

A photograph of a wolf standing on a log in a forest. The wolf has a mix of grey, brown, and white fur and is looking to the left. The background is a dense forest with green and yellow foliage.

Ending Trophy Hunting

A guide to end the trophy hunting of
native carnivores in your state



THE HUMANE SOCIETY
OF THE UNITED STATES

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How to use this guide

Every year thousands of native carnivores—namely, wolves, bears, mountain lions and bobcats—are killed in this country solely to obtain a “trophy” to hang on a wall, throw on the floor or pose in a room. This guide provides the tools to help end or reduce this cruel practice in your state.

The killing of Cecil—a magnificent black-maned African lion who was lured out of a national park in Zimbabwe and shot by a wealthy American dentist—sparked global outrage over trophy hunting. The Humane Society of the United States took the lead in informing Americans that trophy hunters kill thousands of wildlife yearly, right here within our own borders, and that American hunters are also importing trophies into the country at an alarming rate.

Fortunately, citizens like you can help stop the trophy hunting of native carnivores in your state. There are three main components to putting an end to trophy hunting of native carnivores in your state:

1. Raising public awareness.
2. Passing laws to restrict trophy hunting of native carnivores (such as targeting the methods used, reducing the number of animals killed, or reducing the species killed).
3. Passing laws to ban trophy hunting of native carnivores.

Here’s how this guide will help you get started.

- **Learn about the issue:** This guide provides an overview of trophy hunting of native carnivores and what’s being done to stop the practice.
- **Gather information:** This guide provides a list of questions to ask yourself regarding trophy hunting in your state and includes advice on reaching out to the Humane Society of the United States for help building a coalition and finding out about the opposition.
- **Take action:** This section provides an overview of the three main methods for combatting trophy hunting: raising public awareness, passing laws to restrict trophy hunting, and passing laws that ban trophy hunting.
- **Sample documents:** You can adapt these sample documents to the issues in your community. We’ve included sample letters to the editor, op-eds, letters to sponsors and hosts, tweets, Facebook posts, a share graphic, fact sheets, testimony and letters to lawmakers. Native carnivores commonly trophy hunted in this country include mountain lions, bears, wolves and bobcats, so we’ve included sample documents for each of these species, as well as trophy hunting in general. You can adapt the documents for whichever species are trophy hunted in your state.
- **Useful documents:** The guide includes sample fact sheets on trophy hunting s. Share them on social media or with lawmakers, event sponsors, media outlets and others.

For assistance, contact wildlife@humanesociety.org.

Learn about the issue

WHAT IS TROPHY HUNTING?

Trophy hunting is a hunt where the primary motivation is to obtain animal parts (e.g., heads, hides or claws and even whole stuffed bodies) for display and for bragging rights. Trophy hunters often pose with the dead animal for a portrait, such as for social media. Trophy hunters are not primarily motivated by subsistence (i.e., putting food on the table.)

THE FACTS ABOUT TROPHY HUNTING

It's a widespread problem.

When Cecil the lion was killed in Africa, the issue of trophy hunting received international condemnation. Yet in the U.S., the level of outrage is comparatively muted even though most of the world's trophy hunters are American. That's why we need you to act!

More than 100,000 of America's native carnivores, such as black bears, grizzly bears, wolves, mountain lions (also known as cougars) and bobcats are killed by trophy hunters and trappers every year in the U.S.

Even species whose populations were so low they were given federal protections under the Endangered Species Act (e.g., Northern Rocky Mountain wolves and grizzly bears) are targeted by trophy hunters as soon as those protections are removed, and states gain management control.

Highly sentient and family-oriented carnivores need protection, not persecution.

Like humans, large-bodied carnivores have few offspring and provide extended parental care to them. Black bears and mountain lions keep their young with them for up to two years and grizzly bears up to four. Trophy hunting disrupts the social stability of native carnivores, which can impact their populations beyond the individual animals killed.

The death of one animal by trophy hunters can indirectly cause the deaths of other individuals. Yet states never account for these added mortalities—including pup, kitten or cub orphaning and their

subsequent deaths—in their hunting quotas (the number of animals that states permit to be killed each season/year).

It relies on cruel and unsporting hunting methods.

Trophy hunting relies heavily on the most unfair, cruel methods, including baiting, hound hunting and trapping. These methods violate the tradition of fair chase hunting and give trophy hunters, who already have the edge over their quarry, additional unfair and unsporting advantages.



BRIAN ATKINSON/ALAMY STOCK PHOTO

Baiting involves the intensive feeding of wild animals to make them easy targets for trophy hunters waiting in a nearby blind. Bait is typically comprised of unhealthy foods, such as fatty pastries rich in processed sugar or even toxins from theobromines (caffeine found in chocolate). Spoiled bait can be

toxic and fatal to native carnivores, other wildlife and pets.

Baiting also creates additional ethical issues with bears. Bait piles can draw mother bears; if they are killed, their cubs may be orphaned.

Hound hunting involves hunters and guides using packs of radio-collared hounds to pursue targeted trophy animals until the exhausted, frightened animals seek refuge in a tree—where they are shot—or turn to fight the hounds. Hound hunting results in injuries or death to targeted trophy animals, their young, and the hounds.

Trapping involves setting body-gripping traps or wire snares that hold trophy animals until the hunter returns to shoot them. Targeted trophy animals—as well as family pets and other nontarget animals—languish in these devices for hours and even days, sometimes suffering painful injuries, dehydration, starvation and exposure before they die or are killed.

Trophy hunting disrupts social stability.

Trophy hunters typically target the largest and most impressive animals to kill, tearing apart stable family units and leaving inexperienced juvenile animals in their place. For example, when an adult male mountain lion is killed by a trophy hunter, his vacancy draws a bevy of young males who kill the previous male's kittens or even the adult male's resident females. If an alpha pair of wolves is killed, the pack may dissolve, leaving pups or yearling wolves to languish. Studies show that this can lead to increased conflicts with people.

And by removing the largest and fittest animals from a population, trophy hunters may be downgrading genetic traits that animals require for survival.

Agencies manage wildlife in the dark,

State wildlife agencies, the entities that pass and maintain trophy-hunting regulations, rarely have good population estimates or trends for native carnivores because these wildlife species avoid humans and are expensive to study. However, even lacking good information, agencies still permit excessive levels of trophy hunting.

Even in states that do have population estimates, the best available science is often ignored in favor of trophy hunting. Quotas are often set above what

research indicates would be sustainable. For example, a 10-year study on mountain lions conducted by Colorado Parks and Wildlife showed that killing 11% to 14% of the population was sustainable. However, ignoring its own research, the agency proposed a statewide quota of 647 mountain lions in its 2019-2020 hunting season—21.5% to 27.6% of the mature population—substantially exceeding its own calculations for a sustainable killing rate.

Taxpayers subsidize trophy hunting.

Wildlife need healthy habitats and freedom to roam. The best habitats in the U.S. are often located on public lands, which are funded by all taxpayers.

Although state wildlife agencies obtain funds from the sale of hunting and fishing licenses, federal funds aid these agencies as well. For example, the Pittman-Robertson Wildlife Restoration Act imposes an 11% excise tax on firearms and ammunition sold in the U.S., which is put into a fund from which federal agency staff (whose positions are funded by all taxpayers) manage grants to state agencies.

Thus, trophy hunters—a minority fringe group—are highly subsidized by American taxpayers, as they are the ones who primarily pay for the conservation and maintenance of wildlife habitat.

Baseless myths don't justify trophy hunting.

Trophy hunters frequently claim that native carnivores need to be “managed” by vilifying these sentient and familial animals as voracious livestock predators. However, scientific studies have shown that trophy hunting actually *increases* conflicts with humans, livestock and pets.

Misplaced fears often drive people to conduct “predator control,” a euphemism for the killing of native carnivores. It's often carried out by state and federal agencies under the guise of protecting livestock or prey populations.

However, a [recent look](#) at livestock depredations in the United States showed that cougars, grizzly bears and wolves actually kill very few cattle and sheep. Even though the most recent data published by the U.S. Department of Agriculture-Animal and Plant

Health Inspection Service (USDA) was highly exaggerated (when compared with data collected by states and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service), the agency still found that grizzly bears, wolves and cougars cause the loss of far fewer than 1% of cattle—calf or sheep. Their data show that farmers and ranchers lose nine times more cattle and sheep to health, weather, birthing and theft problems than to all predators combined.

Furthermore, the best available science indicates that killing native carnivores does not boost deer and other prey populations. Numerous recent studies demonstrate that predator removal actions “generally had no effect” in the long term on ungulate (such as deer) populations.¹ For example, predator control programs targeting wolves in Alaska failed to bolster ungulates because killing wolves released other, smaller carnivores who preyed on fawns. In another Alaska study, a caribou herd grew beyond the land’s carrying capacity, leaving them to starve. Because ecological systems are complex, trophy hunting native carnivores fails to address the underlying environmental issues—such as habitat loss, loss of migration corridors and inadequate nutrition—that impact prey populations.

Native carnivores typically go out of their way to avoid humans. Negative conflicts are often a consequence of trophy hunting itself due to the breaking up of stable family units.

Trophy hunting is counterproductive to sound wildlife management.

All species—especially apex native carnivores—play a vital role in healthy ecosystems. Through their feeding behaviors, top carnivores drive changes through all the layers in the ecosystem, called a “trophic cascade.”

With the loss of top carnivores, biologists warn we will see more pandemics, dysfunctional ecosystems

and accelerated increases in climate change. In fact, some wildlife biologists worry that the loss of carnivores will cause dire outcomes akin to climate changes. Trophy hunting these animals has negative ripple effects throughout our natural landscapes. Their protection is vital to ensuring our wild spaces are biologically diverse and healthy. Wolves, wild cats and their prey have co-evolved for eons, making prey animals healthier and less likely to die from mass starvation or disease. For example, wild carnivores selectively remove deer suffering from chronic wasting disease, keeping herds healthier.

