



COLORADO WOLF & WILDLIFE CENTER

SEPTEMBER 2024 · CONSERVATION · EDUCATION · PRESERVATION

R.I.P.
Maknee
~



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We hope to give you something to look forward to every day!

R.I.P. TO OUR SWEET Makuee

It is with an incredibly heavy heart that we announce our Makuee passed away in her sleep on Thursday, August 29th. She was 10 years old. She was her normal playful and bubbly self on Wednesday evening. We were all crushed, and very puzzled. We immediately brought her in to have a necropsy performed. Our incredible veterinarian, Dr. Volz quickly diagnosed her with Hypertrophic Cardiomyopathy. This is a very rare condition not often seen in dogs (and likely wolves) and there are usually no symptoms. There is no cure, and the most commonly reported clinical sign is sudden, fatal heart failure. Her heart muscles (specifically her left ventricle) were about twice as thick as they should be.

Makuee was such a light. She was gentle, passionate with her open-mouth kisses, and the biggest sappy girl of the center. She was a powerful ambassador for her species and helped to rewrite the narrative of the "big bad wolf" for thousands of visitors at CWWC. She will always be remembered for her scream howls and paw punches when she wanted more affection. Our heart is with her mate, Keyni who deeply loved her since the moment he laid eyes on her. She will be fondly missed and her memory will be cherished by all who knew and loved her.



The right to snowmobile over wildlife could soon be explicitly protected in Wyoming

A wolf that was injured by a snowmobile and kept alive for kicks has drawn global attention. The bill drafted in response, however, specifically clarifies that snowmobiling over animals is legal.

Mike Koshmrl | WyoFile
September 4, 2024

Residents who enjoy snowmobiling over wildlife could see their wintertime recreational pursuit explicitly protected by law if a draft bill headed for a legislative committee advances unchanged.

Running over animals classified as predators with snowmobiles is already legal in Wyoming. That status came into question, however, after a Daniel man struck an adolescent wolf with a snowmobile, muzzled and collared it and paraded it through a Sublette County bar for hours.

The Legislature formed an ad hoc panel — the Treatment of Predators Working Group — to study changes in the law that could deter the behavior. The group met for the last time on Wednesday, and they walked away from the online meeting agreeing to draft bill language that makes it clear running over animals is OK, provided the creatures are dispatched swiftly after being struck.

“Any person who intentionally injures or disables a predatory animal ... by use of an automotive vehicle, motor-propelled wheeled vehicle, or vehicle designed for travel over snow shall upon inflicting the injury or disability immediately use all reasonable efforts to kill the injured or disabled



A coyote in Wyoming's Red Desert. Photo: Lynn Hanson

predatory animal,” the draft bill reads.

Failing to “immediately use all reasonable efforts to kill” a run-down animal would constitute animal cruelty, the legislation states.

Currently, there are carve-outs in the animal cruelty statutes for predatory animals, which include wolves in 85% of Wyoming and coyotes, red fox, stray cats, jackrabbits, porcupines, raccoons and striped skunks throughout the state.

The proposed statute change would live in the Wyoming Criminal Code. Another draft bill containing almost identical language, that would instead alter the laws governing the Wyoming Game and Fish Department, did not move forward from the panel.

Although there was public pressure on the working group to also draft a bill prohibiting running over

wildlife with snowmobiles, the livestock industry opposed making any changes that it asserted would inhibit predator control.

“I’ve talked with a number of livestock producers across the state — in particular, sheep producers — who have said that they view it as one of their most effective tools,” Jim Magagna, executive vice president of the Wyoming Stock Growers Association told WyoFile in July.

Gov. Mark Gordon also encouraged members to have “narrow, focused conversations on wanton animal cruelty” — and to not interfere with predator control.

In addition to being used for livestock protection, running over coyotes, foxes and other species is a recreational activity that some participants see as another form of hunting.

The working group — a mix of lawmakers and non-elected government and private-sector officials — now passes the baton to the Legislature’s Travel, Recreation, Wildlife and Cultural Resources Committee. Members will meet at the end of the month, when they are scheduled to consider the recommended legislation at 1:30 p.m. Sept. 30 in Cheyenne.

There was talk of nixing language about snowmobiles and motorized vehicles and broadening the bill during the working group’s final meeting.

“I would love to move pulling that vehicle-specific stuff out, but I think I have some things that I have to work through,” said Jess Johnson, the Wyoming Wildlife Federation’s government affairs director.

Removing the vehicle language would require adding in some exemptions for trapping, she said. “Maybe that’s something I can bring in October,”



Jim Magagna is a sheepman leading a cow group as the longtime executive vice president of the Wyoming Stock Growers Association. Photo: Mike Koshmrl/WyoFile

Johnson said, “if we move this bill forward.”

Earlier, soon-retiring Wyoming Game and Fish Department Director Brian Nesvik posed an argument for leaving the motorized vehicle language in.

“If we remove this stuff related to vehicles, it would then include aircraft,” Nesvik said. “That’s my concern.”

Aerial gunning, especially of coyotes, is a routine component of predator control in Wyoming, and elsewhere in the American West. It’d be problematic, Nesvik said, to require aerial gunners to land if they know an animal has been wounded in order to make a “reasonable effort” to kill it.

