

Proposition __ : Prohibit Bobcat, Lynx, and Mountain Lion Hunting

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

1 **Proposition __ proposes amending the Colorado statutes to:**

- 2 • prohibit the hunting of bobcats, lynx, and mountain lions;
- 3 • allow individuals to kill these animals to defend human life, livestock, and
- 4 property, among other exceptions; and
- 5 • establish penalties for violations.

6 **What Your Vote Means**

7 **YES**

8 A “yes” vote on Proposition __ would
9 make it illegal to hunt bobcats, lynx, and
10 mountain lions in Colorado.

11 **NO**

12 A “no” vote on Proposition __ would
13 continue to allow the hunting of bobcats
14 and mountain lions, as it is currently
15 regulated. Hunting lynx would remain
16 illegal, per current state and federal law.

17 **Summary and Analysis of Proposition __**

18 **What does Proposition __ do?**

19 Proposition _ would prohibit intentionally killing, wounding, pursuing, entrapping, or
20 discharging a deadly weapon at bobcats, lynx, and mountain lions in Colorado. While the
21 measure uses the term “trophy hunting,” it bans all killing, pursuing, or entrapping of
22 bobcats, lynx, and mountain lions regardless of the hunter’s purpose. Individuals convicted
23 of any of these activities are subject to up to 364 days in jail, a fine of up to \$1,000, or both,
24 and a five-year prohibition on holding a license issued by Colorado Parks and Wildlife
25 (CPW), with more stringent penalties for subsequent convictions.

26 **If the measure passes, are there any exemptions?**

27 Certain scenarios are not considered trophy hunting under the measure and thus are not
28 prohibited, including when bobcats, lynx, or mountain lions are killed:

- 29 • in the defense of human life, livestock, personal property, or a motor vehicle;
- 30 • by an employee or contractor of any federal, state, or local agency acting in an official
- 31 capacity or with a special license from the CPW, including to manage animals that pose a
- 32 threat to agricultural resources;
- 33 • as a result of an accident involving a motor vehicle, vessel, or train; or

- for scientific research or humane euthanasia.

How is hunting regulated in Colorado?

The CPW is responsible for wildlife management in Colorado and regulates hunting, fishing, and trapping. State law requires wildlife and their environment to be protected, preserved, enhanced, and managed for the use, benefit, and enjoyment of the people and visitors of Colorado. The CPW manages individual animal species differently and imposes hunting, fishing, and trapping regulations to meet management goals. Table 1 discusses the differences between bobcats, lynx, and mountain lions and the different hunting regulations associated with each.

Table 1
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 Colorado's bobcat population is considered stable. | 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 to 4,400 mountain lions in the state, which is considered a stable population. |
| Hunting regulations | All hunters in Colorado must have a Hunter Education certification to buy a hunting license. Bobcats can be hunted with a furbearer license between December and February, and there is no limit on how many bobcats can be hunted. | State and federal law currently bans 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. The CPW limits when, where, how many, and the way mountain lions can be |

| | | | |
|---------------------------|---|--|--|
| | All harvested bobcats or their pelts must be inspected and tagged by the CPW. | | hunted each year. All harvested lions must be inspected by the CPW, and all edible meat must be prepared for human consumption. The CPW must be allowed to collect teeth from the lion to track the ages of those harvested. |
| Hunting statistics | From 2020 to 2023, an average of 900 bobcats were harvested per year. | There have been no reported kills of lynx in Colorado. | From 2020 to 2023, an average of 500 mountain lions were harvested per year. |

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

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

8 **Arguments For Proposition** __

- 9 1) Hunting bobcats and mountain lions is unsporting and causes the animals pain and
 10 trauma, as it often involves baits, lures, traps, or dog-chases. The hunting of these
 11 animals, which is typically for trophies and the commercial fur trade, is unnecessary.
- 12 2) Bobcat and mountain lion populations do not require hunting or trapping to regulate
 13 their numbers, and there is no evidence that banning hunting will increase the density of
 14 their populations or create any new dangers to the public. Big cats provide valuable
 15 ecological contributions and Colorado should protect them instead of allowing them to
 16 be hunted. Where circumstances warrant it, federal, state, and local officials will still be
 17 allowed to protect human life with lethal and non-lethal methods.

18 **Arguments Against Proposition** __

- 19 1) The proposition restricts the ability of wildlife management experts and the CPW to
 20 make science-based decisions to achieve the state’s ecological objectives which include
 21 preserving biodiversity, ensuring sustainable ecosystems, and protecting endangered

- 1 species. The state currently manages a stable population of bobcats and mountain lions,
2 proving that its current management practices, which include regulated hunting, are
3 working. This measure undermines these objectives by disregarding the expertise and
4 research necessary for effective wildlife management. Furthermore, hunting lynx is
5 already illegal and the population is considered stable.
- 6 2) Banning hunting could increase the population of these big cats and the chance of
7 potentially dangerous encounters with humans, livestock, and pets. Controlled hunting
8 also provides a source of income to the state wildlife management system, which would
9 be lost if the measure passes.

10 **Fiscal Impact of Proposition __**

11 **State revenue.** The measure is anticipated to decrease state revenue to the CPW in the
12 Department of Natural Resources by about \$410,000 through June 2025, and by about
13 \$450,000 per year thereafter. This revenue reduction is the result of the elimination of all
14 mountain lion hunting license sales, and some reduction of furbearer hunting license sales.
15 To the extent that prohibited hunting occurs, the state may receive additional revenue from
16 fines or civil penalties.

17 **State spending.** The CPW may have a small increase in workload to investigate, prosecute,
18 hear civil and criminal cases, restrict a wildlife license, and other related activities if illegal
19 hunting of mountain lions occurs. The measure will also reduce state spending on big game
20 damage claims paid to landowners, as mountain lions are no longer covered under this
21 program. Overall, these impacts are anticipated to be minimal.