Trophy hunting is out of step with modern values.

Killing these remarkable, rare and ecologically vital animals for recreation is no longer an acceptable practice to the majority of Americans. According to a recent nationwide Remington Research Group [poll](#), 69% of Americans say they oppose trophy hunting, including 79% of Democrats, 61% of Republicans, and 67% of non-partisan voters.

A 2018 study, led by Michael Manfredo, measured wildlife values across America. Manfredo et al. (2018) found that increasingly, Americans no longer identify with the utilitarian aspects of wildlife recreation (e.g., hunting and trapping). More than ever, Americans instead identify themselves as “mutualists,” meaning that they believe humans and wildlife should live in harmony together. According to data from the National Park Service and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, wildlife watchers—now numbering 86 million in America—contribute billions of dollars to local economies each year, far outspending trophy hunters.²

¹ Forrester, T. D., and H. U. Wittmer. 2013. A review of the population dynamics of mule deer and black-tailed deer *Odocoileus hemionus* in North America. *Mammal Review* 43:292-308., Lennox, R. J., A. J. Gallagher, S. Cooke, and E. G. Ritchie. 2018. Evaluating the efficacy of predator removal in a conflict-prone world. *Biological Conservation* 224:277–289.

²U.S. Department of the Interior, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and U.S. Department of Commerce, U.S. Census Bureau. 2016 National Survey of Fishing, Hunting, and Wildlife-Associated Recreation.

Gather additional information

To be an effective advocate, you must be able to speak with authority about trophy hunting and how it impacts your state's ecosystem.

REACH OUT TO THE HUMANE SOCIETY OF THE UNITED STATES

The experts at the Humane Society of the United States can provide you with information about trophy hunting in your state and information about any efforts to prohibit or restrict the practice. We will also give you guidance on addressing this issue in your state. Email us at wildlife@humanesociety.org.

DO YOUR RESEARCH

Conduct a simple internet search to find answers to the following questions about trophy hunting in your state.

Numbers

- What are the quotas (maximum number of animals allowed to be killed) for bears/mountain lions/bobcats/wolves in my state every year?
- How many bears/mountain lions/bobcats/wolves are killed (“harvested”) in my state every year?
- What are the estimated populations of bears/mountain lions/bobcats/wolves in my state?
- How many hunters bought permits (or tags, licenses, etc.) to hunt or trap native carnivores in my state?

Methods

- Is hound hunting allowed to kill bears/mountain lions/bobcats/wolves in my state?
- Is baiting allowed to kill bears/mountain lions/bobcats/wolves in my state?
- Is trapping allowed to kill bears/mountain lions/bobcats/wolves in my state?

Statutes vs. Agency Rules

- Are the hunting laws regulating the killing of bears/mountain lions/bobcats/wolves found under state statute or under my state's wildlife agency rules/regulations?

Reasoning

- What are the main justifications for trophy hunting and predator control of native carnivores in my state? For example: livestock protection, public safety, growing deer or other prey herds?



TWILDLIFE/ISTOCKPHOTO

IDENTIFY LOCAL ADVOCATES AND ORGANIZATIONS WHO CAN HELP

Developing a broad base of support will greatly increase the chances of ending or restricting trophy hunting in your state. Potential allies may be all around you. Look first in the most likely places: your family, friends and neighbors, as well as animal and environmental advocates that you know. Many fair chase hunters also oppose trophy hunting because ethical hunters object to the egregious methods that are used to target native carnivores. Hunters may become a powerful ally.

Next, research other groups in your city, county and state that may support efforts to end trophy hunting. Look for local humane societies, animal shelters, law enforcement officers, veterinarians, zoos accredited by the Association of Zoos and Aquariums (AZA), wildlife rehabilitation organizations, wildlife sanctuaries accredited by the Global Federation of Animal Sanctuaries (GFAS), civic groups, wildlife experts, people who are outspoken on animal issues and well-known and/or influential individuals.

KNOW YOUR OPPOSITION

It is essential that you become knowledgeable about the people and entities that will oppose your efforts. You should identify the major players who promote trophy hunting in your state and understand their potential objections to your proposal. By understanding their arguments, you can present well-thought-out counterarguments. This information will help when you go before the legislative or regulatory body, the media and others to talk about the importance of the policy reform or action you are proposing and why your viewpoint should be adopted over the opposition's. Make sure you are well-versed on all the arguments as to why trophy hunting is unnecessary, scientifically unsound, and harmful to wildlife, the environment and the public.



DESIGN PICS INC/ALAMY STOCK PHOTO

Take action

Once you've armed yourself with knowledge about trophy hunting in your state, you're ready to take action.

The two critical elements for fighting to end trophy hunting in your state are:

1. **Raising public awareness:** A surprisingly large number of people are shocked to learn that trophy hunting of native carnivores is a common occurrence in their state, particularly the use of egregious methods (e.g., baiting). Public outrage drives change for animals, and you can help spread the word using conventional and social media, or by passing local resolutions opposing trophy hunting.
2. **Passing laws that ban or restrict trophy hunting:** The ultimate goal is to end trophy hunting of native carnivores in your state. You may be able to pass laws that completely ban trophy hunting or that ban particular methods—such as hound hunting, baiting or trapping—through state legislation (passed by the state legislature) or state regulations (generally passed by state wildlife agencies).

Raising public awareness

Most citizens are unaware that thousands of native carnivores fall victim to trophy hunters every year and are appalled to learn that this killing may be taking place in their community. Educating the public is key to ending these cruel practices. Use the media, social media, local resolutions and public events to spread the message.

THE IMPORTANCE OF AN “ASK”: Whenever you reach out to the public, you should always include an “ask”—a specific action that the public can take.

Examples of “asks” include asking people to:

- Contact their city or county council member to ask them to introduce or support a resolution that bans or restricts trophy hunting.
- Contact their state lawmaker to ask them to introduce or support legislation that bans or restricts trophy hunting.

- Contact their state wildlife agency to ask them to pass a regulation that bans or restricts trophy hunting.
- Contact their governor and ask him/her to support efforts to ban or restrict trophy hunting.

SUBMIT LETTERS TO THE EDITOR OF YOUR LOCAL PAPER

Letters to the editor are an important tool for influencing public opinion. Not only is the opinion page one of the most widely read sections of a newspaper, but lawmakers frequently read it to gauge the interest of their constituents on a variety of matters. The more letters submitted to the same publication that express similar viewpoints, the greater the likelihood that one or more letters will be published, so encourage others to write as well. Editors may also recognize trophy hunting as an important issue to readers and decide to cover it themselves.

The average letter to the editor is only about five or six sentences, or about 150-250 words—keep it short and direct. Most papers publicize their word count limit in the opinion section. Your main point (i.e., trophy hunting is cruel, unnecessary and not supported by science) should be clearly stated in the beginning of the letter to grab the reader's attention. Don't forget to include an “ask” (i.e., the action you want readers to take after reading your letter). Timing is also important, so submit your letter prior to key legislative or regulatory actions, or before the start of a trophy hunting season. This guide contains a few examples of letters to the editor that you can adapt for your needs, and [here](#) are some tips on writing and submitting letters.

SUBMIT AN OPINION PIECE TO YOUR LOCAL PAPER

Opinion editorial pieces (commonly known as “op-eds”) are similar to letters, but they are longer and provide more context regarding a particular issue. While letters to the editor may be around 250 words

or fewer, for an op-ed aim for between 500 and 800 words. Media outlets are more likely to publish op-eds written by individuals who have authority on a particular issue or are seen as a leader in their community. Outline your stake in the issue—are you a business owner, veterinarian, wildlife rehabilitator, animal shelter or rescue worker or volunteer, scientist, member of academia, hunter, hiker, wildlife watcher, or parent, school or community association concerned with animal welfare, the environment or public safety? Say so! Your main point (i.e., trophy hunting is cruel, unnecessary and not supported by science) should be clearly stated at the beginning of the op-ed to grab the reader’s attention. Don’t forget to include an “ask” (i.e., the action you want readers to take after reading your op-ed). Timing is also important, so submit your letter prior to key legislative or regulatory actions, or before the start of a trophy hunting season.

SPREAD THE WORD ON SOCIAL MEDIA

Engage your network on social media to help combat trophy hunting. Inform them of important legislative actions and ask them to get involved by submitting letters to the editor and joining your coalition. Social media is a great way to find like-minded individuals who will help you in your mission! Our guide includes a sample share graphic, tweets and Facebook posts.

ATTEND LOCAL WILDLIFE AGENCY/COMMISSION MEETINGS

A good way to raise awareness is to attend a wildlife agency meeting where decision-making officials are present—particularly if there is an item related to trophy hunting (or trophy-hunted species) on the agenda. Meetings typically include an opportunity to present public comment or ask a question. This is an ideal opportunity to discuss why trophy hunting should be prohibited and put the issue right before the decision-makers for comment.

ATTEND A TOWN HALL MEETING IN YOUR COMMUNITY

You can also attend a town hall meeting where your local elected official(s), state or federal officials, or other lawmaker(s) will be present. Typically, these meetings include an opportunity to present public comment or ask a question. This is an ideal opportunity to discuss why trophy hunting should be

prohibited and put the issue right before the decision-makers for comment.

ORGANIZE A PUBLIC EDUCATION EVENT IN YOUR COMMUNITY

If you have a strong grasp on the issue and how it impacts your state, consider hosting a public event to educate fellow citizens and encourage them to take action. You’ll want to invite key stakeholders to co-host, speak at or attend the event, including local elected officials or state lawmakers. Reach out to the Humane Society of the United States for guidance at wildlife@humanesociety.org.



