

Initiative 91: Prohibit Bobcat, Lynx, and Mountain Lion Hunting

Placed on the ballot by citizen initiative • Passes with a majority vote

1 Initiative 91 proposes amending the Colorado statutes to:

- 2 • prohibit the hunting of a bobcat, lynx, or mountain lion; and
- 3 • establish penalties for any violations.

4 What Your Vote Means

5 YES

6 A “yes” vote on Initiative 91 would make it
7 illegal to hunt bobcats, lynx, and mountain
8 lions in Colorado.

9 NO

10 A “no” vote on Initiative 91 would
11 continue to allow the hunting of bobcats
12 and mountain lions, as regulated by
13 Colorado Parks and Wildlife. Hunting lynx
14 would remain illegal, per current state and
15 federal law.

16 Summary and Analysis of Initiative 91

17 What does Initiative 91 do?

18 The initiative would prohibit intentionally killing or attempting to kill bobcats, lynx, and
19 mountain lions in Colorado. Individuals convicted of any of these activities are subject to up
20 to 364 days in jail, a fine of up to \$1,000, or both, and a five-year hunting license suspension,
21 with more stringent penalties for subsequent convictions.

22 What is trophy hunting?

23 Trophy hunting is generally understood to be the hunting of wildlife for sport instead of for
24 food. Usually, trophy hunters stuff the animal or keep a body part to display. While the
25 measure uses the term “trophy hunting,” it bans all killing, pursuing, or entrapping of
26 bobcats, lynx, and mountain lions regardless of the hunter’s purpose.

27 If the measure passes, are there any exemptions?

28 Under the measure, certain scenarios are not considered trophy hunting, including when
29 these animals are killed:

- 30 • in the defense of human life, livestock, personal property, or a motor vehicle;
- 31 • by an employee or contractor of any federal, state, or local agency acting in an official
32 capacity or with a special license from Colorado Parks and Wildlife, including animals
33 that pose a threat to agricultural resources;

- 1 • as a result of an accident involving a motor vehicle, vessel, or train; or
- 2 • for scientific research or humane euthanasia.

3 **How is hunting regulated in Colorado?**

4 The Colorado Parks and Wildlife Commission, known as Colorado Parks and Wildlife (CPW),
 5 is responsible for wildlife management in Colorado and regulates hunting, fishing, and
 6 trapping. State law requires wildlife and their environment to be protected, preserved,
 7 enhanced, and managed for the use, benefit, and enjoyment of the people and visitors of
 8 Colorado.

9 CPW manages different species differently and imposes hunting regulations based on these
 10 management goals. Table 1 discusses each of the animals in the measure and outlines the
 11 current hunting regulations.

12 **Table 1**
 13 **Bobcats, Lynx, and Mountain Lions in Colorado**

	Bobcats	Lynx	Mountain Lions
Description of animals	Bobcats are medium-sized cats, ranging from 28-37 inches long fully grown with reddish fur, often with distinctive black spots and black stripes. They have a stubbed tail and short tufted ears.	Lynx are medium-sized cats, ranging from 31-51 inches long fully grown with grayish fur. They often have large back paws, long tufts on their ears, and a solid black stubbed tail.	Mountain lions are large cats, over six feet long fully grown, with a long black tipped tail. They are also known as cougars, pumas, panthers, or catamounts.
Species conservation status	Bobcats are not currently classified as threatened in Colorado or in the United States. Their exact number is uncertain, but it is estimated that there are approximately several thousand within the state.	The lynx (also called the Canada lynx) is currently listed as endangered in Colorado and is nationally threatened. Colorado began its effort to reintroduce lynx in 1999 and now has what is considered a stable population. Due to their status, they are protected by state and federal law, making their hunting and trapping illegal.	Mountain lions are not currently classified as threatened in Colorado or in the United States. There are an estimated 3,800-4,400 mountain lions in the state.

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2

**Table 1 (cont.)
Bobcats, Lynx, and Mountain Lions in Colorado**

	Bobcats	Lynx	Mountain Lions
Hunting regulations	All hunters in Colorado must have a Hunter Education certification to buy a hunting license. Bobcats can be hunted with a small-game license between December and February, and there is no limit on how many bobcats can be hunted. All killed bobcats and their pelts must be inspected and tagged by CPW.	State and federal law currently ban all hunting and trapping of lynx, punishable by possible fines, imprisonment, or hunting license suspension.	In addition to a Hunter Education certification, hunters must have a special Mountain Lion Education certificate to buy a mountain lion hunting license. CPW limits when, where, how many, and the way mountain lions can be hunted each year. All killed lions must be inspected by CPW, and all edible meat must be prepared for human consumption. CPW must be allowed to collect teeth from the lion to track the ages of those killed.
Statistics on annual kills	Over the last three years, an average of 880 bobcats have been killed per year.	There have been no reported kills of lynx in Colorado.	Over the last three years, an average of 500 mountain lions have been killed per year.

3 **How would this measure change reimbursements for big game damage?**

4 Under current law, Colorado may provide reimbursement to landowners for damage to
5 crops, fences, orchards, nurseries, personal property, or livestock from any “big game”
6 species, including mountain lions. Colorado does not provide reimbursement for damage
7 caused by lynx or bobcats. This measure would remove mountain lions from the definition of
8 big game, making landowners ineligible for reimbursement for any damage caused by a
9 mountain lion.

For information on those issue committees that support or oppose the measures on the ballot at the November 5, 2024, election, go to the Colorado Secretary of State’s elections center web site hyperlink for ballot and initiative information:

<https://coloradosos.gov/pubs/elections/Initiatives/InitiativesHome.html>

10 **Arguments For Initiative 91**

11 1) This measure prevents the inhumane killing of big cats. Hunting of these animals
12 involves techniques such as baits, lures, traps, and dog chases to capture and kill them,

1 causing unnecessary pain and trauma. Even though it is illegal to hunt lynx, they are
2 attracted to similar bait as bobcats, so they can end up caught and killed by a bobcat
3 trap.

4 2) Bobcat and mountain lion populations do not require hunting to regulate their numbers.
5 Research does not support that banning hunting of these animals will increase the
6 density of a population or cause any negative effects on their habitat and environment.
7 Big cats provide valuable ecological contributions and Colorado should protect them
8 instead of allowing them to be hunted.

9 **Arguments Against Initiative 91**

10 1) Wildlife management in Colorado should be overseen by experts who make
11 science-based decisions to achieve the state's ecological objectives, which include
12 preserving biodiversity, ensuring sustainable ecosystems, and protecting endangered
13 species. This measure threatens to undermine these objectives by disregarding the
14 expertise and research necessary for effective wildlife management. Furthermore,
15 hunting lynx is already illegal.

16 2) The banning of trophy hunting would increase the population of these big cats and the
17 chance of potentially harmful encounters with humans, livestock, and pets. People in
18 Colorado have experienced an increase in dangerous wildlife encounters in recent years,
19 and the measure would allow populations of these big cats to go unregulated.

20 **Fiscal Impact of Initiative 91**

21 The fiscal impact will be included in the second draft.