



WILDLIFE SERVICES

A Government Agency Under the U.S. Department of Agriculture

WILDLIFE SERVICES

Coyotes, wolves, mountain lions, bears, and other native wildlife are being killed by Wildlife Services, a rogue federal program under the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s, Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service. Tasked “to resolve wildlife conflicts to allow people and wildlife to coexist,” Wildlife Services’ tactics are in fact destroying ecosystems, killing millions of animals, and — in some cases — violating laws.

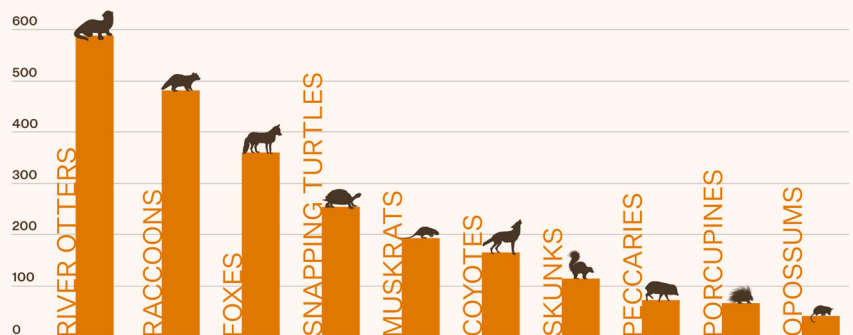
For more than 100 years, dating back to 1885, Congress has funded lethal programs designed to benefit the special interests of ranchers and farmers who believe animals farmed for animal agriculture are in competition with native predators for land.

WILDLIFE SERVICES’ ANNUAL REPORTING

Each year Wildlife Services publishes a report detailing the number of animals they killed and the methods used. In 2021, Wildlife Services killed more than 1.75 million animals, over 400,000 of which were native species, and nearly 3,000 were accidental deaths.

TOP SPECIES UNINTENTIONALLY KILLED IN 2021

Though traps and poison can be set in ways that increase the likelihood of killing specific animals, they can kill a range of non-target animals too.



Source: USDA Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service.

Unintended targets also included animals covered under the Endangered Species Act and companion animals.



**ANIMAL LEGAL
DEFENSE FUND**

aldf.org

PAINFUL KILLING METHODS

TRAPS

Traps are regularly set and left unattended. According to the agency, they are checked as often as is required by state law, unless exceptions are obtained, however, former Wildlife Services employees report widespread corruption, including that traps could go unchecked for weeks or longer.



Neck snares



Foot hold traps



Body grips designed to crush animals inside

Animals who are found alive in a trap are killed. Others die of exposure, starvation, and predation.

POISONS

Wildlife Services uses spring-activated M-44 cyanide capsules. A small nozzle wrapped in cloth is exposed above ground and baited with a sweet scent, attracting a “bite and pull” response from animals such as coyotes, according to Wildlife Services. Any animal that pulls on the device triggers it to spray. The poison causes internal bleeding, seizures, or lung failure before the animal dies.

Last year’s M-44 unintentional deaths included 266 gray foxes, 16 red foxes, and 23 raccoons

HUNTING VIA AIRCRAFT

PUBLIC SAFETY RISK

Many “non-target” animals, including dogs and cats, become unintended victims due to indiscriminate methods such as poison baits, cyanide traps (known as M-44s), leghold traps, and neck snares.

- In 2017, an M-44 cyanide trap went off in the face of Canyon Mansfield, a 14-year old Idaho boy who was walking his dog on their property. Their dog, Casey, died.
- An investigation by the Sacramento Bee exposed that between 2000 and 2012, more than 1,100 dogs were killed by the devices.

NEGATIVE ECOLOGICAL IMPACT

Targeting top predators wreaks havoc on ecosystems. Small mammal densities can surge and encourage diseases to spread and invasive flora to thrive. Killing apex predators is also ineffective at decreasing the overall population. Coyotes, for example, typically eat small animals and studies show when coyote numbers decrease, prey animal populations increase. As a result, mother coyotes have larger litters and decades of killing has not reduced overall coyote numbers. Killing an adult male mountain lion tends to lead to *more* attacks on domestic animals because removing that established male encourages more aggressive juvenile lions to take his place.

NON-LETHAL MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES

Non-lethal options offer better solutions for mitigating human-animal conflict. Fladry, for example, are flags mounted on a fence line, which creates a visual barrier that effectively deter wolves. Light and sound-generating devices are other tools, as well as physically protecting animals when they are most vulnerable, such as penning them up at night or keeping sheep indoors when they are lambing. Cleaning up afterbirth and dead animals quickly is also effective.

