife Society Bulletin*, 107-110.

Proulx, G., Rodtka, D., Barrett, M.W., Cattet, M., Dekker, D., Moffatt, E. and Powell, R.A., 2015. Humaneness and selectivity of killing neck snares used to capture canids in Canada: A review. *Can. Wildl. Biol. Manag*, 4, 55-65.

Proulx, G., Barrett, M.W., Buskirk, S.W., Harestad, A.S., Raphael, M.G. and Powell, R.A., 1994. Ethical considerations in the selection of traps to harvest martens and fishers. *Martens, sables and fishers: biology and conservation* (SW Buskirk, AS Harestad, MG Raphael, and RA Powell, eds.). Cornell University Press, Ithaca, New York, 192-196.

Ritchie EG, Elmhagen B, Glen AS, Letnic M, Ludwig G, McDonald RA. (2012). Ecosystem restoration with teeth: what role for predators? In: Trends Ecol. Evol. 27(5):265-271.

Rochlitz, I., Pearce, G.P. and Broom, D.M., 2010. The impact of snares on animal welfare. Onekind Report on Snaring, Centre for Animal Welfare and Anthrozoology. Cambridge University Animal Welfare Information Service, 1-31.

Sacks B.N., Blejwas K.M., Jaeger M.M. (1999a). Relative vulnerability of coyotes to removal methods on a northern California ranch. J Wildl Manage 63, 939-949;

Sæther, B. E. (1997). Environmental stochasticity and population dynamics of large herbivores: a search for mechanisms. Trends in Ecology & Evolution, 12(4), 143-149.

Shivik, J.A. and Gruver, K.S., 2002. Animal attendance at coyote trap sites in Texas. Wildlife Society Bulletin, pp.502-507.

Treves A., Naughton-Treves L. (2005). Evaluating lethal control in the management of human-wildlife conflict. pp. 86-106 in R. Woodroffe, S. Thirgood, A. Rabinowitz editors. People and Wildlife, Conflict or Coexistence. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, UK.

Treves, A., K. J. Kapp, And D. Macfarland. (2010). American black bear nuisance complaints and hunter take. Ursus 21:30–42. doi: 10.2192/09gr012.1

Vucetich, J. A., Smith, D. W., & Stahler, D. R. (2005). Influence of harvest, climate and wolf predation on Yellowstone elk, 1961-2004. Oikos, 111(2), 259-270.

White, H. B., G. Batcheller, E. K. Boggess, C. L. Brown, J. W. Butfiloski, T. A. Decker, J. D. Erb,, M. W. Fall, D. A. Hamilton, T. L. Hiller, G. F. Hubert Jr., M. J. Lovallo, J. F. Olson, and N. M. Roberts. 2020. Best management practices for trapping furbearers in the United States. Wildlife Monographs 207:3-59.

Wielgus, R.B. & Peebles, K.A. (2014) Effects of Wolf Mortality on Livestock Depredations. PLoS ONE, 9, e113505.

Wilmers, C. C., Post, E., Peterson, R. O., & Vucetich, J. A. (2006). Predator disease outbreak modulates top-down, bottom-up and climatic effects on herbivore population dynamics. Ecology Letters, 9(4), 383-389.

Zuardo, T. 2017. How the United States was able to dodge international reforms designed to make wildlife trapping less cruel. Journal of International Wildlife Law and Policy. 20:73-95.