

CITIZEN PETITION FORM

Date: November 18, 2024

Issue:	<p>Proposed changes to Chapter W-3 – Furbearers and Small Game, except Migratory Birds:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Require submission of the lower jaw from each bobcat (<i>Lynx rufus</i>) harvested and possessed to be submitted with appropriate labeling at the time of the mandatory check. 2. Require a mandatory check of all swift fox (<i>Vulpes velox</i>) harvested and that each swift fox harvested must have an individual legal possession seal affixed through the hide/pelt. 3. Require a mandatory check of all beaver (<i>Castor canadensis</i>) harvested and that each beaver harvested must have an individual legal possession seal affixed through the hide/pelt
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Which rule are you seeking to create or revise? Please include a copy of the rule you are proposing to create or change, preferably with the changes made in redline format.

#324 – Bobcat

- A. Season Dates and Units
 - 1. Statewide: December 1 - end of February annually.
- B. Daily Bag and Possession Limits
 - 1. Unlimited bag and possession.
 - 2. Special Restrictions.
 - a. All bobcat, or their pelts, shall be personally presented by the licensee for inspection and must be sealed within 30 days after take, or within 5 days after the close of the season, whichever is sooner, with a seal provided by the Division. Any bobcat hide/pelt not having a seal within 5 days after the close of the season shall be illegal and become property of the State. Seals will only be placed on bobcat legally taken in Colorado. No fee shall be required for the inspection and issuance of a legal possession seal, which shall remain attached to the hide until processed. Bobcat hides/pelts shall not be transported, shipped or otherwise taken out of Colorado until the hide(s)/pelt(s) are inspected and sealed. The legal possession seal, when attached to the bobcat or the pelt, shall authorize possession, transportation, and sale thereof. For the purposes of this regulation it is illegal to buy, sell, trade, or barter an untanned bobcat hide/pelt unless a permanent seal is affixed thereto. Only one legal possession seal shall be provided for each hide/pelt.
 - b. A lower jaw from each bobcat shall be submitted by the licensee at the time of the inspection and sealing of hide/pelt. The licensee shall report to the Division the gender and game management unit from which the bobcat was killed and for each lower jaw submitted.

#323 - Mink, pine marten, badger, gray fox, red fox, swift fox, raccoon, ring-tailed cat, striped skunk, western spotted skunk, long-tailed weasel, short-tailed weasel, opossum, and muskrat

- A. Season Dates and Units
 - 1. Statewide: November 1 - end of February annually.
- B. Daily Bag and Possession Limits
 - 1. Unlimited bag and possession.
 - 2. Special Restrictions.
 - a. All swift fox, or their pelts, shall be personally presented by the licensee for inspection and must be sealed within 5 days after the close of the season with a seal provided by the Division. Any swift fox hide/pelt not having a seal within 5 days after the close of the season shall be illegal and become property of the State. Seals will only be placed on swift fox legally taken in Colorado. No fee shall be required for the inspection and issuance of a legal possession seal, which shall remain attached to the hide until processed. Swift fox hides/pelts shall not be transported, shipped or otherwise taken out of Colorado until the hide(s)/pelt(s) are inspected and sealed. The legal possession seal, when attached to the swift fox or the pelt, shall authorize possession, transportation, and sale thereof. For the purposes of this regulation it is illegal to buy, sell, trade, or barter and untanned swift fox hide/pelt unless a permanent seal is affixed thereto. Only one legal possession seal shall be provided for each hide/pelt.
 - b. At the time of the inspection and sealing of hide/pelt the licensee shall report to the Division the gender and game management unit from which the swift fox was killed.

#326 - Beaver

- A. Season Dates and Units
 - 1. Statewide, October 1 - April 30 annually.

B. Daily Bag and Possession Limits

1. Unlimited bag and possession.
2. Special Restrictions.

- a. All beaver, or their pelts, shall be personally presented by the licensee for inspection and must be sealed within 5 days after the close of the season with a seal provided by the Division. Any beaver not having a seal within 5 days after the close of the season shall be illegal and become property of the State. Seals will only be placed on beaver legally taken in Colorado. No fee shall be required for the inspection and issuance of a legal possession seal, which shall remain attached to the hide until processed. Beaver hides/pelts shall not be transported, shipped or otherwise taken out of Colorado until the hide(s)/pelt(s) are inspected and sealed. The legal possession seal, when attached to the beaver or the pelt, shall authorize possession, transportation, and sale thereof. For the purposes of this regulation it is illegal to buy, sell, trade, or barter and untanned beaver hide/pelt unless a permanent seal is affixed thereto. Only one legal possession seal shall be provided for each hide/pelt.
- b. At the time of the inspection and sealing of hide/pelt the licensee shall report to the Division the game management unit from which the beaver was killed.

Why are you seeking to create or revise this rule? Please include a general statement of the reasons for the requested rule or revision and any relevant information related to the request.

