



January 27, 2015

Sonke Mastrup, Executive Director  
Fish and Game Commission  
1416 Ninth Street, Room 1320  
Sacramento, CA 95814

Dear Sonke Mastrup:

The National Parks Conservation Association (NPCA) urges the California Fish and Game Commission to work to allocate additional funds for studying bobcat populations and to carefully monitor and analyze the impacts of bobcat trapping on the Mojave National Preserve.

NPCA's mission is to "Protect the national parks for present and future generations." We have over 800,000 active members and supporters nationwide, including over 100,000 in the state of California and two offices in the California desert: Barstow and Joshua Tree. Our desert offices work closely with local businesses, chambers of commerce, the media and elected officials to further protect the spectacular natural and cultural legacy of our national parks.

With passage of AB1213, the Bobcat Protection Act of 2013, the California Fish and Game Commission is launching a rulemaking to implement this bill. One of the provisions in the bill is a ban on bobcat trapping around Joshua Tree National Park, implementation of bobcat population studies and the creation of future trapping buffer zones around protected areas.

NPCA believes that the whole issue of bobcat trapping deserves careful consideration by the California Fish and Game Commission. While our organization generally honors and supports traditional recreational uses, the trapping of this iconic desert predator without sound scientific management could lead to a destabilization of desert ecosystems and local extirpations of bobcat populations that would have an adverse impact on a variety of other game and non-game species. Any future taking of bobcats must be based on sound science to avoid harming the complex web of life in the California desert.

NPCA is concerned about current bobcat trapping levels throughout the state and, in particular, the California desert because of the lack of credible scientific data about these populations. While we believe that AB1213 protects bobcat populations around Joshua Tree National Park and is extremely beneficial to the populations of this top carnivore in the Morongo Basin area, we are concerned that the bill's provisions may have shifted trapping pressure in and around the Mojave National Preserve. If bobcat trapping does continue in the state of California, this possible impact must be monitored and analyzed carefully to ensure the long term sustainability of populations in and around the Mojave National Preserve.

In closing, further study is warranted about the status of bobcat populations in California and funds should be allocated for research in this area and/or the California Department of Fish and Wildlife should initiate partnerships with a university, non-profit, or other organization to try to develop sound science related to bobcat populations.

Sincerely,

Seth Shteir, California desert senior field representative  
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