



1255 23<sup>rd</sup> St. NW, Suite 450  
Washington, DC 20037  
202-452-1100  
humaneworld.org

Formerly called the Humane  
Society of the United States and  
Humane Society International

February 19, 2025

Committee: Vermont House Committee on Environment  
RE: H. 132 to prohibit the use of bait to lure and kill furbearers  
Position: Support

Chair Sheldon, Vice Chair Labor, Ranking Member Satcowitz and Members of the House Environment Committee:

On behalf of Humane World for Animals (formerly called the Humane Society of the United States and Humane Society International) and our Vermont supporters, I want to respectfully urge your support for H. 132 to prohibit the use of bait to lure and kill furbearers.

Trappers and hunters use bait to increase their likelihood of success, but baiting can cause multiple harms. As a result of the placement of human food into the environment, wildlife may associate food with the smells of humans, and even livestock.<sup>1</sup> Bait sites attract and aggregate many animals, many of whom are non-target or even protected species (e.g., raptors). A concentration of different wildlife at bait sites also increases the potential for disease and parasite transmission, especially rabies and Chronic Wasting Disease, and, for coyotes, potentially mange.<sup>2</sup> It could also lead to the increased spread of deadly avian flu, which has already been found in multiple wild mammals, including coyotes and other furbearers. And it can create vexing health risks to wildlife because of spoilage (e.g., rotting meats).

Using bait can also harm meso-carnivores (e.g., foxes and mustelids) and their prey. Bait sites affect meso-carnivore communities by making them more reliant on prey species who feed on human-food baits.<sup>3</sup> Candler et al. write that this creates “ecological traps” for species at “lower trophic levels (Morris 2005, Cortés-Avizanda et al. 2009),” “decoupling the predator-prey relationship (Rodewald et al. 2011).”<sup>4</sup>

Baiting can also be destructive to wild habitats. Bait sites require ease of access, and biologists have noted habitat destruction at these places, including the spread of invasive plants.<sup>5</sup> Bait piles are also smelly and irritating to other outdoor recreationists.

In addition to the problems caused by baiting furbearers, the practice is also unsporting. Many hunting advocates condemn methods like baiting as unsustainable, inhumane and a violation of the hunter’s ethical code because they are not perceived as “fair chase” hunting.<sup>6</sup> Jim Posewitz, author of *Beyond Fair Chase: The Ethic and Tradition of Hunting*, explains this concept: “The ethical hunter must make many fair-chase choices . . . *luring animals with bait* or hunting in certain seasons sometimes is viewed as giving unfair advantage to the hunter. If there is a doubt, advantage must be given to the animal being hunted.” (Emphasis added.)

For all of these reasons, we respectfully ask that you vote yes on H. 132 to end the use of bait to hunt or trap furbearers in Vermont. Thank you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Joanne Bourbeau".

Joanne Bourbeau  
Northeast Regional Director  
[jboubeau@humanesociety.org](mailto:jboubeau@humanesociety.org)



1255 23<sup>rd</sup> St. NW, Suite 450  
Washington, DC 20037  
202-452-1100  
humaneworld.org

Formerly called the Humane  
Society of the United States and  
Humane Society International

---

<sup>1</sup> Beck et al., "Sociological and Ethical Considerations of Black Bear Hunting"; Inslerman et al., "Baiting and Supplemental Feeding of Game Wildlife Species," *The Wildlife Society*; Dunkley and Cattet, "A Comprehensive Review of the Ecological and Human Social Effects of Artificial Feeding and Baiting of Wildlife."

<sup>2</sup> *Id.*; Inslerman et al., "Baiting and Supplemental Feeding of Game Wildlife Species," *The Wildlife Society*; Amanda Sommerer, "A Spatial Analysis of the Relationship between the Occurrence of Mange in Pennsylvania's Black Bear Population and Impervious Land Cover" (2014); Rebecca Kirby, David M. Macfarland, and Jonathan N. Pauli, "Consumption of Intentional Food Subsidies by a Hunted Carnivore," *The Journal of Wildlife Management* 81, no. 7 (2017).

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 105.

<sup>5</sup> Hank Hristienko and Jr. McDonald, John E., "Going in the 21st Century: A Perspective on Trends and Controversies in the Management of the Black Bear" *Ursus* 18, no. 1 (2007).

<sup>6</sup> J. Posewitz, *Beyond Fair Chase: The Ethic and Tradition of Hunting* (Helena, Montana: Falcon Press, 1994).