“We don’t want to criminalize otherwise legal behavior,” he said.

About a half-hour of the working group’s meeting was devoted to hearing from the public. Roughly a dozen people spoke, mostly Wyoming residents. Every commenter except for one — Wyoming Farm Bureau Federation lobbyist Brett Moline — encouraged the lawmakers and non-elected members to take a step further and end Wyoming’s embrace of running over animals with snowmobiles.

“I sympathize with a rancher that’s defending livestock from predators, absolutely,” Jackson filmmaker Shane Moore told the working group. “But that’s a far different issue than



A coyote runs from people chasing it on snowmobiles. Videos that show people running down wildlife while riding snowmobiles can be found online with relative ease. (YouTube screenshot)

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allowing the public to joyride on snowmobiles and torture wildlife legally on public lands, which is precisely what’s happening.”

“It seems Wyoming will be allowing wildlife torture to continue with motorized killing if either of these provisions passes — as long as it’s not prolonged,” he added.

Pinedale resident Kelly Ravner also encouraged the lawmakers to take another step.

“The low-hanging fruit is that you could make ‘whacking’ — the torturing and killing of animals with motor vehicles — illegal,” Ravner said. “Whacking is not fair-chase. It is not hunting, and it has no place in actual wildlife management.”

A growing online fury over allegations that a Sublette County resident who tortured a wolf ran the animal down on a snowmobile is shining a light on a practice some call “chasing fur.” (Screenshot from Instagram)

WOLF NEWS

Colorado Parks and Wildlife Announces New Source for Gray Wolves

CPW ANNOUNCED ON SEPTEMBER 13TH, 2024 THAT THE NEXT WOLVES WILL BE TRANSLOCATED FROM BRITISH COLUMBIA BETWEEN DEC 2024 AND MAR 2025. UP TO 15 WOLVES WILL BE CAPTURED AND RELEASED IN COLORADO.



Photos by:
Kerry Haug

THINGS TO KNOW ABOUT BRITISH COLUMBIA WOLVES:

1. THERE ARE NO BIOLOGICAL DIFFERENCES BETWEEN GRAY WOLVES IN BRITISH COLUMBIA AND THOSE RELEASED FROM OREGON IN 2023
2. ALL GRAY WOLVES, WHETHER IN COLORADO OR BRITISH COLUMBIA, BELONG TO THE SAME SPECIES (CANIS LUPUS)
3. AVERAGE WEIGHT IS THE SAME AS GRAY WOLVES IN THE US: 80-110 LBS
4. AVERAGE HEIGHT: 26-34 INCHES AT THE SHOULDER
5. AVERAGE LENGTH: 6 FEET FROM NOSE TO TAIL TIP

'My two favourite animals are sheep and wolves'. In Portugal's Montesinho, shepherds peacefully coexist alongside wolves

Whilst Europe grapples with how to deal with growing wolf populations, this mountainous region of Portugal has coexisted with the predators for centuries.

Marta Vidal | BBC | August 9, 2024



"My two favourite animals are sheep and wolves," says Miguel Afonso as he looks over his flock of 200 sheep bleating and grazing on the gently rolling hills surrounding the village of Rio de Onor in northeastern Portugal. Holding his sturdy crook, the 34-year-old shepherd doesn't see his love for wolves as inconsistent with his work. In the region of Montesinho, shepherds, sheep and wolves have coexisted for centuries.

"Wolves have caused me no trouble," says Afonso while patting one of his six guard dogs, which protect his flock from attacks. "The wolves are actually helping me because they are hunting deer and boar, which damage my chestnut and grain plantations."

Declared a protected area in 1979, the plateaus, mountain ranges and valleys of Montesinho in

northern Portugal have long been a refuge for the Iberian wolf (*Canis lupus signatus*), an endangered subspecies of the European grey wolf. Connectivity with packs across the border in Spain and the availability of wild prey between the trees and meandering rivers have helped maintain stable wolf populations in this region.

"I've seen many wolves here, and I've seen them hunt deer," says Afonso. "Once I was lucky to see what very few people have seen: I saw 14 wolves together. I thought it was impossible."

In Portugal, wolves have been strictly protected by national law since 1988. Once numerous across the country, wolf populations have declined over the last century as they suffered habitat loss, the disappearance of prey species and conflict with humans. Today, only an estimated 300 wolves in 50-

60 packs remain in Portugal's northern and central highlands, in less than a third of their original range.

Hunted by humans and deprived of their habitats, wolves vanished from most of Europe in the 19th and 20th Centuries, with some remnant populations surviving in Southern and Eastern Europe. Stricter legislation, successful conservation projects and rural abandonment have led to a comeback of these predators across the continent in recent years. But as wolf populations have grown, so have conflicts with human populations.

According to data gathered by the European Union (EU), wolves kill about 65,500 livestock each year, the majority being sheep. Considering there are an estimated 60 million sheep in the EU, the level of wolf predation represents an annual killing of 0.065%. While on a large scale, the impact of wolves on livestock is minimal, the depredations have led to an escalation in human-wildlife conflicts recently in countries such as Germany. While conflict with wolves remains a challenge in Central Portugal, attitudes towards wolves remain largely positive, and negative attitudes are driven mostly by fear or lack of knowledge.

