



## Support AB 273: The Wildlife Protection Act of 2019



**SCIL**  
Social Compassion  
in Legislation

Each year, hundreds of animals including gray foxes, coyotes, badgers, beavers and mink are trapped and killed in California so that their pelts can be sold in foreign fur markets. This antiquated, ecologically destructive and cruel practice threatens local persistence of native species, contradicts conservation values held by most Californians and wastes taxpayer money. The Wildlife Protection Act of 2019 (AB 273 - Gonzalez) would end commercial trapping statewide, preventing the subsidized exploitation of our natural heritage for the international fur trade while supporting healthy ecosystems, local economies and science-based wildlife management.

### **AB 273 Conserves Wildlife and Local Ecosystems by Prohibiting Fur Trapping**

Although fur trapping historically contributed to the extirpation of wolves and wolverines as well as severe declines in sea otters, fishers, marten and beaver in California, the destructive practice continues today for more than ten fur-bearing species. In 2017 more than 1,500 animals were killed statewide by the mere 68 commercial trappers who reported participating in the archaic industry, for pelts generating only approximately \$4,500 in combined fur sales or \$67 per trapper, and worth an estimated total value of less than \$10,600. Coyote pelts sold for \$73 while gray fox fetched a paltry \$12. The price Russian and Chinese fur companies pay for these animal's pails in comparison to their ecological value in fragile local ecosystems.

Mesocarnivores, or small to midsized mammals such as foxes, badgers, coyotes and mink, play a critical role in maintaining biodiversity, and are important drivers of ecosystem function, structure and dynamics. However, due to concentrated trapping in constrained geographic areas and unlimited trapping quotas, local populations could suffer severe depletion in one trapping season, or even be extirpated by a single trapper in portions of the state. For example, over the past three years, more than 200 foxes were killed for their fur in Los Angeles County, threatening to drive down the local fox population, impair ecological processes and damage natural communities.



### **AB 273 Saves Financial Resources by Ending Taxpayer-Subsidized Commercial Trapping**

The commercial trapping program in California is de facto taxpayer subsidized. A total of 113 fur trappers bought licenses last year, generating approximately \$15,000 for the Department of Fish and Wildlife (DFW). Given that this license revenue covers only a tiny fraction of the salary of a single scientist, warden or other DFW employee, proper management and enforcement of the fur trapping program necessarily results in subsidization of the declining industry. Notably, when the Fish and Game Commission voted to ban commercial trapping of bobcats in 2015, the program's funding shortfall was key to the decision.

Moreover, given that DFW is chronically underfunded and lacks a sufficient budget to robustly manage imperiled and nongame species, subsidizing the commercial exploitation of native wildlife for the benefit of a few dozen people lacks fiscal sense.

For more information, please contact:

Jenny Keatinge, Center for Biological Diversity, [jkeatinge@biologicaldiversity.org](mailto:jkeatinge@biologicaldiversity.org)  
Nickolaus Sacket, Social Compassion in Legislation, [nick@socialcompassion.org](mailto:nick@socialcompassion.org)

### AB 273 Aligns with California Values by Bringing Wildlife Management into the 21<sup>st</sup> Century

Approximately 6.73 million Californians actively participate in wildlife watching for outdoor recreation, according to a U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service report. In 2011, wildlife watching, including equipment and trip-related expenses, generated more than \$3.77 billion in sustainable annual revenue to California's economy, supporting nearly 77,000 jobs. These jobs produced more than \$3.01 billion in employment income that contributed approximately \$648 million in state and local tax revenues. The minimal revenue fur trapping generates is dwarfed by the amount wildlife watching

contributes to our economy, demonstrating how much more Californians value wildlife alive rather than as commodities to be killed and skinned for foreign fur markets.

Commercial fur trapping is an antiquated practice that can involve killing animals through strangulation, shooting, gassing and worse to ensure undamaged pelts. This cruel and inhumane process has led many famous brands to commit to going fur-free, including companies like Burberry, Versace, Gucci, Michael Kors, Armani, Stella McCartney, Tommy Hilfiger, Ralph Lauren and Calvin Klein, among others.

*Commercial fur trapping is ecologically, economically and ethically bad policy.  
Support AB 273 and stop the unnecessary, egregious killing of our native wildlife today.*

### AB 273 Modifies Existing Law to Protect Vulnerable Species from Fur Trapping

- Under existing law, fur trappers must procure a trapping license to capture certain fur-bearing and nongame mammals, including gray fox, coyote, badger, beaver, mink, raccoon and others. Licensed fur dealers may also lawfully trap these species.
- Under existing law, the raw fur of certain fur-bearing and nongame mammals may be sold by licensed trappers or fur dealers, while sale of raw fur taken for pest-control or depredation purposes may not be sold.
- AB 273 would prohibit trapping of any fur-bearing or nongame mammal for recreational or commercial purposes and prohibit the sale of all fur from any fur-bearing or nongame mammal.
- AB 273 would not alter existing law related to the hunting of fur-bearing and non-game mammals or the taking of fur-bearing and nongame mammals found injuring crops or property.
- California has already banned commercial trapping of bobcats, river otters and red foxes statewide.



For more information, please contact:

Jenny Keatinge, Center for Biological Diversity, [jkeatinge@biologicaldiversity.org](mailto:jkeatinge@biologicaldiversity.org)  
Nickolaus Sacket, Social Compassion in Legislation, [nick@socialcompassion.org](mailto:nick@socialcompassion.org)