

Decoding the Jargon

The language used to describe the mission and purpose of state wildlife agencies and wildlife management advising and decision-making bodies often has a double meaning that is not known to the public at large. We hope this glossary of language commonly used by state wildlife agencies will help clear up any misconceptions and empower advocates to call out many of these terms for what they are: euphemisms for killing.

- **Bag limit:** The limit of how many individual animals of a certain species a single person can kill.
- **Baiting:** The intensive feeding of wild animals to make them easy targets for trophy hunters waiting in a nearby blind. Bait is typically comprised of unhealthy, fatty, sugary foods, including foods that are toxic to many wild animals like chocolate and xylitol.
- **Challenge/Derby/Tournament:** These terms often refer to wildlife killing contests, which are organized events in which participants compete for prizes—typically cash or guns—to see who can kill the most, the largest or smallest animals within a certain time period.
- **Conservation:** By definition, conservation means “prevention of wasteful use of a resource.” Yet this term has also been co-opted by many clubs and organizations whose primary interest is to promote trophy hunting interests, who often call themselves “conservation clubs.”
- **Consumptive users:** Using wildlife in a way that typically involves killing.
- **Depredation:** Agencies often use this word to refer to when a native carnivore (like a wolf or bear) predares on animals owned by people (e.g. livestock or pets). These events are very rare and can often be prevented using non-lethal deterrents.
- **Dispatch:** A euphemism for kill.
- **Game species:** Species that may be hunted and/or trapped.
- **Harvest:** Another euphemism for kill.
- **Hound hunting or hounding:** This method of trophy hunting involves hunters and guides using packs of radio-collared hounds to pursue targeted trophy animals until the exhausted, frightened animals seek refuge in a tree—where they are shot—or turn to fight the hounds. Hound hunting results in injuries or death to targeted trophy animals, their young, and the hounds.
- **Manage:** Agencies often use the word “manage” to talk about how they plan to exert control over a wildlife species, which almost always means killing them.
- **Method of take:** The means that can be used to kill wildlife.
- **Non-consumptive users:** This term encompasses wildlife watchers, hikers, campers, and other outdoor recreationalists.
- **Quota:** The limit on how many individuals of a certain species may be killed in a specific area. Some agencies also commonly refer to this as a “harvest recommendation” or “harvest limit.”
- **Resource:** Referring to wildlife as a “resource” implies that wild animals are to be exploited for human benefit. This term ignores that wild animals are intrinsically valuable and have a right to their own lives.
- **Subsistence hunting:** Hunting for food.
- **Take:** Another euphemism for kill.
- **Trapping:** This method of trophy hunting involves setting body-gripping traps or wire snares that hold trophy animals until the hunter returns to shoot them. Targeted trophy animals—as well as family pets and other wildlife—languish in these devices for hours and even days, sometimes suffering painful injuries, dehydration, starvation, and exposure before they die or are killed.
- **Trophy hunting:** A hunt where the primary motivation is to obtain animal parts (e.g., heads, hides, claws, and even whole stuffed bodies) for display and for bragging rights. Trophy hunters often pose with the dead animal for a picture, such as for social media. Trophy hunters are not primarily motivated by subsistence.

