

RECORD OF RESOLUTIONS

Resolution No. R-04-18

Passed March 19 2018

Introduced by All Members of Council

A RESOLUTION OPPOSING THE OHIO DIVISION OF WILDLIFE PROPOSED RULE 1501:31-15-17 WHICH WOULD ALLOW FOR THE TRAPPING AND KILLING OF THE OHIO NATIVE BOBCAT SPECIES LYNX RUFUS, AND CALLING FOR ITS PERMANENT PROTECTION FOR THE COMMON GOOD OF ALL OHIOIANS.

WHEREAS, the Ohio Division of Wildlife (DOW) is proposing a bobcat trap-kill season that will start this fall in southeast Ohio, with a decision to be made on May 2 by the Ohio Wildlife Council; and

WHEREAS, the plan will allow an unlimited number of permits to be sold for \$5 each; and

WHEREAS, the species, Ohio's only native wild cat, was taken off the threatened and endangered list less than four years ago; and

WHEREAS, the DOW itself wrote in October 2017 that "the rate of expansion and the area currently occupied by bobcats as well as population size are still unknown," and the population's "viability is unclear... Little is known about the density and distribution of bobcats in Ohio, as well as the population trajectory, and which areas act as source populations,"; and

WHEREAS, the same report states, "Such information is critical before decisions are taken on opening a trapping season and the maximum yearly take; and

WHEREAS, this same DOW report states that it will take *four years* to collect and analyze data to establish population viability, and has just funded a four-year Ohio University study to estimate abundance, density and population viability, which will use "non-invasive monitoring" not carcasses from trap-kills; and

WHEREAS, the OU study does not require such killing or carcass study; and

WHEREAS, there may be fewer than 500 bobcats in Ohio; and

WHEREAS, allowing trap-killing of 40 in one critical region and 20 in a region where the population is likely not yet reproductively viable, with potentially many more than 60 to be killed before authorities can halt the killing, appears to be premature and irresponsible given that the species is still recovering from extirpation, is poorly understood, and may already be compromised by road kill and "incidental" and illegal trapping, and given that the DOW's own new Bobcat Management Plan (p. 26) cites research that says mortality rates of over 20 percent can impact population viability; and

WHEREAS, this is a level that may have been reached by the 94 known bobcat deaths in 2017 from vehicles and "incidental" trapping; and

WHEREAS, according to scientists, bobcats do not overpopulate, since like all wild cats, their populations are self-regulating, and unlike rabbits, bobcats cannot take advantage of lowered population to repopulate quickly; and

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WHEREAS, trap-killing is inhumane and Ohio's plan particularly cruel in allowing trap-killing during a season in which kittens are out hunting but still dependent on their mothers; and

WHEREAS, the mission of the Division of Wildlife is to manage wildlife for all; and

WHEREAS, southeast Ohio will be most directly impacted by this bobcat trap-kill season and needs to be given ample time and opportunity to weigh in on this decision, and the only public hearing scheduled will be held north in Columbus; and

WHEREAS, this Council finds this whole plan barbaric and out-of-step with 21st century wildlife management principles to protect native predators and support building a healthier ecosystem.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY OF ATHENS, OHIO:

SECTION I: Athens City Council strongly opposes the Ohio Department of Wildlife's proposal to allow the trapping of bobcats in southeast Ohio, and hereby calls on the Ohio Division of Wildlife to cancel the proposal.

SECTION II: Athens City Council urges the State of Ohio to declare the bobcat a protected species and ban all hunting and trapping of this wonderful animal for all Ohioans now and in the future.

SECTION III: Athens City Council hereby calls on the public, our state representative Jay Edwards, and Governor John Kasich to contact the Division of Wildlife and voice their opposition to this proposal.

SECTION IV: This Resolution shall be in full force and effect at the earliest moment permitted by law upon its passage and approval by the Mayor.




President of Council

ATTEST:



Clerk of Council

APPROVED:



Mayor