Last year, the European Commission President Ursula Von der Leyen called for a downgrading of wolf protections in Europe. "The concentration of wolf packs in some European regions has become a real danger for livestock," she said. One year before, a wolf had killed Von der Leyen's pony in Germany's Lower Saxony.

The proposal to downgrade the wolf's protection



Corriça's sheep in one of her meadows in Carragosa (Credit: Marta Vidal)

status was welcomed by hunting and farming associations that have long advocated for changes in legislation to make it easier for wolves to be killed in the name of protecting livestock. The European Commission is still evaluating the proposal.

Conservationists worry the move could also threaten the species' survival in the continent. Even though wolf populations are recovering, their status is still far from favourable. According to the IUCN, six of the nine transboundary wolf populations in the EU are categorised as vulnerable or near-threatened.

"Ursula Von der Leyen's pony was eaten, but this shouldn't lead to revenge," says Bruno Arrojado, a wolf advocate and founder of Plataforma Lobo Ibérico [Iberian Wolf Platform]. The organisation aims to improve knowledge about wolves and to raise awareness about the importance of protecting this threatened predator.

Protecting livestock

For Arrojado, who has been visiting Montesinho to monitor wolves and talk to shepherds for years, the main problem is that in many regions in Europe people no longer know how to live alongside wolves. "Montesinho could be an example of how we can coexist. There is some predation on domestic animals, but we don't see a major conflict here because people know how to use ancestral methods of coexistence with wolves," he says.

A study published in 2020 found the local population in Montesinho had either a neutral or positive opinion towards wolves. Unlike other regions in

Europe where hostility to wolves is rising, most of the residents surveyed didn't perceive the wolf as a threat because of the low levels of livestock predation and the region's long history of coexistence with wolves.

"This region has 40% of Portugal's wolf population, but only 5% of attacks on domestic animals," says José Rosa, the head of northern forest

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management at the Portuguese Institute for Nature Conservation and Forests (ICNF). Rosa explains the statistics – which come from ICNF's own research – are due to the high diversity and density of wild prey, but also because livestock is guarded by shepherds and dogs.

"There are countries where the wolf is expanding in areas where habits of coexistence have been lost," says Sílvia Ribeiro, a biologist with wolf conservation non-governmental organisation Grupo Lobo, which has a programme to promote the use of local guarding dog breeds traditionally valued for their protective instinct and ability to bond with the herds under their care.

According to Ribeiro, the continuous presence of wolves has helped maintain Montesinho's traditional methods of preventing attacks, such as guard dogs, fences and shepherding. Studies have shown that areas with continuous wolf presence tend to experience lower depredation levels compared to regions where predators disappeared and then returned in the last decades.

While wolf attacks on livestock are influenced by the abundance of wild prey and the landscape features, protection measures can be very effective. According to research by the European Commission-funded Life Coex research project, prevention methods can result in a significant reduction of attacks on livestock: up to 61% with guard dogs, and up to 100% with fixed enclosures. The research found there was no single method that could guarantee 100% livestock safety, although the combination of electric fences and guard dogs was the most effective deterrent.

Protecting livestock is particularly challenging in areas where wild prey is scarce, making wolves dependent on domestic animals as a source of food. So restoring habitats to increase the availability of natural prey could also be an effective measure to prevent attacks.

Meanwhile, scientific research has shown that the culling and hunting of wolves is usually ineffective and can even be counterproductive in reducing attacks on livestock, unless it is carried out on a large scale – which could compromise the viability of wolf populations. Research suggests that disrupting healthy packs by shooting wolves might lead to higher levels of livestock predation because lone

wolves lack the support of a pack to hunt wild prey and are more likely to attack smaller animals like sheep.

Afonso describes the only time a wolf killed one of his sheep as an "oversight, not an attack" since he was not taking enough precautions to protect his livestock. Back then, he only had two dogs, who couldn't keep up with all the sheep. Now, his six guard dogs are always on the lookout, sniffing for signs of trouble and barking to scare the wolves away. Afonso always accompanies his sheep as they graze during the day and fences them in at night.

"If we have enough dogs and fences in good conditions, there are no attacks," he says. But the costs of implementing these livestock protections are significant. Afonso spent about €4,000 (\$4,360/£3,375) to install fences to protect his flock. Considering the thin margins of the region's small-scale farming, not all are able or willing to bear the costs of protecting livestock from wolf attacks.

Supporting farmers

A backbone, a few ribs and wool are spread across the meadow. "Wolves attacked recently," says Alcina Corriça, as she points to the scattered remains of a sheep. "Vultures came to eat the leftovers."

It is not the first time wolves have attacked Corriça's livestock in Carragosa, a small village inside the Montesinho Nature Park. "Last year I lost six sheep. Then after a few days the wolves attacked one of my cows. They bit her throat," says Corriça.

Yet despite the attacks, Corriça doesn't hold grudges. "I'm not against the wolf. I love animals and I know we need to protect the wolves," she says. "But it's very hard when there are these big attacks. It's very hard to see the animals we raised with such care torn apart."

Corriça's family owns 600 sheep, 80 cows and eight goats. Her two guard dogs can't watch all the animals, and with her low profit margins, she has been unable to invest in fences to protect her livestock from wolves.