Bobcat harvests are already required to be reported and a legal possession seal is required because they are included as a species highly similar in appearance to other endangered cat species as listed in the Convention of International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES). As such bobcat hides/pelts may not be bartered, traded, or sold without first being inspected and having a legal possession seal affixed to each hide/pelt. Bobcat management guidelines developed by CPW examines female harvest composition because there appears to be evidence that male bobcat tend to be more vulnerable to harvest. Collection of a lower jaw from each bobcat harvest will allow both age and gender composition of harvest to be examined at the various geographic scales established by CPW guidelines. Age of bobcat are not well determined by extraction of a premolar because the teeth are smaller and much more fragile. Aging is best determined by the ossification of bones as evidenced by small openings in the lower mandible. Forensic labs (both within certain State agencies or commercial operations) have the capability of credibly and consistently aging bobcat via lower mandibles. Gender can be more accurately reported by X Y chromosome assays. Tissue from each jaw can be removed at the time of the mandatory inspection and has the advantage of not compromising hides/pelts or relying on the licensee's memory for each individual bobcat hide/pelt.

Including age and gender demographic composition analysis to data already collected and evaluated annually will help improve the scientific basis for bobcat management.

Because of restrictions to methods of take imposed by citizen's initiative in 1996 it has been assumed that trapping/hunting of nearly all furbearer species is insufficient at most geographic scales to have any significant impact of population viability. Yet, swift fox are relatively easy to capture and because they are adapted to short grass habitats there are few places where access limits potential for harvest. Beaver harvest is largely restricted to box traps made from rigid wire or what are sometimes referred to as "suitcase" or Hancock traps or more rarely using a firearm. Traps large enough to capture beaver are bulky and cumbersome and their use in remote locations may be difficult. Still a determined effort could result in beaver being temporarily eradicated from some headwaters or smaller side drainages. These temporary local eradications may be of concern for riparian ecology. Although CPW has not established any beaver management guidelines they were identified in 2012 for continuing harvest survey on a bi-annual or tri-annual basis.

Requiring a permanent seal on each swift fox and beaver hide/pelt will provide more accurate harvest data related to total amount of take, location demographics, and for bobcat and swift fox age and gender composition information. This would enhance management of these species.

Since data analysis is not time sensitive beyond an annual evaluation and since CITES restrictions aren't applicable to beaver or swift fox, harvest reporting within 5 days of the conclusion of the season seems more appropriate than continually throughout the seasons for these two species.

Petitioner's Name:

Dan Gates and Jerry Apker on behalf of Colorado Trappers & Predator Hunters Association.



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Department of Natural Resources

6060 Broadway • Denver, CO 80216

To: Colorado Parks and Wildlife Commission

From: Laura Clellan, Acting Director, Division of Parks and Wildlife

Date: February 19, 2026

Re: Division recommendation to deny petition to amend furbearer regulations to require bobcat jaw submission and mandatory checks and seals for swift fox and beaver

RECOMMENDATION

On November 18, 2024, Dan Gates and Jerry Apker, on behalf of the Colorado Trappers & Predator Hunters Association, submitted a petition to revise Chapter 3 to require the submission of the lower jaw during mandatory checks for bobcat and to require new mandatory check and sealing requirements for swift fox and beaver. The Division recommends denial of the petition with respect to beaver, as that proposal is consistent with, and mooted by, a separate proposal that the Division will make at the March 4-5, 2026, Commission meeting concerning mandatory check and sealing requirements for avocational beaver harvest. Accordingly, the remainder of this recommendation will focus on the petition requests concerning bobcat jaws and swift fox check and seal requirements.

For bobcat, as the petition notes, reporting and sealing already occurs under the similarity-of-species requirements of the Convention of International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES). But the petition argues that additional age and gender information gathered from analysis of the lower jaw will add to data already collected to help improve the scientific basis for bobcat management. While more data is always useful, it comes at a cost that must be weighed against the need for such data. For example, according to the Division's recent data on costs associated with biological sampling of bear jaws, for an average harvest of



Laura Clellan, Acting Director, Colorado Parks and Wildlife

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1,800 animals, the associated external lab costs are approximately \$25,740 plus approximately 1,100 hours of staff time. Since the average annual bobcat harvest is about 900 animals, these costs and staff time estimates could be roughly halved to provide an estimate of additional Division staff time requirements associated with adding lower bobcat jaw collection, processing, and analysis requirements.

With respect to the proposed swift fox check and seal requirements, petitioners state that such information will enhance the Division's harvest data and enhance management of these species. To estimate the cost of collecting and analyzing this additional data, the Division looked at the staff time estimates associated with the current check requirements in place for bobcat. For an average harvest of 900 animals, the work requires approximately 179 hours of staff time. Since the average annual swift fox harvest is about 260 animals, the estimates could be reduced by about 70% to provide an estimate of additional Division staff time requirements associated with adding swift fox check requirements.

When these additional costs and time resources are weighed against the need for additional data, the Division recommends denial of these requested amendments. Information on harvest of both species is already obtained through the Division's current furbearer harvest survey. As the petitioner notes, the Division already receives bobcat information through the current inspection and sealing requirements. And for swift fox, the Division is satisfied that the information received through its other occupancy monitoring work provides sufficient population trend data in order to manage the species, especially in light of the small harvest numbers (average 260 per year).



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Finally, additional harvest data is the most useful in setting particular harvest limits or levels for a species. However, for these species and other furbearers, the Division does not intend to set specific harvest limits. Rather, at the March 4-5, 2026, Commission meeting, the Division will be presenting its recommendation to adopt daily bag limits for all avocationally-taken furbearers.

For these reasons, the Division recommends denial of the petition.¹

 Laura Clellan, Acting Director

¹ If the Commission follows the Division’s recommendation, this memo will express the Commission’s rationale.