KENNETH R. WHITTEN

Passing stronger laws that ban trophy hunting, and defending existing bans

You can make long-lasting change by passing laws that prohibit or restrict trophy hunting, defending existing bans, or fighting laws that would expand trophy hunting. These laws might address trophy hunting of native carnivores in general or they might address specific methods of hunting, depending on your state’s existing legal framework. For example, in 2018, the Humane Society of the United States defeated legislation to open a bear trophy hunting season in Connecticut and bobcat hunting and trapping seasons in Indiana and Ohio.

An animal's strongest advocate to influence and change laws is you. As a constituent, you have the most power to influence your local and state officials.

You just need patience, commitment and the determination to communicate with those who represent you on the local and/or state level.



ERIC FAULKNOR/ISTOCKPHOTO

There are three main avenues for securing resolutions opposing trophy hunting or laws that ban or restrict trophy hunting:

1. **Local governing body:** These entities can pass resolutions—formal expressions of opinion or intention. Although they are not binding, local resolutions can serve as building blocks for statewide legislation.
2. **State legislature:** State legislatures generally have broad authority to pass laws regulating the taking (killing) of fish and wildlife within the state. In 2012, the California state legislature passed a law that prohibited the use of hounds to hunt bears and bobcats.
3. **State wildlife management agency:** A state's wildlife management agency typically has the power, granted to them by the state's legislature or the state's constitution, to regulate the hunting of fish and wildlife within the state. Most state wildlife management agencies have the power to pass regulations restricting trophy hunting—as the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation

Commission did in 2017 when it tabled a proposed bear hunt for two years.

The following information will help get you started on creating policy changes on the state and local levels.

WORK WITH YOUR LOCAL OFFICIALS TO PASS A RESOLUTION IN YOUR COMMUNITY

You've already done all your research on trophy hunting in your state—now put that knowledge into action! Because trophy hunting of native carnivores is typically allowed either via state legislation or state regulation, cities and counties cannot pass restrictive ordinances. However, you can still make a significant difference locally by getting your city or town to pass a resolution against trophy hunting of native carnivores. Here are some suggested action steps:

Prepare your materials

Convert your research into concise fact sheets. You will need a short (no more than one or two pages) fact sheet explaining the problem and why a

resolution is needed. Include general information as well as species-specific information about trophy hunting in your state. This guide contains sample fact sheets that you can adapt for your needs.

Learn the process

The process for enacting a resolution varies around the country, so take the time to become familiar with how things work in your community. An official or employee in your local government may be able to help you. Attend a few meetings of the governing body you hope to influence. Listen to the kinds of questions they ask and the issues they take most seriously. By understanding their general concerns, you will be able to craft your arguments accordingly.

Find a friend in office

Public officials take constituents' interests seriously, so try talking to your own council member, county commissioner or alderman first. As much as we would like the people we vote for to agree with us, this may not always be the case. If your own council member is

not interested, do not despair. Try to find another official with an interest in animal issues and pitch your idea to her or him. Your [HSUS state director](#) may be able to point you toward a sympathetic decision-maker.

Helpful tips for your meeting

Before any meeting with a lawmaker or agency commissioner, research the person you'll be meeting with as much as you can, develop an agenda and prepare a packet of materials to leave with them. For helpful tips on meeting with your council member, see [here](#).

Dress professionally and be cordial. Practice your presentation ahead of time. If you do not know the answer to a question, tell the official you will find out and get back to them. Do not be discouraged if the official agrees with only a portion of your proposal. Compromise is often necessary in legislative advocacy. Be candid on which entities will likely oppose any kind of ban or restriction on trophy hunting.

Be prepared to explain that:

- The proposed resolution is not an opposition statement against all hunting—it is narrowly tailored to only address trophy hunting of native carnivores.
- There is growing public awareness of—and opposition to—trophy hunting of native carnivores, particularly wolves, bears, mountain lions and bobcats.
- Gratuitously slaughtering animals for nothing more than a trophy or bragging rights is out of step with the way most Americans believe animals should be treated.
- Trophy hunters frequently use unsporting and cruel methods—including baiting, hounding and trapping—that violate the tradition of fair chase hunting and give human hunters, who already have an edge, additional advantages.
- Trophy hunting is counterproductive to sound wildlife management. Trophy hunters perpetuate baseless myths and exaggerated claims about “pest” species to justify trophy hunting. All species are important to natural ecosystems, and indiscriminate killing of certain species can create significant wildlife management problems.
- Native carnivores play a vital role in their ecosystems, and trophy hunting these animals has negative ripple effects throughout our natural landscapes. Their protection is vital to ensuring our wild spaces are biologically diverse and healthy.

Promptly follow up on your meeting by sending a letter or email thanking the official for their time, briefly restating your position and responding to any unanswered questions that came up during the meeting.



LISA DEARING 1

Develop a proposed resolution

Next, you will need a proposed resolution to present to the city or county officials. Make sure that legislative experts on the issue thoroughly review the language that you submit. The Humane Society of the United States has significant experience in drafting, lobbying for and defending animal protection legislation and we may be able to provide guidance on a particular state or local proposal—please email us at wildlife@humanesociety.org.

Key provisions of a resolution include:

- Clear definitions of the animals to be covered and the activities prohibited.
- Enforcement provisions and a penalty clause.
- A list of exemptions to the prohibited activities.
- The date the resolution goes into effect.

Provisions to consider when drafting a resolution:

- **Species covered:** Is the goal to include trophy hunting of all native carnivores or only certain species (i.e., only mountain lions, or only wolves)? Resolutions that include more species may draw more opposition.
- **Activities prohibited:** Do you want to encourage a full prohibition on trophy hunting or just target certain methods, such as hound hunting, trapping or baiting? Colorado’s law is narrow in scope in that it only prohibits certain methods used to hunt black bears, while a law in California prohibits all trophy hunting of mountain lions. A narrower bill will be easier to pass but may have loopholes that allow some harmful practices to continue.
- **Exemptions:** Some of the most common reasonable exemptions include allowing the take of native carnivores to protect public safety, public property (including pets and livestock), or for scientific research.

While a comprehensive ban on trophy hunting involving all native carnivores is the most protective, keep in mind that broad bills draw more opposition. Consider the political climate in your community and

the public's appetite for a complete ban on trophy hunting. You may have better success if you limit the scope of the resolution.

Build a coalition

Getting a local resolution enacted takes real effort and requires meeting with council members, testifying at council meetings and garnering support from others for the resolution. Even in big cities, it's common for very few people to get involved in local government (which means a small group of people are often changing laws and policies). Getting active support from diverse groups in the community can make or break the legislation you are trying to pass.

Some of the people and groups who should be involved in your efforts include:

- Wildlife rehabilitators.
- Conservation or environmental organizations.
- Animal advocates.
- Like-minded sportspersons.
- Local chambers of commerce or visitor or tourism bureaus.
- Animal shelters, rescue groups or other animal welfare organizations.
- Local tourism and recreation guides and businesses.
- Outdoor clubs for hiking, birdwatching, canoeing and kayaking.
- Veterinary professionals.
- Faith-based groups.

Start reaching out to these individuals and groups to garner support for your resolution. These people can then spread the word among their groups and engage their own media contacts. Let them know about your efforts and ask for letters of support and commitments to meet with their elected officials, attend and/or testify at hearings and conduct outreach to other community residents.

Prepare for opposition

While every community is different, the odds are that someone in your area will oppose the resolution. In advance of a public hearing, prepare the resolution's sponsor with information about the opponent's concerns and the data, facts and talking points to address them. Creating a short fact sheet with common arguments and answers can be very helpful to your sponsor.

Generate support using social media

You can use tools like Facebook, Twitter and Instagram to spread the word, garner support, post alerts and keep followers updated on developments such as upcoming hearings and votes. You can also reach out to legislators and urge their support for pending legislation.

Incorporate the use of a hashtag (#) in your postings. Be mindful that using too many hashtags can clutter a post and make it more difficult to read, so keep it short: For example, #YesOn123 or #BanTrophyHunting or #StopTrophyHunting.

Use the media to persuade public opinion

Submit letters to the editor and opinion pieces (also called op-eds) and request to meet with the newspaper's editorial board to encourage them to weigh in supporting your position. Cultivate a relationship with local reporters and keep them updated on developments.

Lobby elected officials

Once a public hearing has been scheduled, make every effort to ensure that you have the votes you need for the resolution to pass. Ensure that you have met with every council member or commissioner, shared your information packets and responded to their concerns. Don't be afraid to ask whether you have their vote. Encourage as many residents as possible to write to and call their legislators. Ask your coalition partners to help publicize the issue and put out a call to action through alerts and letters. The key is to convince a majority of the council members to vote in your favor.

Attend the public hearing

Once your elected officials call a public meeting to discuss your proposal, you will need to determine who will testify at the hearing and get others to attend. Work closely with the resolution sponsor on how best to present your case to legislators. The sponsor may recommend limiting the number of speakers.

Plan ahead of time to make sure that everyone does not speak on the exact same points (a common problem at public hearings). You most likely will have very limited time (probably only three to five minutes per person), so dividing talking points among a handful of speakers can ensure that all of your key arguments are heard.

Also, it's helpful to make sure the elected officials can readily identify those in attendance who are in support of the resolution. Create stickers, buttons or T-shirts with messages that support for the resolution.

Follow up after the hearing

Oftentimes, an issue is not voted on at the time of a public hearing. During the hearing, take careful notes on who speaks in opposition to the resolution, what their arguments are and how the elected officials respond to them. Also note what questions the elected officials ask. This will help you provide information to legislators following the hearing to help alleviate any specific concerns that may result in them opposing the resolution. Check in with the sponsor of the legislation to debrief about the public hearing and decide on what steps to take next.

After the vote

If a vote is taken and you win, celebrate! But bear in mind that the campaign may not yet be over. While careful legislative drafting is key to ensuring that a bill survives any lawsuits, it is important to monitor and consult with experts on any legal challenges in the courts or further action by the legislature. If the resolution passes, inform relevant lawmakers of the locality's support on the issue.

