

Longtime Former Top U.S. Wildlife Management Official Endorses Prop 127, Cats Aren't Trophies

Former director U.S. Fish and Wildlife joins 22 wildlife professionals urging voters to stop trophy hunting, commercial trapping Colorado native wild cats

GRAND LAKE, CO, UNITED STATES, September 19, 2024 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Native wild cats picked up support from one of the most trusted voices in American wildlife management — the distinguished former head of our U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Former Chief Dan Ashe enthusiastically endorsed Prop 127 in an Opinion piece published today in a Colorado newspaper that read:

“Today, I am one more wildlife professional, and hunter, proudly adding my name and voice in support of Proposition 127 — Cats Aren't Trophies,” Ashe said.

Ashe has more than four decades experience in the field of wildlife management and conservation. He served for 22 years at the wildlife agency, as leader of America's 570-unit National Wildlife Refuge System, the world's largest system of lands and waters dedicated to wildlife conservation, at nearly 1 billion acres.

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*Dan Ashe, Former Director,
U.S. Fish and Wildlife*

“Killing 500 lions, every year, in Colorado is not simply unscientific and unethical, it is interrupting their vital work as a bulwark against CWD,” Ashe said, referring to the scourge of Chronic Wasting Disease, which is our biggest threat to healthy deer and elk populations, as well as deer and elk hunting today in Colorado and the West.

Ashe is a lifelong hunter, and says the methods used to hound and tree mountain lions and bobcats violates a foundational value of 'fair chase' and diminishes as well as harms the vital role of mountain lions in checking the spread of CWD that affects 42 of Colorado's 51 deer herds and 17 of 42 elk herds with an always fatal brain-wasting disease that has no cure.

“There is good science that lions will selectively prey on CWD-infected animals, and that makes sense, because infected animals would be weaker and easier to kill. And what we can observe is



Mountain
Lion Kitten,
Credit
National
Park Service

that where there are no lions, there are higher rates of CWD-infected animals, and where there are lions, there are low levels of CWD infection, or none at all.”

Ashe joins Colorado’s key leader in wildlife management, Elaine Leslie, former Chief of Biological Resources at National Park Service, a resident of Durango, a city where 25% of its population signed the petition to put Prop 127 on the ballot.

Leslie has done extensive studies on mountain lions, and joined 21 other wildlife scientists with a combined experience of more than a century to also enthusiastically endorse Prop 127 last week. They did so in a letter that explained that mountain lions, according to our best rigorous science, have not ever needed to be managed through hunting programs like Colorado’s for population control, because they are limited to vast territories, and nature will never allow for too many lions on the landscape.

“As experts in biology and ecology, we write to describe scientific conclusions and consensus about issues related to mountain lion management. We hope that sharing our understanding of this science will help Colorado voters make informed choices on Proposition 127. Mountain lion trophy hunting is unnecessary to manage stable mountain lion populations and serves no management purpose. Colorado Parks and Wildlife considers mountain lion trophy hunting a “recreational opportunity.” Several studies have shown mountain lions, and other wild felids like bobcats, are self-regulating. Wild cats evolved in Colorado’s natural ecosystems and maintain stable populations based on territorialism, intraspecific aggression, prey availability, low reproductive rates and juvenile survivorship, and other key biological and ecological characteristics.”

The letter went on to explain that Colorado’s current hunting program “may also exacerbate human-lion conflicts by removing unoffending animals from the ecosystem, leaving the door open to younger cats who are more likely to be involved in conflict.”

[Read the letter here](#): Science-letter-sign-CATs-24-09-12.pdf (catsarenttrophies.org)

Prop 127 allows for the control of individual lions that pose any threat to people, pets or livestock, which is the only proven and effective way to manage mountain lions for beneficial and proven outcomes.

About Proposition 127, Cats Aren’t Trophies:

Proposition 127, Cats Aren’t Trophies (CATs) is a broad and diverse coalition of Coloradans that includes nearly 100 wildlife and other organizations endorsing a November ballot measure to stop the cruel and inhumane trophy hunting of mountain lions and the commercial fur-trapping of bobcats in Colorado.

CATs believes that trophy hunting of mountain lions and bobcats is cruel and unsporting — a

highly commercial, high-tech head-hunting exercise that doesn't produce edible meat or sound wildlife management outcomes, but only orphaned cubs and social chaos among the surviving big cats.

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