



Arizona Wildlife Federation
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**Arizona Wildlife Federation Position Statement on the
September 25, 2017 Humane Society Proposed Initiative to Ban the killing of all
Arizona Cat Species; Mountain Lion, Bobcat, Lynx, Jaguar and Ocelot in Arizona**

The Arizona Wildlife Federation (AWF), a 501(c) 3 non-profit corporation was founded in 1923 to take politics out of Arizona's game and fish management and to promote the management of Arizona's wildlife and natural resources based on the principles of 'sound science'. The AWF got its start as the Arizona Game Protection Association and will celebrate 95 years of Arizona conservation activity in 2018. AWF believes in the [North American Model of Wildlife Conservation](#) and the principles of sound science and best governance for all Arizona wildlife species.

The AWF has reviewed the proposed initiative language and suggested modifications to state wildlife statutes by the *Arizonans for Wildlife* – a newly formed front group of the *Humane Society of the US* - which would modify state wildlife statutes to ban sport hunting of all wild cats in AZ. The initiative is both misguided and biologically flawed and does not consider the science behind the Arizona Game and Fish Departments management of these species. In fact, Lynx have just recently been recorded as a species of occurrence in Arizona. Ocelots have been recently confirmed in southeastern Arizona in one canyon with no evidence of a breeding population. Only seven male Jaguars have been recorded since 1996 with no evidence of a breeding population. Of these three federally protected endangered species not one has been recorded as taken either purposely or by accident by any Arizona sport hunter, trapper or resident.

Bobcat and mountain lion populations are robust as evidenced by the annual Arizona Game and Fish Department's management records which estimate a minimum population of 62,000 bobcats and a mountain lion population estimated at between 2,000 and 2,500 animals. Bobcat take averages 3,731 per year and in 2016 records show that 10,577 sportspersons purchased a tag to hunt mountain lion with a resulting harvest of just 313 animals. Those required annual tags purchased created \$200,000 in revenue which is used to employ a full-time professional carnivore biologist. It also provides funding to analyze bobcat and mountain lion tooth data, conduct population modeling and ensure that conservative management guidelines are utilized to maintain healthy bobcat and mountain lion populations. There are no data which suggests that bobcat or mountain lion populations are being negatively impacted under current harvest levels or guidelines.

Position

This initiative proposes to permanently remove key wildlife management tools used by Arizona's professional wildlife managers, which are supported by both the North American Model of Wildlife Management and paid for by hunters to ensure healthy populations. It chooses to prohibit certain methods of wildlife harvest that are legal and carefully regulated. It will permanently remove \$200,000 of feline wildlife management funding. It ignores the science and population data for Arizona's wild cat species demonstrating they are present in robust populations.

In conclusion, the AWF recommends that well informed Arizona residents and voters ignore this attempt to pit personal emotion over wildlife science and to reject this proposal based on sound wildlife science and management.