



Assemblywoman Lorena Gonzalez, 80th Assembly District

AB 273— Ban on Fur Trapping

IN BRIEF

Assembly Bill 273 would prohibit fur trapping and the sale of raw fur in California.

BACKGROUND & PROBLEM

In California, the most commonly trapped species for fur are foxes, coyotes, badgers, skunks, muskrats, weasels, raccoons, opossums and beavers.

Historically, trapping for fur was a large industry in California. However, the harmful effects of trapping on the wildlife population go back to the early 1800s when the sea otter population along the San Francisco Bay and north coast was decimated¹. Fur trapping has also played a role in the decline of wolves, wolverines, fishers, martens and beavers in California.

Today, fur trapping in California is done on an extremely small scale relative to its heydays in the 1800s. In the 2017-18 year, only 133 commercial fur/recreational trapping licenses were sold. In 2016-17, only 120. As reported to the Department of Fish and Game, the estimated revenue received by trappers for fur sales in 2017-18 was \$10,595, an average income of \$156 per successful trapper².

However, it continues to be an inherently cruel and inhumane practice. Animals may be beaten to death after being trapped in order to avoid damaging the fur. Some animals die in the trap due to dehydration, blood loss, or hypothermia.

Fur trapping in California is also subsidized by taxpayers. Despite requirements in state law for the trapping program to cover its own costs, trapping license fees do not cover the actual cost of implementing the state's fur trapping program. The 2016-17 season cost of a trapping license was just \$117, which based on management of the licenses and enforcement costs is less than it should be to generate enough revenue to cover the cost of the fur-bearing and non-game mammal trapping program.

Just four years ago, the California Fish and Game Commission banned commercial bobcat trapping, in part based on similar concerns regarding the cost of the program³.

Fur trapping can also have unintended consequences, such as killing pets or protected wildlife, since traps are not able to discriminate.

SOLUTION

AB 273 would protect California's native wildlife from a cruel and outdated practice. The bill would prohibit the trapping of a fur-bearing or nongame mammal for the purpose of recreation or commerce in fur, and prohibit the sale of the raw fur of such an animal otherwise lawfully taken.

This prohibition would not apply to trapping for other purposes, such as in order to protect crops or property, or to any hunting purposes.

AB 273 would also eliminate the licenses for a fur dealer and fur agent in California.

SUPPORT

Social Compassion in Legislation (co-sponsor)
Center for Biological Diversity (co-sponsor)

FOR MORE INFORMATION

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¹ <https://web.sonoma.edu/asc/projects/pointreyes/overview4.pdf>
² <https://nrm.dfg.ca.gov/FileHandler.ashx?DocumentID=161328&inline>
³ <https://www.sacbee.com/news/politics-government/capitol-alert/article30187980.html>