If you lose, take all you have learned during the campaign and put it to good use when you try again. It can often take several attempts (even years) before a

proposed resolution passes, so do not be discouraged if your first effort fails. Talk to council members who opposed the bill and discuss what changes could be made to garner their support for a future bill. Remember that regardless of the outcome, you educated many people with your message. Public education is critical to the success of any animal welfare campaign and, over time, an educated public can push for positive changes in the lives of animals.



NATHAN HOBBS

Unlike local resolutions, state legislation and state agency regulations are legally binding. However, the process can be a bit complex—below are some steps and tips for additional guidance.

CONTACT YOUR STATE LEGISLATORS

First, email us at wildlife@humaneociety.org to see if the Humane Society of the United States is already working with your state legislature. Next, contact your own state lawmakers by phone, email and postal mail and politely urge them to pass a ban on trophy hunting in your state and ask for a meeting. You can find your state legislators and their contact information [here](#). For helpful tips on lobbying, including [calling elected officials](#), go [here](#), and follow the steps outlined above under “Work with your local officials to pass a resolution in your county/city.”

CONTACT YOUR STATE WILDLIFE AGENCY

It is equally important that your state's wildlife management agency hear from constituents who oppose trophy hunting and egregious killing methods. Call, email and write to your agency and politely ask them to pass regulations banning trophy hunting of native carnivores or specific methods used to kill them. You should also consider attending a public agency or commission meeting to express your concern about trophy hunting and to urge them to pass a ban during the public comment portion of the meeting. The Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies maintains a list of state wildlife agencies [here](#). Email us at wildlife@humanesociety.org to see if the Humane Society of the United States is working with your state wildlife agency on trophy hunting regulations.

DEFEND EXISTING LAWS

In addition to passing new reforms that protect native carnivores, it's just as important to ensure that

existing protections remain in place—both at the legislative and regulatory level. The trophy hunting industry will often try to either remove or amend any laws restricting the practice. A good way to find out about proposed regulations is to sign up for notifications and emails from your state wildlife agency. They'll alert you to any proposed rulemakings.

The steps and work involved to defeat these attempts to weaken or remove protections for native carnivores are very similar to those you would take to pass a new reform. You'll still want to meet with your elected officials and let them know where you stand, build a coalition, research your opposition, prepare materials, and use the media to get your message out.

If you have a question about a proposed bill or agency regulation, please reach out to wildlife@humanesociety.org to find out if we're working on the issue already.



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Appendices

What do leading scientists say?

Some of the world's top scientists have voiced their opposition to trophy hunting of native carnivores.

On whether trophy hunting actually increases livestock losses by wild native carnivores:

Bradley Bergstrom, in his comprehensive 2017 article on the folly of predator control, writes:

“There are three reasons that predator removal is likely to have no long-term effect—or even adverse effects—on depredation of livestock: vacant territories are quickly recolonized (Knowlton et al. 1999; Treves and Naughton-Treves 2005); immigration rate of breeding pairs into the area experiencing lethal control can increase (Sacks et al. 1999); and immigrants are more likely to be subadults, which have a greater propensity for livestock depredation than older adults (Peebles et al. 2013).”³

Published in a journal in 2014, Heather Bryan and her colleagues write about the consequences of trophy hunting wolves. Here's one:

“Hunting can decrease pack size, which results in altered predation patterns, increased time spent defending kill sites from scavengers, and may lead to increased conflict with humans and livestock (Hayes et al. 2000; Wydeven et al. 2004; Zimmerman 2014).”⁴

Kaylie Peebles and Robert Wielgus in their 2013 journal article found that hunting cougars (mountain

lions) in Washington led to increased complaints and livestock depredations. They write:

“Remedial hunting of cougars, in Washington, was associated with increased, not decreased, complaints and depredations.”⁵

In 2016, Kristine Teichman and Chris Darimont titled their published study: “Hunting as a management tool? Cougar-human conflict is positively related to trophy hunting,” confirming Peebles’ and Wielgus’ study results.

On whether trophy hunting increases the abundance of ungulate species, such as deer, for hunters:

In a 2018 paper on the efficacy of predator control, Robert Lennox and his colleagues write:

“Elimination of a top predator could release herbivores from control, resulting in extensive damage to landscapes and changes to habitat suitability that cause shifts in the community (Bertness et al., 2014; Ripple and Beschta, 2006). Hunters can compensate for predation mortality but will generally remove highly fit phenotypes (Allendorf and Hard, 2009) whereas predators target weak or diseased prey (Genovart et al., 2010; Krumm et al., 2010; Quinn and Cresswell, 2004); loss of predators can then proliferate disease within prey populations (Packer et al., 2003) and can spill over to infect domestic animals (Cross et al., 2007). Even when removal is successful in the short-term, compensatory processes may regulate predator

³ Bergstrom, Brad. (2017). Carnivore conservation: Shifting the paradigm from control to coexistence. *Journal of Mammalogy*. 98. 10.1093/jmammal/gyw185.

⁴ Bryan, H. M., Smits, J. E., Koren, L., Paquet, P. C., Wynne-Edwards, K. E. and Musiani, M. (2015), Heavily hunted wolves have higher stress and reproductive steroids than wolves with

lower hunting pressure. *Funct Ecol*, 29: 347-356. doi:10.1111/1365-2435.12354

⁵ 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(11), e79713. doi:10.1371/journal.pone.0079713

populations such that removal is ineffective in the long-term (e.g. Donehower et al., 2007).⁶

In their 20-year study of Alaska's draconian predator control of wolves, Boertje et al. found that killing thousands of wolves backfired as the caribou became too numerous for the land's carrying capacity. The number of breeding female caribou declined, calves' fall weight decreased, and the herd migrated earlier during seasons. Boertje et al. (2017) write:

“[W]hen ungulates overshoot carrying capacity, the effects of high density, adverse weather, and increased predation can have synergistic negative effects on prey numbers and long-lasting negative effects on sustainable yields, contrary to the intended purpose of the wolf control programs.”⁷

In short, despite the state's very expensive and intensive wolf control program, the goal of creating a caribou game farm for hunters in Alaska utterly failed.

On whether trophy hunting is necessary to maintain predator populations:

In a 2018 paper looking at the role of hunting as conservation, Adrian Treves and his colleagues write:

“Regulatory systems seem to have saved many wild animal populations from extinction by regulating methods and limiting participants and quantities

taken by hunters and trappers. Yet, this view that regulation saved wild animals of western nations is persistently misrepresented and replaced in the scientific and management literature by an interpretation that hunting itself was the intervention. Asserting that an action is an effective conservation tool without scientifically evaluating population-level outcomes of that action, risks misleading the public and policy makers.”⁸

On the harms of trophy hunting:

In her 2018 paper, “The elephant (head) in the room: A critical look at trophy hunting,” Chelsea Batavia and her colleagues write:

“Although some animals such as invertebrates or fish may challenge our best efforts at understanding and empathy, the imaginative leap required to relate with generally charismatic “trophy” animals is much smaller. Compelling evidence shows that such animals have intelligence, emotion, and sociality (DeMello, 2012), all of which are profoundly disrupted by the practice of trophy hunting (Muposhi, Gandiwa, Makuza, & Bartels, 2016; Sogbohossou et al., 2014). However, nonhuman animals are not only physically, socially, and emotionally disrupted, but also debased by the act of trophy hunting. Commoditized, killed, and dismembered, these individuals are relegated to the sphere of mere things when they are turned into souvenirs, oddities, and collectibles.”⁹

⁶ Lennox, Robert & Gallagher, Austin & Ritchie, Euan & Cooke, Steven. (2018). Evaluating the efficacy of predator removal in a conflict-prone world. *Biological Conservation*. 224. 10.1016/j.biocon.2018.05.003.

⁷ Boertje, R. D., Gardner, C. L., Ellis, M. M., Bentzen, T. W. and PHOTO BY ALL CANADA PHOTOS/ALAMY STOCK PHOTO

with restricted wolf control. *Jour. Wild. Mgmt.*, 81: 429-448. doi:10.1002/jwmg.21209

⁸ Treves A, Artelle KA, Paquet PC. Differentiating between regulation and hunting as conservation interventions. *Conserv Biol*. 2018 Aug 27. doi: 10.1111/cobi.13211. [Epub ahead of print] PubMed PMID: 30152178.

⁹ Batavia C, Nelson MP, Darimont CT, Paquet PC, Ripple WJ.

trophy hunting. *Conservation Letters*. 2018;e12565. <https://doi.org/10.1111/conl.12565>

What is the law?

Federal, state and local laws fail to protect native carnivores from trophy hunting.

As of February 2020, there is no comprehensive federal law prohibiting trophy hunting of all native carnivores, and only a handful of states either prohibit the trophy hunting of certain species or prohibit the use of specific cruel methods (e.g., hound hunting). The only states with resident populations of mountain lions that prohibit their trophy hunting are California and Florida. Fourteen other states currently allow trophy hunting of mountain lions, four states allow trophy hunting of wolves, and 40 states allow bobcat hunting. Thirty-two states allow trophy hunting of black bears, although nine of those states prohibit baiting and hound hunting. Alaska is the only state to currently allow trophy hunting of grizzly bears.

