



Texans for Mountain Lions

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Texans Urged to Comment on TPWD Proposed Canned Hunting Ban and 36-Hour Trap Check for Mountain Lions

TPWD makes progress toward first-ever management action for mountain lions in Texas

Austin, Texas – In a historic moment for mountain lions, the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department (TPWD) has taken the first steps to actively manage the state’s mountain lion population and is [requesting that Texans provide public comment](#) on a new proposal to prohibit canned hunting of mountain lions, and implement trapping standards for the species. Texas Parks and Wildlife Commissioners are scheduled to vote on the proposal at their meeting in Austin on May 23.

Texans for Mountain Lions – a coalition of landowners, biologists, and organizations supporting the status and scientific management of Texas’ largest wild cat – is urging Texans to go to [the comments page on the TPWD website](#) and “agree completely” with TPWD’s proposed rules.

Of the 16 states home to populations of breeding mountain lions, Texas is currently the only state that does not regulate the hunting and trapping of the species.

In calling for-public comment, TPWD is providing citizens with the first opportunity in Texas history to determine whether the species should be managed as other native species are managed.

Texans for Mountain Lions coalition member and wildlife filmmaker Ben Masters is encouraged by the upcoming Commission vote.

“Mountain lions are important to the culture of Texas and belong in the future of our state. That’s one thing that almost all trappers, hippies, hunters, houndsmen, ranchers, environmentalists, and Texans across the spectrum can agree on. They’re a symbol of our remaining wild places,” said Masters, whose award-winning film [Deep in the Heart](#) featured a segment on mountain lions. “I’m encouraged that the TPWD Commissioners have decided to vote on these important proposals to more respectfully manage Texas’ big cat.”

The proposal's first action point would end canned hunting for mountain lions – the capture and later release of a mountain lion to be pursued and killed. Although rare, this practice is legal in Texas despite being widely condemned. The practice is antithetical to hunting organizations' fair chase guides and the [North American Model of Conservation](#). The North American Model affirms that individuals may own the land where wildlife resides, but that individual does not own wildlife – wildlife is owned by all citizens.

The proposal's second action point would require trappers to ensure that mountain lions are not kept alive in traps or snares for more than 36 hours. Texas does not currently have trap check requirements for mountain lions, which leaves animals potentially trapped for days or weeks until they succumb to dehydration or exposure.

The trap check proposal would only apply to mountain lions and would not prevent landowners from trapping for predator management, as long as they comply with the 36-hour trap check requirement. If passed, this regulation would update the state's mountain lion policies to be consistent with current [Texas furbearer regulations](#) and standard trapping ethics. Requiring regular checking of mountain lion traps would also likely reduce fatalities and injuries for non-target species, such as the state-protected black bear and domestic animals.

A [2022 Texas A&M University survey](#) showed that 75% of the more than 700 citizens surveyed support trap check periods for mountain lions of 36 hours or less. Livestock owners and hunters were as supportive of this measure as nonhunters and people who did not own livestock.

Mountain lions can be trapped and hunted year-round in Texas without any harvest limits, hunting seasons, or any requirement to report a lion kill. As a result, research studies in Texas have reported mortality rates that are among the highest in the country.

Texans for Mountain Lions coalition member Dr. Patricia Harveson is a wildlife researcher who spent much of her research career studying mountain lions.

"It is heartening to see the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department genuinely and thoughtfully move the needle on behalf of a species that so many Texans value as part of our natural heritage, and that gives back in supporting the health of our ecosystems," said Harveson. "We are grateful to TPWD Commissioners for creating a diverse stakeholder group to discuss this issue, and all who participated – from livestock owners to scientists – for listening to one another and engaging in difficult conversations to ensure all were represented."

Texans can [provide comment on 31 TAC §65.950](#) until 5pm on May 22, after which the TPW Commission will vote on the proposal during the May 23, 2024 meeting in Austin, Texas.

[Background on Texas' Recent Mountain Lion Management Progress](#)

Texans for Mountain Lions submitted a petition to TPWD in 2022 to better manage Texas mountain lions. While TPWD denied that petition, it did create a stakeholder advisory group made up of cattle ranchers, sheep raisers, hunters, trappers, landowners, scientists, and conservationists to explore the

status of mountain lions and where consensus could be found. After much lively discussion, the group found consensus [outlined here](#) that 1.) Texas is in need of more data on mountain lion distribution, numbers, mortality and more; 2.) Texas needs an official mountain lion management plan; and 3.) Canned hunting of mountain lions should be prohibited. The group was split on the necessity of mandatory reporting for harvest and a 36-hour trap check standard. TPWD Commissioners subsequently requested a public comment period on the proposal at hand.

About Texans for Mountain Lions

Texans for Mountain Lions is a coalition of landowners, biologists, conservationists, and organizations that is working to improve the status and conservation of our state's largest wild cat, the mountain lion. Our purpose is to support the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department, the Texas Parks and Wildlife Commission, and other stakeholders to implement a science-based management strategy to ensure the long-term survival of healthy mountain lion populations in Texas. Visit TexansforMountainLions.org for more information about mountain lions in Texas.

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