

The USDA Admits to Killing Over a Million Wild Animals Per Year to Protect Livestock

Wonder why wildlife is disappearing? The government is killing cougars, bobcats, bears, wolves and coyotes to protect cows, pigs and chickens.

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According to the U.S. Department of Agriculture's [own reports](#), it has killed over 34 million animals in the last decade alone.

Most of those animals were native, wild animals. The rest were accidental killings of domesticated animals.

In 2017 alone, the agency killed more than [1.3 million native, wild animals](#).

That figure includes:

- 319 mountain lions
- 357 gray wolves
- 552 black bears
- 1,001 bobcats
- 3,827 foxes
- 69,041 coyotes
- 15,933 prairie dogs
- 675 river otters
- 23,646 beavers
- 624,845 red-winged blackbirds

These figures are almost certainly far smaller than the actual number of animals killed, as whistle-blowing former employees of the ironically named “Wildlife Services” program of the USDA [have claimed](#) they killed far more animals than they were instructed to report:

While livestock protection is its primary charge, Wildlife Services also “kills animals for eating flowers and pet food, digging in gardens, frightening people, and other concerns that could easily be addressed using nonviolent methods,” [according to wildlife advocacy group Predator Defense](#).

“That killing is carried out with a vast arsenal of rifles, shotguns, small planes, helicopters, snowmobiles, leg-hold traps, neck snares and sodium cyanide poison,” [writes Tom Knudson](#), a reporter who’s been investigating the program for years.

“A list of birds and mammals trapped and poisoned by mistake by Wildlife

Services would fill a small field guide: great blue herons, porcupines, river otter, mule deer, pronghorn, snapping turtles, raccoons, family pets, federally protected bald and golden eagles, a wolverine – the list goes on and on.”

“This war on wildlife can’t be tolerated anymore,” attorney for The Center for Biological Diversity Collette Adkins [told Newsweek](#). “This idea of killing wildlife any time there is a conflict is just barbaric.”

The environmental organization is suing the federal government over its Wildlife Services program.

“The Department of Agriculture needs to get out of the wildlife-slaughter business,” she [added](#). “There’s just no scientific basis for continuing to shoot, poison and strangle more than a million animals every year. Even pets and endangered species are being killed by mistake, as collateral damage.”

“The barbaric, outdated tactics Wildlife Services uses to destroy America’s animals need to end. Wolves, bears and other carnivores help balance the web of life where they live. Our government needs to end its pointless cycle of violence.”

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