



Talking Points: Snowmobiles Aren't Weapons (SAW) Act

Background: The Snowmobiles Aren't Weapons (SAW) Act ([H.R. 9568](#)) would make it illegal for any person to intentionally run over or kill a wolf or coyote with a motor vehicle on public lands. This legislation would protect wildlife and public safety by putting an end to egregious acts of violence—using motorized vehicles, particularly snowmobiles, to pursue and kill wildlife, specifically wolves and coyotes, commonly referred to as "whacking."

This February, this depraved practice made [national headlines](#) when a Wyoming man ran over a young female wolf with a snowmobile, then secured the injured animal's mouth shut with duct tape before posing for a photo. He then transported her home and then to a local bar where he tormented the wolf before finally shooting or bludgeoning her to death. This disturbing animal cruelty must be prevented by law.

The use of snowmobiles to chase and kill wildlife is an act of extreme brutality and an abuse of power over wild animals rendered defenseless against motorized vehicles. Such actions inflict unnecessary suffering and stress on animals, violating basic principles of animal welfare that should underpin all human interactions with wildlife.

There is a [well-established link](#) between animal cruelty and interpersonal violence.

Numerous studies have demonstrated that individuals who engage in acts of violence against animals are more likely to commit violent crimes against humans.¹ The FBI now tracks animal cruelty crimes alongside felony offenses, recognizing it as a potential indicator and predictor of violence against humans.² By allowing the practice of "running down" wildlife with snowmobiles to continue, we risk normalizing extreme violence and potentially contributing to a cycle of escalating aggression in our communities.

There is [no credible science](#) supporting the indiscriminate killing of wild carnivores as an effective method for wildlife "management." Wild carnivore species like wolves and coyotes play crucial roles in maintaining ecosystem health, influencing prey populations, vegetation patterns, and overall biodiversity. The disruption of apex predator populations can trigger trophic cascades with far-reaching ecological consequences.³ It is imperative that our wildlife policies align with scientific understanding rather than outdated and harmful misconceptions about "predator control."

¹ Alleyne, E., & Parfitt, C. (2019). Adult-perpetrated animal abuse: A systematic literature review. *Trauma, Violence, & Abuse*, 20(3), 344-357. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1524838017708785>

² Federal Bureau of Investigation. (2016). Tracking Animal Cruelty: FBI Collecting Data on Crimes Against Animals. FBI News. <https://www.fbi.gov/news/stories/tracking-animal-cruelty>

³ Ripple, W. J., Estes, J. A., Beschta, R. L., Wilmers, C. C., Ritchie, E. G., Hebblewhite, M., ... & Wirsing, A. J. (2014). Status and ecological effects of the world's largest carnivores. *Science*, 343(6167), 1241484. <https://doi.org/10.1126/science.1241484>

By prohibiting the use of motorized vehicles to pursue and kill wildlife on federal lands, this legislation would:

1. Protect carnivore species crucial for ecosystem health
2. Prevent unnecessary animal suffering
3. Align wildlife policy with modern scientific and ethical understanding of ecological and animal well-being
4. Potentially reduce the risk of escalating violence in society

The SAW Act sends a clear message that our society does not tolerate wanton cruelty towards wildlife. It sets a standard for ethical treatment of animals that reflects our evolving understanding of animal cognition, sentience, and the interconnectedness of all species within ecosystems.

The SAW Act does not impede legitimate wildlife policy or hunting practices. This legislation will not infringe on traditional practices or hunting regulations. Individuals will still be allowed to hunt coyotes and other wildlife according to state laws. This bill specifically targets an inhumane, unsafe, and ecologically destructive practice that has no place in modern wildlife stewardship.