

**TESTIMONY OF THE HONORABLE JERROLD NADLER,
CHAIRMAN, HOUSE JUDICIARY COMMITTEE**

**Before the Natural Resources Committee Subcommittee on Water,
Oceans and Wildlife**

H.R. 4716, the “Refuge from Cruel Trapping Act of 2021”

Thursday, January 20, 2022 at 10:00 a.m.

via WebEx

Thank you, Subcommittee Chairman Huffman and Ranking Member Bentz, and Chairman Grijalva, for including the Refuge from Cruel Trapping Act in today’s hearing and providing me with an opportunity to speak in support of the legislation.

When Americans visit their local National Wildlife Refuges, most expect to view wildlife without fearing that they or their pets will fall

victim to a dangerous trap. Unfortunately, over 40% of our nation's 568 refuges still permit trapping, putting humans, companion animals, and endangered species at risk of severe injury or death. These traps have no place on protected lands, which is why I introduced the Refuge from Cruel Trapping Act with Rep. Blumenauer to ensure that our wildlife refuges are free from this inhumane practice.

This legislation will help restore the original purpose of the National Wildlife Refuge System as a sanctuary for wildlife by prohibiting the use of body-gripping traps on these public, protected lands. The National Wildlife Refuge System currently attracts more than 61 million visitors each year, of which trappers constitute less than 0.1 percent of total visitors. However, the activities of this small minority put the safety of millions of other visitors at risk, making trapping on wildlife refuges an unacceptable exploitation of our public resources.

Under my legislation, the types of traps that would be banned are steel-jawed leghold traps, snares, and Conibear traps. All of these body-

gripping traps are indiscriminate by design, putting non-target animals and humans at risk. They are also inherently cruel, brutal devices; animals caught in these traps—intended target or not—experience excruciating pain as they desperately attempt to escape. They may remain in this state of misery for hours or even days, as trappers often are not required to return to their traps for at least 24 hours.

The US Fish and Wildlife Service uses a variety of methods to manage wildlife on National Wildlife Refuges. That's why the Service, along with other federal agencies, is exempt from the prohibition on body-gripping traps in this bill, but only after all viable nonlethal methods have been attempted and documented.

I urge all my colleagues to support this commonsense, humane legislation that will undoubtedly make our nation's wildlife refuges safer for all Americans to enjoy—not just the select few who choose to trap. It is my hope that this Committee will move this legislation forward, and I will continue to work with all of you to bring it to a vote in the House.

Thank you, and I yield back my time.