"I never received compensation for the attacks because there are rules to be compensated. We have to be with the animals all the time, and I am unable to," she says.

European guidelines for agricultural aid allow EU



Bruno Arrojado looks for wolves in Montesinho (Credit: Marta Vidal)

members to grant compensation to farmers for damages caused by wolves. In Portugal, however, the highly bureaucratic process excludes many farmers like Corriça, who are unable to receive the benefits because they don't meet all the requirements. "We need more support. I'm protecting the wolves. I think they need to be protected, but the farmers also need support," says Corriça. The Institute for Nature Conservation and Forests, the entity responsible for payments, did not respond to the BBC's request for comment.

For Jorge Laranjinha, president of the local association of sheep breeders, the compensation offered for wolf attacks is not enough to cover farmers' losses. "The payments arrive late, and the amount is negligible. The compensation is based on the global market prices, which vary, but the animals of our local breed are much more valuable," he says. "If farmers are properly compensated and protected there will be less conflict," argues Laranjinha, adding that there needs to be more substantial support for livestock farmers. Portuguese breeders can apply for benefits to cover the recurring costs of keeping guard dogs, but receive no financial support to install protective fences.

Despite the challenges and losses that farmers face, Laranjinha says Montesinho is still one of the areas where the wolf is more easily tolerated. "We have to accept the wolf," he says. "It has always been here,

we have always coexisted with wolves. It has to be here because it's part of the ecosystem."

Research has shown that wolves play a crucial role in maintaining the balance of ecosystems. By controlling the foraging behaviour and numbers of herbivores through predation, wolves help promote the growth of trees, benefiting other animal and plant species and restoring natural processes.

The presence of wolves can also attract tourists and generate income for rural communities. The Sanabria area in Spain, which neighbours Montesinho and is home to one of the densest wolf populations in Western Europe, has become a popular wolf-watching destination. In Montesinho, wolf tourism is also starting to grow, with some local businesses offering wolf-themed tours.

"Wolf tourism is important, but it needs to benefit the people who are most affected by the presence of the wolf, so we need to make sure farmers are also involved," says Ribeiro.

Arrojado, the wolf advocate who lives in Lisbon, often spends his holidays in the Montesinho Nature Park searching for wildlife with his family. He is eager to show wolves and deer to his nine-year-old daughter, teaching her about the importance of biodiversity and fostering a sense of wonder and responsibility towards the environment. He says Montesinho's model of coexistence demonstrates "there is space for all of us".

Asha denied freedom for failure to breed

The young female Mexican wolf captured the imagination of New Mexicans with her travels

Wolf Conservation Center | July 25, 2024



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ALBUQUERQUE, N.M.— Today, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has decided that Asha, the young female Mexican wolf who twice traveled into northern New Mexico, would not be released back into the wild this year.

Since December 2023, the last time Asha was taken from near the Valles Caldera National Preserve in the Jemez Mountains of New Mexico, she has been held in a facility near Socorro. Prior to this announcement, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service had approved Asha's release "on the condition of successful breeding and producing pups."

"Asha deserves to be free and wild. She has done nothing wrong—she has followed her instincts into

suitable wolf habitat in northern New Mexico and is being punished for it," said Chris Smith, wildlife program director for WildEarth Guardians. "Asha belongs in the wild whether she breeds or not; there are some pretty telling layers to this."

"We need to let lobos lead, respect their sentience, and learn from Asha and her family," said Claire Musser, executive director of the Grand Canyon Wolf Recovery Project. "The Caldera pack should be free to live their own lives and make their own choices. We should embrace the opportunity to make new scientific discoveries by allowing wolves to teach us, rather than continuing to disrupt and control their lives."

The Fish and Wildlife Service's decision to keep Asha in captivity, rather than release her along with her male partner, Arcadia, is consistent with the state wildlife agency's long-held opposition to releasing almost any captive-born wolves except for young pups removed from their parents, who have been released since 2016 but with a high disappearance rate.

"This wolf, and others like her, are showing us where the wolves want to be. The human-created maps, with imaginary lines on the ground where wolves are not allowed, ignores what

science tells us – that the southern Rocky Mountains are home to the Mexican gray wolf," said Cyndi Tuell, Western Watersheds Project's Arizona and New Mexico director. "Making Asha's freedom dependent on her ability to breed represents an outdated and unscientific philosophy held by wildlife managers that needs to change."

"Asha's value to her species isn't solely as a breeder – she's an experienced wild wolf with important knowledge and traditions to share with other wolves. Depriving her of the wild is also depriving wild lobos of her keen instincts, and is yet another setback on the path to true recovery," said Regan Downey,

director of education of the Wolf Conservation Center. "The wild lands of northern New Mexico are incomplete without lobos," said Sally Paez, staff attorney for New Mexico Wild. "It's time for wildlife managers to use their authority to support the natural dispersal of Mexican wolves into suitable landscapes such as Valles Caldera and the Jemez Mountains to restore balance to our treasured public lands and ecosystems."

"It's achingly clear that Asha and her mate could contribute to wolf recovery if only the government would allow it," said Michael Robinson, a senior conservation advocate at the Center for Biological Diversity. "Keeping them behind wire mesh for another year shows how politics are prioritized over wolf releases, as well as the livestock industry's success at blocking wolves north of Interstate 40. Both have contributed to alarming declines in the genetic diversity of Mexican wolves since the early days of reintroduction."

