

## H-357 Prohibiting the Wanton Waste of Wildlife

### Failure to Track and Kill Wounded Animals

60 to 100 animals ANNUALLY are not retrieved after wounding.

When I was a practicing veterinarian, I treated two fawns that were shot during hunting season. Both died. One was shot with a rifle and the other with an arrow. These were underage deer that never should have been hunted in the first place.

### Lead Poisoning

Lead bullets fragment on impact. These fragments are easily swallowed when the remains are eaten. Lead is highly toxic and causes brain malfunction often leading to death from starvation.

Recreational killing leaves the carcass of a wantonly killed animal to be utilized as food for meat eating species. Lead in these carcasses causes the illness and deaths of many of these meat eaters. Some of these victims are likely endangered species like the bald eagle or the Canadian lynx.

Raptors, including eagles, vultures, hawks and owls often ingest the remains of killed or wounded animals. The higher the lead level, the less chance for recovery. Most die or are euthanized. From the Wildlife Center of Virginia

The College of Veterinary Medicine in Minnesota treats about 120 to 130 bald eagles exposed to lead every year. Most of them die or are euthanized.

The National Park Service in California found lead in the California Condors when they worked to bring back the species from extinction. Most of the Condors have received chelation therapy to save them from dying of lead poisoning. Because Condors feed exclusively on dead animals, they are more frequently exposed to lead than most other wildlife.

Spent lead ammunition and fragments in the environment and from wantonly killed animals have contaminated water supplies. Runoff from contaminated land has affected fish, reptiles, amphibians, land animals and humans.

70% of Vermonters support policies that prohibit intentional and wasteful destruction of wildlife as documented in a 2018 UVM study.

In 2009, Fish and Wildlife supported a wanton waste law through the F & W Board. This rule required hunters, trappers and fishermen to retrieve carcasses and make use of them. So why is F & W against H 357 when this law is similar to theirs? We need to broaden the definition of “utilize” to be more specific – salvage meat or use fur.

What are we teaching kids when animals are recklessly and needlessly killed? That animals are disposable?? From experience in the courtroom, we prosecutors know that often children who abuse animals also abuse humans. Most serial killers abused animals before they killed humans. The FBI has declared that animals are sentient because human abuse/violence is closely related to animal abuse/violence.

Wildlife belongs to these Vermonters. Wildlife is not the exclusive property of those who live to hunt and kill.

Respectfully submitted,

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