Trophy Hunting of Native Carnivores

Updated January 2020



Below is a summary of existing state laws that prohibit or restrict trophy hunting and methods used to trophy hunt native carnivores:

State	Bill, Statute or Regulation	Summary of Law
CALIFORNIA	CA FISH & GAME §§ 4156, 4157, 4158	<p>It shall be unlawful for a person to hunt, trap, or otherwise take a bobcat, except under the following circumstances:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Take by a law enforcement officer or licensed veterinarian acting in the course and scope of official duty ▪ Protection from immediate bodily harm ▪ To protect property or livestock ▪ To protect endangered or threatened species ▪ For scientific research <p>After January 1, 2025, the commission <i>may</i> open a bobcat hunting season in any area determined by the commission to require a hunt if it receives an appropriation from the Legislature to do so. Prior to reopening a season, the Fish and Game Commission must:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Consider the potential impacts of a bobcat hunting season, including the effects on all of the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Bobcat populations. ○ Bobcats' wild prey. ○ Disease abatement, including, but not limited to, hantavirus. ○ The control of invasive species, especially nutria. ▪ Require the implementation of effective nonlethal management strategies to address public safety and livestock conflicts related to bobcats. ▪ Adopt the bobcat management plan developed by the department ▪ Consider state residents' values with regard to the trophy hunting of bobcats. ▪ Assess the costs to the department and the commission associated with bobcat hunting, including the administrative, implementation, and enforcement costs. <p>Before opening a bobcat hunting season the Fish and Wildlife Department, in consultation with other relevant state agencies, local governments, federal agencies, nongovernmental organizations, landowners, and scientific entities, shall develop, upon appropriation by the Legislature, a bobcat management plan to inform and coordinate management decisions regarding bobcat populations. The bobcat management plan shall use credible science and utilize an ecosystem-based approach. The bobcat management plan shall be submitted by the department to the commission and the Legislature and shall include all of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ A current statewide bobcat population estimate based on the best available science. ▪ An assessment of the overall health of the statewide bobcat population. ▪ A comprehensive strategy to manage bobcat populations and their habitat throughout the state, including, but not limited to, an assessment of the effects of climate change, such as from drought and wildfires; rodenticides; and human development on the state's bobcats, the bobcats' prey, and the bobcats' habitats. The comprehensive strategy shall utilize the principles of adaptive management and incorporate recommendations for monitoring. ▪ An investigation of efficacious nonlethal solutions to prevent bobcat predation on livestock, primarily chickens or other domestic animals that the Department of Food and Agriculture deems needing widespread protections from bobcats.

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recommendations for regulatory or statutory changes necessary to implement the bobcat management plan.
	<p>CA FISH & GAME §§ 4800, 4801</p>	<p>It is unlawful to take, injure, possess, transport, import, or sell a mountain lion or a product of a mountain lion, except under certain circumstances.</p> <p>This does not apply to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the sale or possession of a mountain lion or a product of a mountain lion, when the owner can demonstrate that the mountain lion, or product of a mountain lion, was in the person’s possession on June 6, 1990. If (A) The carcass or carcass product is prepared or being prepared for display, exhibition, or storage, for a bona fide scientific or educational purpose, at a nonprofit museum or government-owned facility generally open to the public or at an educational institution, including a public or private postsecondary institution; and (B) The mountain lion was taken in California consistent with the requirements of this chapter and any other applicable law; and (C) The department has authorized the possession of the carcass or carcass product for the purposes of this paragraph. <p>The department may also remove or take any mountain lion, or authorize an appropriate local agency with public safety responsibility to remove or take any mountain lion, that is perceived to be an imminent threat to public health or safety or that is perceived by the department to be an imminent threat to the survival of any threatened, endangered, candidate, or fully protected sheep species.</p>
	<p>CA FISH & GAME § 3960(b)</p>	<p>It is unlawful to permit or allow any dog to pursue any big game mammal during the closed season on that mammal, to pursue any fully protected, rare, or endangered mammal at any time, to pursue any bear or bobcat at any time, or to pursue any mammal in a game refuge or ecological reserve if hunting within that refuge or ecological reserve is unlawful.</p>
	<p>CAL. CODE. REGS. tit. 14 § 478</p>	<p>It is unlawful to trap any bobcat, or attempt to do so, or to sell or export any bobcat or part of any bobcat taken in the State of California. Any holder of a trapping license who traps a bobcat shall immediately release the bobcat to the wild unharmed.</p>
<p>COLORADO</p>	<p><u>CO REV ST § 33-4-1013</u></p>	<p>It is unlawful for any person to take a black bear by any means during the period from March 1 to September 1. It is unlawful for any person to take a black bear with the use of bait, or with the use of one or more dogs, at any time during any calendar year.</p> <p>This prohibition does not apply to employees or agents of the Division of Parks and Wildlife or to field agents of the United States Department of Agriculture when such employees or agents are acting in their official capacity, nor shall this section apply to any person who lawfully takes a black bear in defense of livestock, real property, a motor vehicle, or human life.</p>
	<p>CO CONST Art. 18, § 12b</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> It shall be unlawful to take wildlife with any leghold trap, any instant kill body-gripping design trap, or by poison or snare in the state of Colorado. This prohibition does not apply to: The taking of wildlife with these devices by federal, state, county, or municipal departments of health for the purpose of protecting human health or safety; The use of the devices or methods for controlling: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> wild or domestic rodents, except for beaver or muskrat, as otherwise authorized by law; or wild or domestic birds as otherwise authorized by law; The use of non-lethal snares, traps specifically designed not to kill, or nets to take wildlife for scientific research projects, for falconry, for

		<p>relocation, or for medical treatment pursuant to regulations established by the Colorado wildlife commission;or</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The use of traps, poisons or nets by the Colorado Division of Wildlife to take or manage fish or other non-mammalian aquatic wildlife. ▪ The use of these devices by an owner or lessee of private property primarily used for commercial livestock or crop production, or the employees of such owner or lessee, so long as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ such use does not exceed one thirty-day period per year;and ○ the owner or lessee can present on-site evidence to the division of wildlife that ongoing damage to livestock or crops has not been alleviated by the use of non-lethal or lethal control methods which are not prohibited.
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MASSACHUSETTS	MASS. GEN. LAWS ch. 131, § 21A	<p>It shall be unlawful to pursue or hunt bear or bobcat with the aid of a dog.</p> <p>It shall be unlawful to hunt bear by the aid of baiting or knowingly to hunt bear in a baited area.</p> <p>The prohibition on the use of a dog or baiting may be waived by the director upon written application (1) for the control of individual animals specifically identified as posing a threat to human safety or individual animals that have destroyed livestock, property or crops, and (2) for legitimate scientific research projects that are conducted in a humane manner.</p>
	MASS. GEN. LAWS ch. 131, § 80A	<p>It shall be unlawful to use, set, place, maintain, manufacture or possess any trap for the purpose of capturing bobcats – or other furbearing mammals - except for common type mouse and rat traps, nets, and box or cage type traps, as otherwise permitted by law. A box or cage type trap is one that confines the whole animal without grasping any part of the animal, including Hancock or Bailey’s type live trap for beavers. Other than nets and common type mouse or rat traps, traps designed to capture and hold a furbearing mammal by gripping the mammal’s body, or body part are prohibited, including steel jaw leghold traps, padded leghold traps, and snares.</p>

OREGON	ORS 498.164	<p>A person may not use bait (defined as “any material placed for the purpose of attracting or attempting to attract bears”) to attract or take black bears or use one or more dogs to hunt or pursue black bears or cougars.</p> <p>The use of bait or one or more dogs is <u>not</u> prohibited:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - by employees or agents of county, state or federal agencies while acting in their official capacities. - by persons for the taking of black bears or cougars in accordance with the provisions of ORS 498.012 relating to taking wildlife that is causing damage.
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WASHINGTON	RCW § 77.15.245	<p>It is unlawful to take, hunt, or attract black bear with the aid of bait, and it is unlawful to hunt or pursue black bear, cougar, bobcat, or lynx with the aid of a dog or dogs.</p> <p>This section does not prohibit the killing of black bear, cougar, bobcat, or lynx with the aid of a dog or dogs:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - by employees or agents of county, state, or federal agencies while acting in their official capacities for the purpose of protecting livestock, domestic animals, private property, or the public safety. - by the owner or tenant of real property consistent with a permit issued and conditioned by the director. <p>This does not prohibit the director from issuing a permit or memorandum of understanding to a public agency, university, or scientific or educational institution for the use of a dog or dogs for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - the pursuit, capture and relocation, of black bear, cougar, bobcat, or lynx for scientific purposes. - the killing of black bear, cougar, or bobcat, for the protection of a state and/or federally listed threatened or endangered species.
	RCW 77.15.194	<p>It is unlawful to use or authorize the use of any steel-jawed leghold trap, neck snare, or other body-gripping trap to capture any mammal for recreation or commerce in fur.</p> <p>This prohibition does not apply to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - the use of a Conibear trap in water, a padded leghold trap, or a nonstrangling type foot snare <u>with a special permit granted by the director</u> under the following circumstances: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o for the purpose of protecting people from threats to their health and safety in consultation with the Department of Social and Health Services or the United States Department of Health and Human Services o to a person who applies for such a permit in writing, and who establishes that there exists on a property an animal problem that has not been and cannot be reasonably abated by the use of nonlethal control tools, including but not limited to guard animals, electric fencing, or box and cage traps, or if such nonlethal means cannot be reasonably applied. In this instance, the director may authorize the use, setting, placing, or maintenance of the traps for a period not to exceed thirty days. - Situations where the director grants a special permit to department employees or agents to use traps listed in this subsection where the use of the traps is the only practical means of protecting threatened or endangered species. - Usage of the prohibited traps, excluding Conibear traps, for the conduct of legitimate wildlife research. - Usage of these traps by the United States Fish and Wildlife Service, its employees or agents, where they determine, in consultation with the director, that the use of such traps is necessary to protect species listed as threatened or endangered under the federal Endangered Species Act (16 U.S.C. Sec. 1531 et seq.).

Native carnivores are killed in unsustainable numbers around the country. In almost all states, large carnivores are overhunted, and their conservation is in peril. For example, in the 10-year span between 2007 and 2016, more than 30,000 mountain lions were trophy hunted in the U.S. Large carnivores did not evolve to be hunted, but the biggest cause of their mortality is from humans.

Sample letters to the editor

These samples can be used for inspiration, but do not copy and submit these samples verbatim as newspapers prefer to print letters that are unique submissions to their publication. To have the most impact, be sure to include additional details with specifics about trophy hunting in your state.

