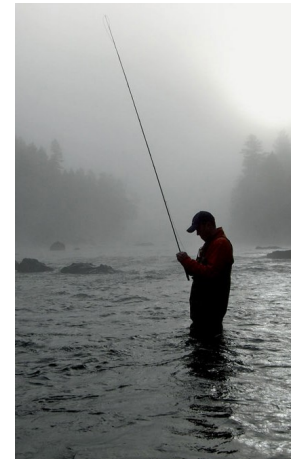


Hunting, fishing, and trapping were long central to the lives of indigenous peoples in Montana, for subsistence, ceremonial, and cultural purposes. The ethics of taking wildlife included killing only what a community could use. After the arrival of non-Native migrants, mostly of European ancestry, populations of many animals plummeted, as these hunters, fishers, and trappers valued wildlife not only for their own needs but also as commercial products.

Contemporary Montanans engage in hunting, fishing, and trapping for a variety of reasons, including gathering food, providing clothing, creating trade, controlling wildlife populations, connecting with the environment, and participating family and community tradition. Through the purchase of licenses, permits, and stamps, plus the taxes paid on hunting and fishing equipment, hunters, fishers, and trappers fund wildlife research, habitat acquisition programs (like Habitat Montana), and the proper management of wildlife in Montana.

Today, states regulate the taking of wildlife in order to maintain sustainable populations. Most wild animals are able to produce enough offspring to maintain a healthy, sustainable population. Poor management of hunting, fishing, and/or trapping of various species can lead to serious problems for the wildlife itself, the habitat on or in which they live, and Montana's human community. For example, overhunting can reduce the number of viable females in an already small population, or overhunting in one area can increase animal damage in adjacent areas. Supported by biologists and other experts, the State is responsible for managing populations in scientifically sound, sustainable, and socially acceptable ways.



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### The policy of Montana Audubon regarding Taking Wildlife: Hunt, Fish and Trap is to:

- Educate the public and decision makers about the relationship between taking individual animals and species population numbers and health, species conservation, and ecosystem impacts (like impacts to food webs)
- Support and hold accountable MT Fish, Wildlife & Parks, and the Fish and Game Commission's role in wildlife management
- Support regulations that rely on sound, up-to-date science and oppose regulations that allow take limits that harm population demographics or sustainability;
- Encourage FWP to consider species and animal health when creating take regulations rather than just looking at species numbers alone;
- Educate the public about potential negative impacts of hunting, fishing, and trapping, such as lead poisoning from lead bullets;
- Recognize that policy regarding animal take requires consideration of societal values and tolerance of methods for taking wildlife, especially on public lands.