Asha is one of several wolves who have made headlines recently by repeatedly dispersing north of Interstate 40. Anubis, a male lobo, made two journeys to the Flagstaff area in Arizona before being killed in January 2022. One of two wolves currently north of Interstate 40 in Arizona has been captured and collared in an attempt to capture the second wolf so they can be relocated.

Conservation groups say the arbitrary Interstate 40 boundary beyond which wolves cannot go is the result of state pressure to restrict the recovery of Mexican wolves to a limited portion of the Southwest. But leading scientists have suggested that three interconnected subpopulations of at least 200 wolves each need to be present in the Southwest to achieve recovery. The southern Rocky Mountains and the Grand Canyon Ecoregion represent excellent opportunities for two new subpopulations, along with the existing population of roughly 260 lobos in the Greater Gila Bioregion.

"Her value does not depend on whether she can breed," said Smith. "She is a wild wolf who has proven she can take care of herself in the wild, and should be allowed to do so."

Colorado voters weigh a ban on hunting mountain lions as attitudes toward wild predators shift

Kevin Crooks & Rebecca Niemiec | The Conversation | September 14, 2024



In Colorado, many people run, bike and climb in mountain lion habitat. DEA/ C. Dani I. Jeske/De Agostini via Getty Images

Hunting large carnivores is a contentious issue in wildlife management and conservation. It's on the ballot in fall 2024 in Colorado, where voters will consider Proposition 127, a proposed ban on hunting and trapping of mountain lions, bobcats and lynx in the state.

Wildlife agencies often use regulated hunting as a tool for controlling carnivore populations, reducing their impacts on vulnerable wildlife or minimizing the risk of conflict between carnivores and people, pets and livestock. But scientific studies have questioned how effectively recreational hunting achieves these goals. And public attitudes are shifting as participation in hunting declines.

We direct Colorado State University's Center for Human-Carnivore Coexistence and Animal-Human Policy Center. Together with our colleague Benjamin Ghasemi, we recently surveyed Colorado residents about their perceptions of hunting mountain lions



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Mountain lions are rarely seen feeding on their prey.

In this video taken by trail cam, a mountain lion returns to the site of its cached prey. They prey primarily on deer and elk and often stay largely undetected by people as they prefer to move in secrecy between dusk and dawn. If you encounter a mountain lion, it's important to know what to do. Learn more by clicking the link in our bio. #wildlifewednesday

— [CLICK TO VIEW VIDEO via INSTAGRAM](#) —

and black bears in the state.

We found that support for hunting depended on the purpose, with most Coloradans disapproving of hunting for trophies or sport. Gender, age and other demographic factors also played roles.

Meet the neighbors

Mountain lions, also known as cougars or pumas, live primarily in the western U.S. and are legally hunted in all western states except California. Black bears, which live mainly in mountainous and forested regions across the continental U.S., are hunted in the majority of states in which they are found.

The Colorado Parks and Wildlife agency estimates that roughly 3,800 to 4,400 adult mountain lions and 17,000 to 20,000 black bears live in Colorado. They are found mainly in the Rocky Mountains, with the eastern edges of their ranges near more human-populated areas in the Front Range.

According to state data, hunters in Colorado killed 502 mountain lions during the 2022-2023 hunting season and 1,299 black bears during the 2023 season.

Both species come into conflict with people in the state. The most common situation is when bears wander into mountain towns in search of garbage or other foods left by humans. Mountain lions are occasionally sighted in urban areas, and on rare occasions have attacked people.

Varying views of hunting

Our study gathered responses from Colorado residents through two public mail surveys. Samples were weighted to be representative of state population demographics, including age, gender, urbanization level, geographical region and participation in hunting.

Respondents' views on legal and regulated hunting of mountain lions were evenly split, with 41% approving and 41% disapproving. This was also true for black bears: 46% approved of hunting them, and 46% disapproved.

Large majorities disapproved of hunting either animal for trophies, hide or fur, or for recreation.

For mountain lions, 78% of respondents disapproved of trophy hunting; for black bears, 86% disapproved of trophy hunting. People also generally disapproved of hunting either species for meat.



Residents of Silverton, Colo., react after a mother bear that wandered into town in September 2024 was shot with a bean bag, intended as a nonlethal hazing method, and died.

Respondents were more supportive of hunts for other reasons. They approved of hunting mountain lions and black bears to protect human safety by 63% and 57%, respectively. And 56% approved of hunting mountain lions to reduce harm to livestock.

Large majorities disapproved of hunting mountain lions with dogs (88%) or recorded electronic calls (75%). Most mountain lions hunted in Colorado are legally taken with the aid of dogs, which chase and then tree or corner the cats. Using electronic calls to attract the cats was permitted in some parts of western Colorado until 2024, when the practice was banned for hunting mountain lions. It remains legal for hunting other carnivores, such as bobcats and coyotes.

Women, younger people, urban residents and people who identified as or leaned Democratic tended to be less supportive of hunting than men, older people, rural residents and Republicans. A study we published in 2022 on the reintroduction of wolves to Colorado found a similar political split, with stronger support for restoring wolves among people who identified as Democratic than among Republicans.