BAN TROPHY HUNTING [GENERAL]

Following the death of Cecil, the famous African lion killed by a Minnesota dentist, the world was awakened to the horrors of trophy hunting. Unfortunately, many people are unaware that this cruel industry is operating right here in the U.S.

Trophy hunting—where a hunter’s primary motivation is not for subsistence but rather to obtain a head or hide, or to secure bragging rights—claims thousands of native carnivores around the country every year.

Although they play essential roles in their ecosystems, native carnivores such as wolves, bears, mountain lions, and bobcats are fair game and popular targets for trophy hunters in many of the states where they reside.

The vast majority of Americans value and cherish these iconic species, and it’s time that lawmakers stop caving to special interest groups who just want to see them slaughtered for trophies.

Contact [LAWMAKER/CITY COUNCILMEMBER/ETC.] and ask [him/her/them] to ban trophy hunting now.

BAN SPECIFIC METHOD [HOUNDING OF BEARS]

It’s shameful that [STATE] still allows trophy hunters to chase down our bears with packs of dogs every year. Hound hunting is a barbaric practice that pits dogs against bears, is outdated and inhumane, and should be stopped.

If you’ve never heard of hound hunting of bears, I strongly recommend you do some research into this mockery of traditional hunting. A simple YouTube

search will turn up videos of packs of dogs chasing a terrified bear through the woods, as the houndsman simply waits in a truck. Using GPS transmitters in the dogs’ collars, the houndsman tracks his dogs to the tree where the exhausted bear has climbed to escape the pack and simply shoots the bear off a tree branch.

Make no mistake: This is not hunting. It’s high-tech shooting, and many fair chase hunters agree.

Contact your state lawmakers today and let them know that you’re opposed to hound hunting of bears. Animal cruelty and lack of sportsmanship should not be what [STATE] is known for.

BAN TROPHY HUNTING OF SPECIFIC SPECIES [WOLVES]

I’ve been a resident of [STATE] for [X] years, and I deeply value the essential role that wolves play in our ecosystem. They keep our deer herd populations healthy by taking down weak, old and sick animals, including those infected with chronic wasting disease.

And yet a few of our [state lawmakers/council members] seem determined to wipe them out by sanctioning trophy hunting seasons on these iconic animals.

Trophy hunting of wolves has no basis in sound science and is opposed by the majority of residents in our state—not to mention the rest of the country.

As a lifelong wildlife advocate, I strongly encourage [lawmaker/councilmember/decisionmaker] to pass legislation that would prohibit the cruel and unnecessary trophy hunting of wolves. Our wildlife deserves better.

Sample opinion pieces (op-eds)

These samples can be used for inspiration, but do not copy and submit these samples verbatim as newspapers prefer to print op-eds that are unique submissions to their publication. To have the most impact, be sure to include additional details with specifics about trophy hunting in your state.

OP-ED #1: BAN TROPHY HUNTING [GENERAL]

Every year hundreds of thousands of wild animals globally are killed solely to obtain a “prize”—an animal’s head, hide or pelt, and even whole stuffed animals—to hang on a wall, throw on the floor, or pose in a room. The practice is unethical, cruel, harmful and unsustainable. Wolves, bears, mountain lions, and bobcats are killed right here in the U.S. solely for a trophy and by some of the most egregious killing methods, including hound hunting, baiting and trapping.

The killing of well-known animals such as Cecil—the African lion killed by an American dentist—or Spitfire—the Yellowstone wolf shot just outside the national park—has shed a global spotlight on the gruesome nature of trophy hunting. The public rejects trophy hunting, and the concept that individuals kill remarkable and rare animals for nothing more than recreation and trophies is no longer an acceptable practice to the majority of Americans.

Not only is trophy hunting unnecessary, but it’s also harmful to the ecosystem. Top carnivores such as wolves and mountain lions make their landscapes both healthier and more biologically diverse. They remove the sick and weak from prey herds, making those populations stronger. Collecting “trophy-quality” animals harms wild populations because the fittest animals are removed, reducing population vitality.

Underlying a growing number of trophy hunts of carnivores in the United States is the wrongheaded but long-standing belief that killing these animals protects livestock and reduces nuisance complaints about carnivores in and around homes and towns. However, studies have found that trophy hunting of native carnivores neither makes people nor livestock safer. In fact, trophy hunting can actually make conflicts worse, as trophy hunting tears apart stable family units,

leaving the young to find easy prey in order to survive. Furthermore, trophy hunters seek the largest, rarest animals—not the specific animals that may be involved in conflicts.

Trophy hunting also relies heavily on the unfair, cruel methods, including baiting, hound hunting and trapping. These methods violate the tradition of fair chase hunting and give human hunters, who already have the edge over their quarry, additional advantages to increase their chances of collecting their trophies.

Baiters dump hundreds of pounds of smelly human food deep in the woods to create easy targets for trophy hunters while the animals gorge themselves. Not only does this practice lack any sportsmanship, but it also habituates wild animals to human foods. Hound hunters unleash packs of radio-collared hounds to pursue wildlife until the exhausted, frightened animals seek refuge in a tree, where they are shot, or turn to fight the hounds. Hound hunting results in injuries or death to both targeted trophy animals (particularly bear cubs, mountain lion kittens and yearling wolf pups) and dogs and leaves vulnerable young animals orphaned. Trapping involves setting traps or snares that hold trophy animals until they’re shot. Targeted wildlife, as well as nontarget animal—including endangered species and family pets—languish in these devices for hours and even days, sometimes suffering broken limbs or other painful injuries, dehydration, starvation and exposure until they are killed.

These cruel methods have no place in a humane society. It’s time to ban trophy hunting of native carnivores.

OP-ED #2: BAN TROPHY HUNTING [BEARS]

It’s time to put a stop to [STATE]’s trophy bear hunt once and for all. Bears in [STATE] are killed using the cruelest and most unsporting methods, including

shooting bears trained to visit sugary piles of bait and using packs of dogs to chase bears to exhaustion.

The majority of the public is opposed to trophy hunting of bears. Wildlife watchers greatly outnumber hunters and outspend them as well.

There's simply no need to trophy hunt our bears. No one today needs to hunt bears for food or clothing. They are hunting for the thrill of the kill.

While policymakers often claim that opening or extending bear trophy hunts will result in fewer bears expanding into urban areas where they may cause problems, studies show that bear hunting will only reduce conflicts in cases where the bear population is reduced *below* sustainable levels.

And for what purpose, other than to satisfy a few trophy hunters who want a bear skin rug? Studies have shown that aversive conditioning techniques coupled with public education are the most effective means of reducing bear-human conflicts—not trophy hunting. It not only teaches bears to avoid humans, but bears pass this knowledge on to their offspring. These bears then act as placeholders, maintaining territories that other bears would move into if they were vacated.

Studies also show that unsecured food is the root cause triggering interactions with bears. [State] should be focusing its resources on trash management and code enforcement in order to effectively alleviate human-bear conflicts. If the state truly cares about reducing these conflicts, they must take an all-or-nothing approach. Simple steps such as securing garbage and taking in bird feeders can make a huge impact. Community-based education programs that emphasize the benefits of black bears—combined with aversive conditioning or “hazing” programs and stringent law enforcement—are effective in reducing human-bear conflicts.

It certainly doesn't help that the state allows hunters to set out piles of rotted human food as “bait” to lure in bears for an easy kill. This is not only unsporting, but it also acclimates bears to human food and artificially grows the bear population through supplemental feeding.

Furthermore, nonlethal methods such as aversive conditioning actually target the offending animals—unlike trophy hunting, which targets random animals

deep in the woods and away from urban settings. Trying to reduce wildlife conflicts with a trophy hunt is akin to reducing crime by shooting into a crowded room: In other words, it's useless.

Hound hunting should also be prohibited. This cruel practice pits dogs and bears against each other. During these stressful and energy-draining pursuits, either species can be injured or killed, particularly bear cubs. Hounds also trespass on private property, and they chase, harass and kill other wildlife. While some argue hound hunting prevents the orphaning of cubs, studies have shown that houndsmen are ineffective in determining whether a female had cubs. And when a mother bear is killed, her cubs will likely die from starvation, exposure or predation.

Other states such as Oregon and Washington have banned these cruel, unsporting and problematic practices and continue to successfully manage their bear populations.

Americans hold widely divergent standards around wildlife, but the vast majority highly value their conservation and oppose cruel hunting methods. With numbers of hunters continuing to plummet and numbers of wildlife watchers exploding, we strongly urge [STATE] to incorporate the wishes of this growing constituency and use the best available science when making management decisions.

OP-ED #3: BAN TROPHY HUNTING [MOUNTAIN LIONS]

Mountain lions have been heavily persecuted in [STATE] and it's time to put an end to trophy hunting of these iconic cats.

Mountain lions are vitally important to their ecosystems and are hugely beneficial to society. Native carnivores—including mountain lions—play a key role in balancing healthy ecosystems, including maintaining biological diversity. Their protection and conservation have ripple effects throughout their natural communities.

For example, prohibiting the trophy hunting of mountain lions will keep herds healthier as mountain lions selectively prey on sick deer, such as those inflicted with chronic wasting disease and Lyme disease. Chronic wasting disease is constantly found in

new areas throughout the country, and mountain lions are an effective and free barrier to its spread. Prohibiting the trophy hunting of mountain lions will also decrease deadly and expensive vehicle-deer collisions, saving [STATE] residents millions of dollars. According to a recent study, mountain lions save South Dakota approximately \$1.1 million annually by reducing deer-vehicle collisions.

