

September 13, 2019
Oregon Fish and Wildlife Commission

Good Afternoon Chair Finley and Commissioners,

I am Stan Steele, a born and raised rural Oregonian, ardent conservationist and lifelong trapper. I have been blessed with having had incredibly rewarding professional careers as an Oregon State Police Fish and Wildlife Division Trooper and licensed whitewater rafting and fishing guide. But the life experiences that I feel best define who I am is the time spent outdoors hunting, fishing and especially trapping. These outdoor, nature-connected activities are at my very heart and soul. I have been a trapper all of my life; I am very proud of my heritage and culture!

Arguably, very few Oregonians have spent the time in Oregon's outdoors that my hobbies and professional careers have provided. I have been blessed! One of the most notable and prized achievements of my lifetime spent outdoors was being recognized by my fellow trappers with numerous awards for "Excellence in Fur Handling." One of the Oregon Territorial Council on Furs award certified that "Lot. No. 330, containing 25 beaver and displayed at the February 13, 1987, Albany fur sale, exemplifies a superior job of fur handling. Proper handling indicates a respect for harvested furbearers and the fulfillment of the highest principles of conservation. You are commended for this fine example."

Respect for harvested furbearers and the highest principles of conservation are exactly what are on the table before each and every one of you today.

Differing ideologies on how to best manage Oregon's living natural resources always has and always will be steeped in unavoidable controversy. In 1949, the father of modern conservation, Aldo Leopold, said: "Public policies for outdoor recreation are controversial. Equally conscientious citizens hold opposite views on what it is and what should be done to conserve our resource base."

The changing of social parameters has put fur harvest and trappers directly in the crosshairs of those willing to use any means possible to eliminate trapping as a science-based wildlife management technique.

Let's cut to the chase: The issue before you today is not about protecting the Humboldt marten -- it is about **BANNING REGULATED TRAPPING IN OREGON!**

It is a fact. Regulated, science-based fur harvest has not put one single species at risk of extinction on the North American continent. It is a fact that trapping has been a tool utilized by wildlife managers to recover numerous species, most notably a species we all are familiar with the Snowy Plover. The bird and the marten both inhabit the Oregon Dunes National Recreation Area. My fellow trappers and I agree to suspend marten trapping to lessen the potential of encountering a marten in this prime marten habitat designated area. It is also factually reasonable to assert that past and present regulated trapping has not had a scientifically measurable "population level" impact on marten in the requested geographic closure area. Population persistence and regulatory actions which are based on questionable population modeling should be problematic to wildlife policy decision makers.

Natural resource management entities that bend to scientifically unsupported social pressures only encourage more regulatory requests to eliminate legitimate uses of Oregon's wildlife which defies the legislative intent of the co-equals of Oregon's wildlife policy.

Trapping is simply a wildlife management technique that provides a unique form of nature-connecting recreational opportunity enjoyed by thousands of Oregon conservationists. To adopt a regulatory policy that bans trapping over large geographic areas of Oregon is simply bad public policy.

Where does the regulatory madness stop?

Will upland bird hunting with scent trailing dogs, or catch and release fly fish fishing for North Umpqua wild steelhead (after all they feel the pain of the hook), or commercial and sport harvest of Dungeness crabs with traps be targeted next?

Is my Oregon rapidly becoming just a northern extension of California which last week banned all trapping?

The decision is yours!

Keep Oregon Hunting, Fishing, Trapping and Recreationally Shooting,

Stan Steele, Corvallis, OR

DISTRIBUTION OF PACIFIC MARTEN IN COASTAL OREGON

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ABSTRACT—Information on the distribution of rare and little known species is critical for managers and biologists challenged with species conservation in an uncertain future. Pacific Martens (*Martes caurina*) historically resided throughout Oregon and northern California's coastal forests, but were considered extinct until 1996 when a population in northern California was rediscovered. Only 26 verified contemporary (1989–2012) records were known within Oregon prior to this survey. The coastal subspecies (*M. c. humboldtensis*) was petitioned for listing under the federal Endangered Species Act in 2010. We surveyed for martens during 2014–2015 with 3 separate, non-invasive surveys. We conducted exploratory surveys in 2014, and surveyed at 2 scales during 2015 to confirm the persistence of historical populations (<5 km prior detections) and to determine the limits of current distributions in the region (5–50 km). We surveyed 348 sample units using a total of 72 track plate and 908 remote camera stations for >14 d within a 25,330 km² area, yielding 355,018 photographs. Martens were detected (photographs, tracks, or genetically verified hair samples) at 72 sample units. We detected 28 individual martens in coastal Oregon using a combination of genetic confirmation and captured individuals. Marten observations were clustered in the Central and South Coast regions, suggesting existing populations have persisted since published observations prior to 1998. We did not locate new populations despite an extensive effort to survey new areas, but did learn a unique population exists in the coastal dunes of Central Oregon. Future research could include surveys at a finer-scale to refine population boundaries and estimate minimum population sizes, better define habitat conditions, and evaluate potential threats to population stability (such as disease, genetic bottlenecks). Until population estimates and trends are known, conservation efforts may benefit from local management actions, such as restricting or eliminating kill-trapping in the Coast Ranges, as well as broad efforts to increase connectivity, especially where existing populations face significant barriers to movement, such as a major roadway (Highway 101). Based on our observations, efforts to increase the size, number, and extent of populations could be valuable for long-term conservation of the species.

Key words: American Marten, camera trap, detectability, distribution, Humboldt Marten, *Martes caurina*, Oregon, Pacific Marten

Pacific Martens (*Martes caurina*), previously referred to as American Marten (*Martes americana*, Dawson and Cook 2012), once resided throughout the coastal forests of northern California, Oregon, Washington, and British Columbia (Merriam 1890; Grinnell and others 1937; Yocom 1974). Since the early 1900s, the range of these populations has declined by greater than 95% (Zielinski