Perspectives on hunting mountain lions in Colorado are shaped by age, gender, residency and political outlook

A survey of 462 Colorado residents found that younger people, women, those who live in urban or suburban areas and those who identified as or leaned Democratic were less likely to support hunting mountain lions than older respondents, men, people who lived in rural areas and those who identified as or leaned Republican. In November 2024, Colorado voters will consider a ballot initiative that would outlaw mountain lion hunting in the state.

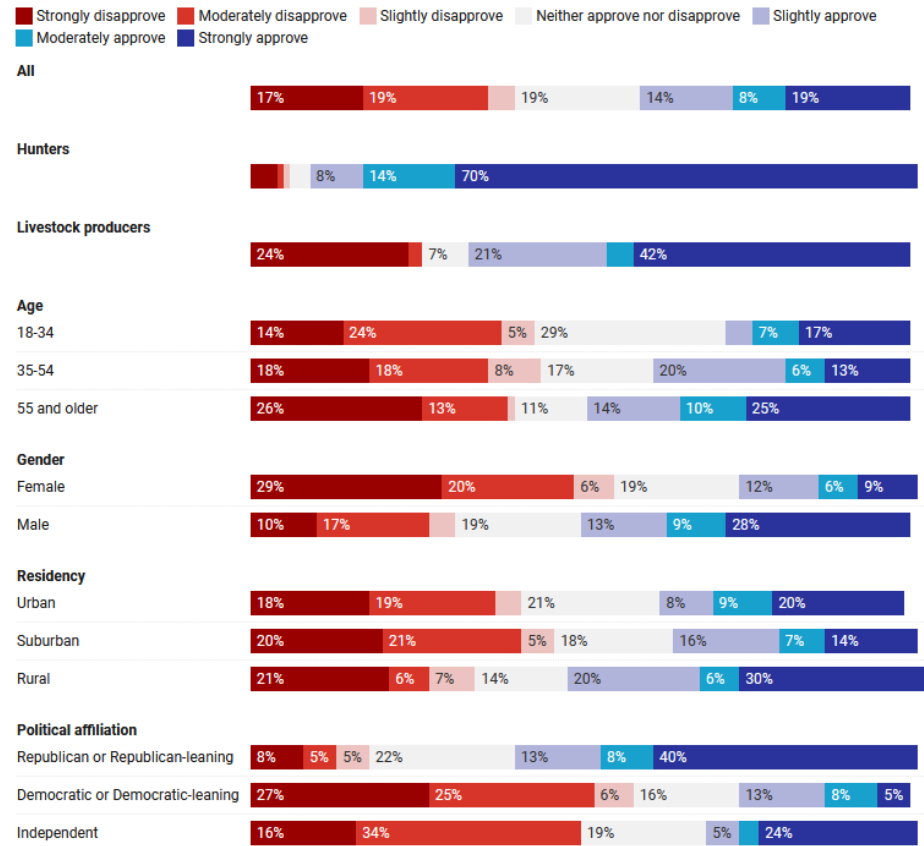


Chart: The Conversation, CC BY-ND • Source: Ghasemi, Niemiec and Crooks 2024 • Get the data • Created with Datawrapper

How to coexist with carnivores?

Although Coloradans were generally supportive of using hunting to reduce human conflict with black bears and mountain lions, studies suggest that it might not be the most effective tool to do so.

For example, a recent experimental study in Ontario, Canada, concluded that increased hunting of black bears did not result in less conflict – particularly during years when the bear’s natural food sources, such as nuts and berries, were limited in the wild. A long-term study on bears in Durango, Colorado, also found that availability of natural foods in the wild, and the lure of human food within the city, were the main drivers of clashes with bears.

Conversely, another study in New Jersey – which is more densely developed than Colorado, so bears may be more likely to encounter people –

found that well-regulated hunting of closely monitored black bear populations could help reduce conflict.

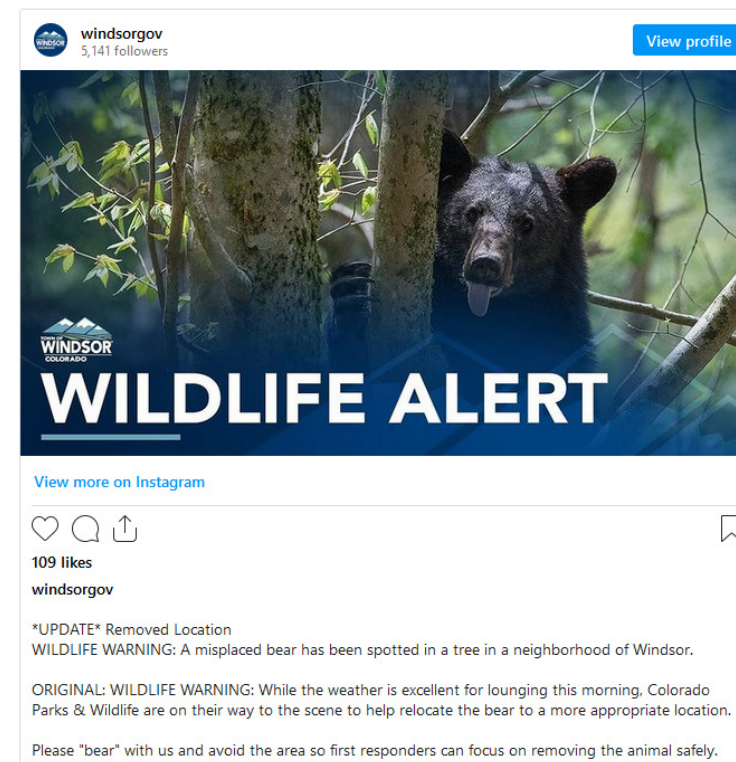
Similar to its policy with bears, Colorado uses hunting as a management tool for mountain lions. There is limited scientific evidence that hunting mountain lions may prevent conflict with them. A recent study found that juvenile mountain lions from a hunted site in Nevada tended to avoid developed areas. In contrast, young cats from a site in California without hunting did not show any preference for or against areas with people.