Because the major source of mountain lion mortality comes from sport hunting, a continued hunt is simply irresponsible. Furthermore, hound hunting of mountain lions is unsporting and inhumane. Hound hunting involves fitting dogs with high-tech radio collars that allow hunters to monitor the dogs' movement remotely. After the hounds have treed a mountain lion, the trophy hunters arrive to shoot the animal at point-blank range. When mother lions are killed, dependent kittens can die from starvation, dehydration, predation or exposure. Biologists have also documented that kittens have been killed on the ground by packs of dogs. Hunting hounds trespass on private property and protected lands, harass and harm non-target species, and may be injured or killed when trapped mountain lions act in defense.

Mountain lion conflicts with humans and livestock are also extremely rare. Mountain lions generally avoid people, and the state wildlife agency may still allow lethal control for any individual mountain lion who poses a threat to public safety or livestock. Studies have shown, however, that heavy killing of mountain lions increases complaints and livestock depredations. In other words, killing mountain lions is counterproductive. Hunters target the big, trophy-sized males—the very animals who keep the population in check—because old male lions kill immigrating younger animals. When those dominant cats are killed by trophy hunters, multiple juveniles take their space. But they are just youngsters, not yet adept at hunting on their own—and they often turn up close to humans looking for easy prey.

Even without trophy hunting, [STATE]'s mountain lion population faces ongoing threats from habitat loss, road mortality, and poaching. Allowing the continued trophy hunting of these vital animals is not supported by the best available science, nor is it in the public's interest in protecting our native wildlife.

Mountain lion biologists—the scientists who make it their business to understand these animals better than any other species—agree that mountain lions themselves do the best job of limiting their own numbers. The presence of mountain lions on [STATE]'s landscape is cause for celebration, rather than reason to declare open season on them.

We must not allow the small faction of trophy hunters who want a head and a skin for their walls to use irrational fears to allow the continued killing of this iconic species. Please join me in calling for a prohibition on the trophy hunting of [STATE]'s lions.

OP-ED #4: BAN TROPHY HUNTING [WOLVES]

In a cruel contest that's anything but sportsmanlike, trophy hunters harass and kill gray wolves in [STATE] every year—and it's time to put a stop to it once and for all.

A flood of scientific studies over the past few years have amply demonstrated that there is absolutely no justification for killing wolves for trophies or in a misguided attempt to protect livestock and/or boost prey species for hunters. In fact, such studies have shown that indiscriminate killing of wolves by hunting can actually make the few conflicts that do occur even worse by disrupting stable social structures.

Furthermore, it makes no sense to kill wolves when the species only recently began a comeback from mass extermination across North America. Wolves are already highly susceptible to persecution thanks to their social structure. Large-bodied carnivores such as wolves provide extended parental care to their young. Female wolves limit reproduction and social stability is vital to their resiliency. Human-caused mortality not only kills the targeted individuals but disrupts this important social structure and in doing so can reduce the survival of young wolves and entire packs.

When select members of Congress—egged on by trophy hunting and agriculture industries in their state—proposed removing federal protections on wolves and thus allowing trophy hunting of them, more than 80 of the world's top scientists co-signed a letter urging Congress not to delist wolves, saying “We must get wolf recovery right by developing a healthy relationship with wolves, recognizing the important

role they play in our ecosystems and refraining from unjustified persecution.”

In states where wolf hunting is allowed, such as [STATE], trophy hunters and trappers use social media to post photos of themselves subjecting wolves to horrific abuse and deliberate acts of torture. These activities go against the values of the vast majority of Americans, who want all animals, including our apex native carnivores, treated respectfully and humanely.

Americans have shown time and again—whether through myriad polls or statewide initiatives—that they’re opposed to the trophy hunting of this majestic species. Since first measured in 1978, the public’s feeling toward wolves has grown substantially more

positive. Those remaining negative few are drowned out by the vast majority of Americans who hold a growing concern for animal welfare. This concern should translate into innovative wildlife management in [STATE].

So why do we continue to allow such a barbaric practice to occur in our state? Just to satisfy the bloodlust of the minority who want to decorate their home with a wolf-skin rug?

It’s far past time for [STATE] to put a stop to the cruel trophy hunting of our wolves.



ANTON SOROKIN

Sample social media items

SAMPLE FACEBOOK POSTS

1. Trophy hunting is not sound wildlife management. Please let [STATE LEGISLATURE/OFFICIAL] know that you OPPOSE trophy hunting.
2. Trophy hunting of native carnivores is not based on the best available science and is cruel and unsporting. Let your lawmakers know that you oppose this outdated and barbaric practice today.
3. [CITY/COUNTY COUNCIL] is considering a resolution to oppose trophy hunting in [CITY/COUNTY]. This cruel activity has no place in modern society, and especially not in our

community. Please urge your council member to vote YES on [RESOLUTION].

SAMPLE TWEETS

1. Modern society does not tolerate the killing of animals for nothing more than a trophy or bragging rights. Pass [BILL #]. #endtrophyhunting
2. Trophy hunting is cruel, unsporting and scientifically reckless. #endtrophyhunting
3. Urge your council member to vote YES to oppose trophy hunting in [COMMUNITY] #YesOn[Resolution#]

SAMPLE GRAPHICS TO GO ALONG WITH SOCIAL MEDIA POSTS:



Sample fact sheets

These samples can be used for background information, talking points and meetings with elected officials. To have the most impact, be sure to include additional details with specifics about trophy hunting in your state.

Fact Sheet #1:



DANITA DELIMONT CREATIVE

End Trophy Hunting

Trophy hunting is a hunt where the primary motivation is to obtain animal parts (e.g., heads, hides or claws and even whole stuffed bodies) for display and for bragging rights. Trophy hunters are not primarily motivated by subsistence reasons (i.e. putting food on the table.)

Why is trophy hunting bad?

Trophy hunting relies heavily on unfair, cruel methods, including baiting, hound hunting, and trapping. These methods violate the tradition of fair chase hunting and give human hunters—who already have the edge over their quarry—additional advantages that increase the hunters' chances of collecting their trophies.

Top carnivores like wolves and mountain lions are essential components of a healthy, thriving ecosystem. Wolves and mountain lions make their landscapes both healthier and more biologically diverse. They remove the sick and weak from ungulate (deer, elk and moose) herds, making those populations stronger.

Trophy hunters typically target the largest—and most visually impressive—animals to kill, tearing apart stable family units and leaving inexperienced juvenile animals in their place, which could lead to conflicts with people.

Isn't trophy hunting illegal?

Unfortunately, no. Apart from protections on endangered and threatened species, trophy hunting is not prohibited in the United States, although some states do have protections in place for certain species or against certain methods of trophy hunting. For example, voters in California passed a ballot initiative prohibiting the trophy hunting of mountain lions, and voters in Oregon have

banned hound hunting—the use of packs of dogs to chase down an animal—of mountain lions, also via ballot measure.

Which species are trophy hunted in the U.S.?

Native carnivores such as wolves, black bears, bobcats and mountain lions (also known as cougars) are all legally killed in this country for nothing more than trophies. If grizzly bears are delisted from the Endangered Species Act, states with grizzly populations are already planning to open trophy hunting seasons on them. Nobody kills these animals for food—rather, these animals are killed for nothing more than a trophy and bragging rights.

Isn't money from trophy hunting necessary for conservation?

Wildlife watchers contribute billions of dollars to local economies each year in order to view native carnivores such as wolves, mountain lions, bobcats and bears, far outspending trophy hunters. Private hunting guides and other individuals profit from trophy hunting, depleting stressed animal populations and harming their long-term survival in our few remaining wild spaces, most of which are currently threatened with human development. Passing and upholding laws such as the Endangered Species Act protects animals, while killing them does nothing to conserve them.

Fact Sheet #2:



DESIGN PICS INC./ALAMY STOCK PHOTO

END TROPHY HUNTING

Every year, thousands of native carnivores are killed in the U.S. solely to obtain a “prize”—that is, the heads, hides, pelts or even whole stuffed animals—to hang on a wall, throw on the floor, or pose in a room. The practice is unethical, cruel, harmful and unsustainable, and it should be banned.

Killing methods are cruel and unsporting.

Trophy hunting relies heavily on unfair, cruel methods including baiting, hound hunting and trapping. These methods violate the tradition of fair chase hunting and give human hunters—who already have the edge over their quarry—additional advantages that increase the hunters’ chances of collecting their trophies.

Baiting involves intensive feeding wild animals to make them easy targets for trophy hunters waiting in a nearby blind. Bait is often placed by professional guides so they can assure their paying customers a guaranteed kill.

Hound hunting involves hunters and guides using packs of radio-collared hounds to pursue targeted trophy animals until the exhausted, frightened animals seek refuge in a tree, where they are shot, or turn to fight the hounds. Hound hunting results in injuries or death to both targeted trophy animals (particularly to bear cubs, mountain lion kittens and yearling wolf pups) and dogs. It often leaves vulnerable young animals orphaned.

Trapping involves setting traps or snares that hold trophy animals until they’re shot. Targeted trophy animals—as well as family pets and other nontarget animals—languish in these devices for hours and even days, sometimes suffering broken limbs or other painful injuries, dehydration, starvation and exposure until they are killed.

Trophy hunting is counterproductive to sound wildlife management.

Trophy hunters select the largest, oldest animals—the opposite of what happens in nature. Collecting “trophy-quality” animals harms wild populations because the fittest animals are removed. For many species, selectively killing the largest male animals disrupts the sex and age composition of the population, which can increase, rather than decrease, conflicts with people. Killing adult female animals—which happens in trophy hunting for mountain lions, bears and wolves—can orphan young animals who may not survive without their parents’ care. Trophy hunting that kills even one member of a social species (such as wolves, who depend on their packs to survive) can have serious negative effects on the remaining pack members, especially on the young.

Trophy hunting does not decrease conflicts.

Biologists have found that killing native carnivores makes neither people nor livestock safer. In fact, if adult mountain lions or wolves are persecuted, human conflicts often get worse. This happens because stable family units are torn apart, leaving the young to find easier prey – such as livestock – in order to survive. Trophy hunters also seek the largest, rarest animals—not the specific animals who may be involved in conflicts.

