



House Bill 366: Wildlife Protection & Public Safety Act

“Roxy’s Law” to Restrict Traps, Snares, and Poisons on Public Lands

Sponsors: Rep. Matthew McQueen, Rep. Christine Chandler, Rep. Bobby Gonzales

What does this bill do?

The Wildlife Protection & Public Safety Act **bans the use of traps, snares, and poisons on New Mexico’s public lands—unless it meets a listed exception.**

This is a reasonable solution that will protect wildlife, companion animals, and citizens enjoying New Mexico’s public lands from unnecessary and accidental suffering, injuries, and deaths—and better align the management of wildlife with modern conservation practices and New Mexico voters’ humane values—while still allowing certain key tools for ranchers and government agencies to protect public health and livestock. It will also help mitigate the emotional and financial strain of dealing with the loss or injury of an animal because of the jaws of a trap, a snare, or poisons.

EXCEPTIONS IN THE BILL:

- It does not apply to hunting, fishing, or other implements by hand used to kill wildlife.
- It does not apply to anywhere other than public land, as defined.
- It does not apply to common **rodents**, listed by species, **or birds or fish**;
- It allows government entities to protect **human health and safety**;
- It allows **ecosystem management** conducted by the NM Dept. of Game & Fish (NMDGF), the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, and Conservancy Districts;
- It allows the NMDGF to use non-lethal traps/snares to address **depredation**;
- It allows **scientific research**;
- It allows the use of live cage traps to remove animals damaging **crops, property, or livestock** on public land, and to recover lost domestic animals or feral animals;
- It allows **tribe and pueblo members** to trap for religious or ceremonial purposes.



On Thanksgiving weekend in 2018, “Roxy” strangled to death in a snare. As her owner carried her body back to his car, a bobcat caught in a leghold trap chained to a tree lashed out at him. The bobcat was so severely injured that euthanasia was required.

Why restrict traps, snares and poisons on public lands?

They are **indiscriminate** and cause **needless suffering**. Because they are non-selective, non-targeted animals—including family cats and dogs, and endangered species—fall victim to traps, snares, and poisons. Captured animals often further injure themselves while thrashing or chewing off their own limb while trying to escape. Traps often go unchecked long enough that the animal starves, dies of exposure or dehydration, or is killed by another animal before being found. Toxic poisons such as sodium cyanide (used in M-44s) and Compound 1080 result in horrific and excruciating deaths within minutes or as long as 9 traumatic hours of cardiac failure, respiratory arrest, and severe prolonged convulsions leading to eventual death.

New Mexico’s **tourism and outdoor recreation economy** is damaged by the threat of traps, snares, and poisons on public land. According to the 2011 U.S. Fish & Wildlife Survey of Wildlife-associated Recreation, wildlife-watchers in New Mexico spent \$327 million on their activities (increased since 2006) versus trappers spending only \$3.5 million (reported in a 2013 NM Department of Game & Fish-commissioned analysis). The #NewMexicoTrue campaign could be destroyed if a tourist’s dog were injured or killed on our public lands.

Current regulations are **inadequate** and **impossible to enforce**. Outdoor recreationists and their companion animals have the right to enjoy lands off-trail or off-road without worrying about encountering traps and poisons. Traps have caught both on-leash and off-leash dogs while legally set, and illegally set traps often do not have the required identification information, so the violators are never found.

They are **not necessary** to manage carnivore species to protect livestock. The U.S. Dept. of Agriculture estimates that carnivores kill only 0.18% of the total U.S. cattle inventory and 4% of the sheep inventory. Many non-lethal methods—pens, sheds, visual deterrents, guard animals, and cage traps—are effective and widely available. Eight (8) other states ban leghold traps, 14 ban body-gripping traps, and 20 ban snares. Neighboring states Colorado and Arizona banned traps on public land in the mid-1990s, and they see less livestock depredation than New Mexico.

They are **completely unrelated** to species population control or disease control.

Trapping is market driven—the number of traps littering our lands increases with pelt price, not population levels. According to the Centers for Disease Control, National Academy of Sciences, World Health Organization, and numerous other scientific, public health and veterinary organizations, use of traps and poisons is unnecessary for disease control.

August 2015 Poll of NM Voters:



“Do you support or oppose allowing the use of steel-jawed leghold traps or snares in New Mexico?”

69% Oppose Traps/Snares

22% Support

(Remington Research Group)

Some of New Mexico’s Victims


San Juan County

 Bloody trap after a tourist discovered and released a captured raven.
 Aztec Raven

Rio Arriba County

 Suffered broken leg from trap.
 "Zippo"


 "Roxy"


San Miguel County

 Found missing back leg, the other back leg dragging behind hanging by strings of flesh—veterinarians determined he chewed himself out of a trap.
 "Cub"

Los Alamos County

 "Jetta"

Sandoval County

 "Juniper"

 Gray fox found in Placitas area with leg injuries.

Santa Fe County

 Chunk of ear ripped out during struggle with the trap.
 "Noodles"

Socorro County

 Dislocated toe and cast needed, costing \$500 in veterinary bills. Rescuers suffered puncture wounds.
 "Wiley"

Valencia County


 Injured leg from trap required amputation.
 "Honey"


Doña Ana County

 "Hank"

Socorro County

 Dumped/Abandoned Carcasses
 Remains of dead bobcats, foxes, and coyotes from unchecked trap / abandoned carcasses.

Lincoln County

 Leg was bruised, swollen for days. Owner needed a tetanus shot after he bit his owner as he struggled.
 "Jasper"

Grant County

 "Banjo"