Yet, other correlative studies in Washington, California and Canada have suggested that hunting may make the problem worse. According to these researchers, hunting might disrupt the social dynamics and age structure of mountain lion populations, causing young cats seeking new territory to roam into populated areas, increasing their chances of encountering people.

Overall, we believe that more reliable scientific information is needed to guide carnivore management and test assumptions about how effective hunting is at addressing these problems. Continued focus on proactive, nonlethal strategies to prevent conflict is essential.

Ultimately, promoting coexistence between humans and carnivores is often much more about managing people than about managing predators. Changing human behavior is key.

For example, failing to store garbage securely attracts bears. So does filling bird feeders in spring, summer and fall, when bears are active. Steps to reduce encounters with mountain lions include hiking in groups and making noise; keeping dogs leashed in the backcountry; keeping pets indoors at home; and not landscaping with plants that attract deer, the cat’s main prey.



— CLICK TO VIEW VIDEO via INSTAGRAM —

Big cats on the ballot

Colorado’s Proposition 127 would ban hunting and trapping of mountain lions, bobcats and lynx in the state. It would allow for lethal removal of problem animals to protect human life, property and livestock.

Hunting and trapping of bobcats, mainly to sell their pelts in the fur trade, is currently legal in Colorado. On average, hunters and trappers have killed 880 bobcats annually over the past three years, the majority of which were trapped. Hunting and trapping are currently prohibited for lynx, which are listed as endangered in Colorado and threatened nationally, but

A declining share of the US population participates in hunting

Since 1970, the number of paid hunting licenses issued in the U.S. has hovered around 15 million per year. At the same time, total population has grown and become more urban. As a result, the share of Americans who hunt declined from about 8% in 1970 to 4.5% in 2020.

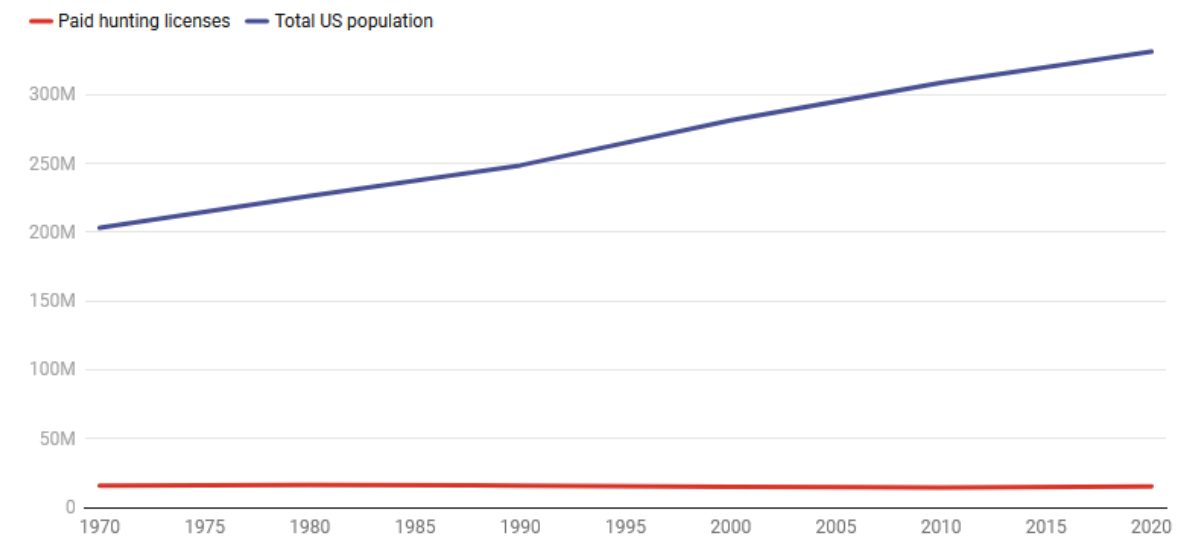


Chart: The Conversation, CC BY-ND • Source: USSFWS and Census.gov • Get the data • Embed • Download image • Created with Datawrapper

the proposed ban would protect them if their populations recover.

