



For Immediate Release, December 10, 2021

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Legal Victory Compels Federal Wolf Trappers to Address Risks to Minnesota's Endangered Lynx

U.S. Wildlife-Killing Program Targets Wolves, Harms Protected Canada Lynx

MINNEAPOLIS— In response to legal action by the Center for Biological Diversity, two federal agencies have [agreed](#) to analyze and mitigate the risks to federally protected [Canada lynx](#) caused by the trapping of Minnesota's wolves by the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Wildlife Services program.

Wildlife Services is a multimillion-dollar federal program that killed more than 5,000 of Minnesota's native animals last year. That included 203 wolves, 167 coyotes and 30 foxes killed with foothold traps and strangulation snares. These indiscriminate traps also capture and kill Canada lynx, which are protected by the Endangered Species Act. As few as 50 of the rare cats may remain in Minnesota.

"This is a win for both gray wolves and Canada lynx, which are Minnesota's rarest carnivores," said Collette Adkins, carnivore conservation program director at the Center. "I'm hopeful that federal officials will now prioritize nonlethal ways of addressing conflicts with wolves, especially in areas where Canada lynx live."

In October the Center [notified](#) Wildlife Services and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service that the Endangered Species Act requires them to analyze and mitigate the adverse effects of the federal trapping program on the Canada lynx.

On Dec. 9 the Service informed the Center that the agencies have committed to completing "consultation," as required by the Act. The first step is preparing a biological assessment, which Wildlife Services anticipates completing by the end of January.

In the past decade, state and federal agencies have documented the captures of 15 lynx in traps set for other wildlife in Minnesota. Seven of these resulted in death for the trapped wild cat. Last year the Center brought a still-ongoing [case](#) against the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources for state-permitted fur trapping that injures and kills Canada lynx.

"Instead of relying on barbaric and indiscriminate traps to kill predators, government agencies should work with livestock operators to implement modern measures to prevent conflicts with wildlife," said Adkins.

The Center's Oct. 13 notice letter started a 60-day clock to give the federal agencies time to comply with the Endangered Species Act prior to the Center filing a lawsuit. The Center has agreed to forego litigation for now to give the federal agencies time to fulfill their pledge to comply with the Act.



Canada lynx (*Lynx canadensis*). Photo courtesy of Erwin and Peggy Bauer, USFWS. [Images are available for media use.](#)

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