



**THE HUMANE SOCIETY  
OF THE UNITED STATES**

**Testimony in Opposition to HB 4080  
Presented to the House Committee on Environment and Natural Resources  
By Haley Stewart, Program Manager, Wildlife Protection  
The Humane Society of the United States  
February 9, 2022**

Good afternoon Chair Marsh and Members of the Committee,

My name is Haley Stewart and I am speaking today on behalf of the Humane Society of the United States and our supporters in Oregon. I've worked on wildlife management policy for more than a decade, have a master's certificate in Wildlife Management from Oregon State University, and am a resident of Beaverton.

The HSUS is opposed to HB 4080 because it would provide funding for USDA Wildlife Services to prevent, reduce or mitigate damage to property caused by wildlife. Unfortunately, HB 4080 includes no requirements for Wildlife Services to use effective and readily available non-lethal methods prior to using lethal force. In other words, the agency may kill wild animals, prior to conflicts occurring, without even attempting to provide tools and training to Oregonians for non-lethal options. Requiring the use of non-lethal approaches can spare the lives of both wild animals and livestock, humanely preventing conflicts from happening in the first place. We cannot support the bill without such requirements which are beneficial to both Oregonians and wildlife alike.

Moreover, Wildlife Services continues to use some of the cruelest practices imaginable to kill Oregon's wildlife, including snares, cages, traps, and aerial gunning. The agency continues to kill cougars, foxes, coyotes and other wildlife with wire neck snares, where these animals are left for hours or days on end to eventually suffocate to death. The agency also uses foothold traps, a method that often results in animals chewing off their own limbs in attempt to break free. Additionally, Oregon's rules regarding trap check times for certain animals designated as predatory species, such as coyotes and beavers, are the longest in the nation. These animals may languish in neck snares and conibear traps, so called "quick kill traps" for up to 30 days on private property without being checked. There are no trap check times for bears whatsoever.

A recent study found that so-called "quick-kill" traps and snares may be anything but. The researchers found: "Because these killing devices are not powerful enough for the target species, the trigger systems do not properly position the animals in traps, or trappers are inexperienced and improperly set traps or snares, these killing devices become restraining devices, and animals suffer long and painful deaths."<sup>1</sup>

That is why the Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies instructs new trappers to check traps daily, the American Veterinary Medical Association recommends checking traps once every 24 hours, and the American Association of Mammologists suggests twice daily or even more frequently.

Last year, Wildlife Services used gas cartridges to kill nearly 200 marmots, ground squirrels, coyotes, and foxes in Oregon. They also killed nearly 500 coyotes by killing them from planes or helicopters. In the fiscal year ending in June 2020, Wildlife Services killed more than 200,000 wild animals in Oregon. More than 10,000 were native wildlife, including 210 bears, 2,147 coyotes and 92 cougars.<sup>2</sup>

Oregon would never accept such treatment for companion animals, and we must be open and honest about how wild animals are managed in our state. These methods are not acceptable to the vast majority of Oregonians and no longer deserve a place in our state's wildlife management "toolbox" as more humane and effective method for addressing conflicts are readily available. Rather than hastily passing legislation, we respectfully request that this legislature set up a process to evaluate Wildlife Services, their practices in Oregon, and how tax dollars can best serve citizens and wildlife alike. For these reasons, we urge you to vote no on HB 4080. Thank you.

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<sup>1</sup> Proulx, G., & Rodtka, D. (2019). Killing Traps and Snares in North America: The Need for Stricter Checking Time Periods. *Animals : an open access journal from MDPI*, 9(8), 570. <https://doi.org/10.3390/ani9080570>

<sup>2</sup> US Department of Agriculture. 2021. Program Data Report G – 2020, Animals Dispersed / Killed or Euthanized / Removed or Destroyed / Freed or Relocated. Retrieved from [https://www.aphis.usda.gov/aphis/ourfocus/wildlifedamage/pdr/?file=PDR-G\\_Report&p=2020:INDEX; Data filtered for the state of Oregon.](https://www.aphis.usda.gov/aphis/ourfocus/wildlifedamage/pdr/?file=PDR-G_Report&p=2020:INDEX; Data filtered for the state of Oregon.)