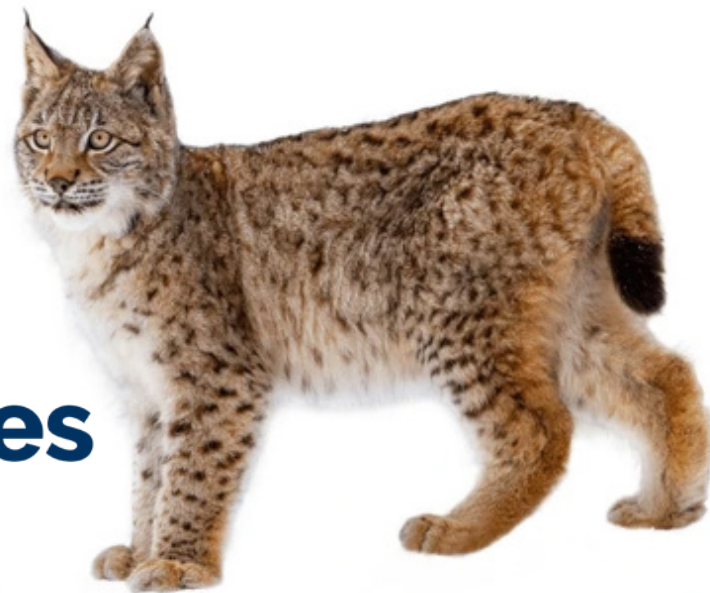
Coloradans have voted to limit carnivore hunting in the past. They passed a ballot initiative in 1992 to ban bait, hounds and a spring hunting season for bears, and another in 1996 to ban the use of leghold traps, poison and snares.

Our research adds to growing evidence that public views toward hunting and carnivores are shifting. An increasing share of Americans believes humans should coexist with carnivores and opposes lethal control for human benefit. Studies also suggest that ballot measures like Proposition 127 may become more common as public attitudes evolve and more diverse groups seek to influence wildlife management.

It will be challenging for wildlife managers to adapt to these changing values. Agencies may have to consider more participatory methods that engage diverse stakeholders in decision-making, develop new funding mechanisms that are less reliant on hunting and fishing license fees, and reexamine how and for whom they manage wild animals.



Cats Aren't Trophies



Protecting Colorado's
mountain lions, bobcats & lynx

Protect the Wild: Stand Against Trophy Killing Mountain
Lions and the Unlimited Commercial Trapping of Bobcats

THU, OCT 10, 2024 | 4-6PM

at The Wild Animal Sanctuary

2999 Co Rd 53, Keenesburg, CO 80643, USA

Learn about the life-threatening challenges Mountain Lions,
Bobcats and Lynx currently face, and engage with fellow advocates

Enjoy food and drinks

All donations will go directly to CATs for crucial marketing and
public education to pass Prop 127

CLICK HERE TO RSVP

HOWLOWEEN

**Sunday
October 27th
4-6pm**

JOIN US AS WE
PASS OUT
MEAT FILLED
PUMPKINS
TO ALL
THE WOLVES!

+ ENJOY A
BON FIRE AND
REFRESHMENTS.

\$40 ages 12+
\$20 ages 6-11

COLORADO WOLF AND WILDLIFE CENTER
Reservations Required · 719.687.9742 · wolfeducation.org

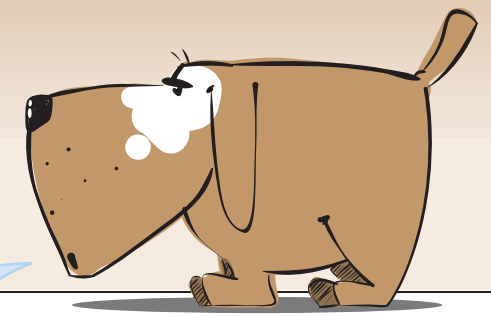
Adoption corner

TCRAS

Teller County Regional Animal Shelter
tcrascolorado.org · 719.686.7707

SLVAWS

San Luis Valley Animal Welfare Society
slvaws.org · 719.587.woof (9663)



[NOTE - Our shelter is still open for adoptions, but we are asking that you call ahead and make an appointment before coming in to the shelter - 719-686-7707.]

CATIER >>

Hello. No my name is not a typo, I'm my own designer kitty! Sounds like "Cartier" but I made it my own! I'm a shy girl, very sweet but need my own time to open up. I'd love a quiet home that is all my own where I can be spoiled with all designer kitty accessories!



<< ANGELICA

Meet Angelica! This beautiful girl was brought to TCRAS when she was only 3 weeks old. Angelica is smart and eager to please. She walks well on a leash and is eager to sit when she knows that treats are around! In her foster home she played nicely with other dogs and tried to play with the cats. Angelica would love an owner who can continue her training and socialization so she can be the best girl she can be!

MISS FUZZYKINS >>

Miss Fuzzykins is a big, fluffy dog who loves to cuddle and be with people. She loves raw hides and playing with squeaky toys. Great Pyrenees under 100 lbs. Spayed, all vacc's, chipped. 3 years old.



<< MONICA

Monica is not cross-eyed, sees great. Each iris has two different colors: sectoral heterochromia. She loves to have a chicken sleep on her back. Affectionate, active, good with children over 10 years old but has not been exposed to younger children. 56% German shepherd, 34% husky, 10% border collie. Good with dogs and cats. Shy when she came in but blossoming and loves to be outside. Spayed, all vacc's, chipped. 1 1/2 years old.



SLVAWS ADOPTION FAIR
Every Saturday at Petsmart
7680 N. Academy Blvd.
11:00am - 3:00pm