In short, trophy hunting does not resolve human or livestock conflicts. And trophy hunters typically target the oldest, largest animals for their collection, which causes social disruptions in animals’ social groups.

Sample testimony

Commission and council meetings often have a time limit of about three minutes for oral testimony, so please keep your remarks brief and concise. You can also coordinate with other advocates to ensure that you don't duplicate each other's testimony; instead, each person should focus on a specific topic. For example, one person can talk about how trophy hunting is cruel and disrupts family units, another can focus on the lack of science supporting trophy hunting, and another can focus on how certain trophy hunting methods violate the principles of sportsmanship and fair chase in hunting.

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF A RESOLUTION AGAINST TROPHY HUNTING

Good morning, members of the committee. My name is [NAME]. Thank you for the opportunity to address you today.

I respectfully urge you to support [RESOLUTION] to oppose trophy hunting in [LOCALITY].

As a resident of [LOCALITY], I was disturbed to learn that trophy hunting of [SPECIES] is allowed right here in my community. I, and many other citizens and community leaders, ask that you pass [RESOLUTION] to show [CITY'S] opposition to this cruel spectacle.

Trophy hunting is a hunt where the primary motivation is to obtain animal parts - that is, their heads, hides or claws and even the whole stuffed animal - for display and for bragging rights. Trophy hunters also typically pose with the dead animal for a portrait, often for social media, but do not kill the animal for food.

Trophy hunting relies heavily on the most unfair, cruel methods, including baiting, hound hunting and trapping. These methods violate the tradition of fair chase hunting and give trophy hunters, who already have the edge over their quarry, additional advantages to increase the chance of collecting their trophies.

Top carnivores like wolves and mountain lions are essential components to a healthy, thriving ecosystem by making their landscapes both healthier and more biologically diverse. They remove the sick and weak from prey herds, such as deer, elk and moose, making those populations stronger. Furthermore, native carnivores are highly sentient

beings. They have emotional lives and form strong bonds with their offspring, and they live in extended family groups. Mountain lion and black bear mothers spend up to two years raising their young, whereas grizzly bears can spend up to four years with their offspring. With wolves, generally only the top pair (the "alphas") have offspring, but the whole pack—a kind of extended family—helps to provision and raise the pups.

Trophy hunters typically target the largest and most impressive animals to kill, which tears apart stable family units and leaves inexperienced juvenile animals in their place. This can ultimately lead to conflicts with both people and livestock.

This is not a practice that our community needs nor wants, and I ask that you vote yes for [RESOLUTION]. Your support will send a powerful message that [LOCALITY] cares about the responsible management of our state's natural resources and protecting our wildlife from cruelty. Thank you.

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF A RESOLUTION AGAINST TROPHY HUNTING

Good morning, members of the committee. My name is [NAME]. Thank you for the opportunity to address you today.

I respectfully urge you to support [RESOLUTION] to oppose trophy hunting in [LOCALITY].

Trophy hunting, where the hunter's primary motivation is a trophy but not food, not only contradicts the values of the majority of the public, but it is also not representative of the best available science.

Killing large carnivores has negative ripple effects throughout our natural landscapes. Their protection is vital to ensuring our wild spaces are diverse and healthy. Large carnivores occupy the top of their food webs, where they help maintain the health and function of whole ecosystems. Wolves, bears and their prey have co-evolved for eons, making prey animals healthier and less likely to die from mass starvation or disease.

Additionally, trophy hunting creates instability and chaos in the family structures of animals who are killed. In other words, trophy hunters don't just kill the animal in the crosshairs. By disrupting large carnivores' societies, many other individuals die too, particularly their young offspring, whose deaths are never counted by wildlife agencies.

We should consider the perspective of hunters and other recreationists who respect the role that all native species play in their ecosystems. In numerous studies, both the general public and hunters themselves object to hunting activities that are viewed as unfair, unsporting, inhumane or unsustainable.

Trophy hunters deprive the greater public the opportunity to view these iconic species in the wild. Wildlife watchers contribute billions of dollars to local economies each year in order to view species such as wolves, mountain lions, bobcats and bears. They far outspend trophy hunters.

Allowing trophy hunting of these animals depletes already stressed animal populations and harms their long-term survival in our few remaining wild spaces, most of which are also currently threatened with human development.

In the interest of creating a more humane community, I ask that you vote yes for [RESOLUTION]. Thank you.

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF A RESOLUTION AGAINST TROPHY HUNTING FROM WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT EXPERTS

Good morning, members of the committee. My name is [NAME]. Thank you for the opportunity to address you today.

I respectfully urge you to support [RESOLUTION], to oppose trophy hunting in [LOCALITY].

As [STATE] already allows high levels of trophy hunting, it's essential to show opposition to this practice wherever possible. I would like to address some of the misinformation about the necessity of trophy hunting. Trophy hunters often try to justify their "sport" with claims that they are protecting public safety, or that killing [SPECIES] and other native carnivores will somehow boost ungulate herds like deer and elk, or will make livestock safer. But those claims are not supported by the best available science.

For example, in several recent studies that involved predator removals, those actions "generally had no effect" on mule deer herd numbers. That is because access to adequate nutrition is the key factor in mule deer dynamics, not predator elimination. Studies in Colorado and Wyoming show that oil and gas drilling is greatly harming mule deer populations—not mountain lions. Habitat loss, hunting and lack of adequate nutrition are the main culprits of ungulate decline—not native carnivores.

Native carnivores also help reduce the spread of chronic wasting disease, a major wildlife health issue in this country. Research has found that adult deer preyed upon by mountain lions were more likely to have chronic wasting disease than deer shot by hunters. Moreover, the study found that mountain lions consumed over 85% of carcasses, thereby removing a significant amount of contamination from the environment.

Regarding livestock depredations, USDA reports show that the primary causes of cattle and sheep mortality in the U.S. come from health problems, weather, theft and other maladies, but *not* from wild native carnivores.

[STATE]'s native carnivores are rare on the landscape and are not resilient to intense human persecution. Furthermore, we reap significant economic benefits from allowing these animals to thrive in wild spaces. According to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's most recent national report on wildlife recreation, most Americans (86 million) participate in and spend funds while wildlife watching. The number of wildlife watchers dramatically surged by 21% since 2011. On the other

hand, hunters declined by 16% since 2011, with the sharpest decline among big game hunters (20%).¹⁰ In 2016, wildlife watchers spent \$75.9 billion, while hunters spent \$25.6 billion, about one-third the spending of wildlife watchers.

I and so many other citizens of [LOCALITY] believe that unethical, unscientific and ineffective trophy

hunting of native carnivores does not reflect sound natural resources management and is a blot on our community.

With this in mind, I ask that you vote yes for [RESOLUTION]. Thank you.



BLICKWINKEL

¹⁰ U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. 2017. 2016 National Survey of Fishing, Hunting, and Wildlife-Associated Recreation: National Overview.

Sample letter to policymakers

Dear [LEGISLATOR, COMMISSIONER, OR COUNCIL MEMBER]:

As a resident of [LOCALITY] and your constituent, I respectfully ask that you support [RESOLUTION NUMBER], an act to oppose trophy hunting of [SPECIES] in [LOCALITY]. Continuing to allow this activity is quite simply an embarrassment for our community.

Trophy hunting is a hunt where the primary motivation is to obtain animal parts—their heads, hides, claws and even the whole stuffed animal—for display and for bragging rights (trophy hunters pose with the dead animal for a portrait, often for social media), but not for subsistence.

In particular, right here in our community, [share details of which species are killed, how many are killed, and what methods are used to kill them (e.g., hound hunting/baiting/trapping)].

Trophy hunting relies heavily on unfair, cruel methods, including baiting, hound hunting and trapping. These methods violate the tradition of fair chase hunting and give human hunters, who already have the edge over their quarry, additional advantages that increase the chances of collecting their trophies. Killing for nothing more than a trophy flouts sportsmanship ethics and outdoor traditions and instead glorifies killing and violence, which sends a dangerous message to younger generations of hunters.

Top carnivores like wolves and mountain lions are essential components to a healthy, thriving ecosystem. Wolves and mountain lions make their

landscapes both healthier and more biologically diverse. They remove the sick and weak from ungulate (deer, elk and moose) herds, making those populations stronger. Allowing trophy hunting of these animals depletes already stressed animal populations and harms their long-term survival in our few remaining wild spaces, most of which are also currently threatened with human development.

Trophy hunters typically target the largest—and most visually impressive—animals to kill, tearing apart stable family units and leaving inexperienced juvenile animals in their place, which could lead to conflicts with people.

These contests are also inconsistent with the values of the public majority. Numerous polls and studies show that the majority of Americans oppose trophy hunting. Trophy hunters deprive the greater public the opportunity to view these iconic species in the wild. Wildlife watchers contribute billions of dollars to local economies each year in order to view species such as wolves, mountain lions, bobcats and bears, far outspending trophy hunters. As shown by the public outrage after the death of iconic animals such as Cecil the lion or Spitfire the Yellowstone wolf, trophy hunting will not be tolerated in a modern society.

In the interest of creating a more humane community, I ask that you vote yes for [RESOLUTION]. Your support will send a powerful message that [LOCALITY] cares about the responsible management of our state's natural resources and protecting our wildlife from cruelty.

Thank you for your consideration.

Our Promise

We fight the big fights to end suffering for all animals.

Together with millions of supporters, we take on puppy mills, factory farms, trophy hunts, animal testing and other cruel industries. With our affiliates, we rescue and care for thousands of animals every year through our animal rescue team's work and other hands-on animal care services.

We fight all forms of animal cruelty to achieve the vision behind our name: a humane society. And we can't do it without you.

For assistance, contact wildlife@humanesociety.org.



**THE HUMANE SOCIETY
OF THE UNITED STATES**

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