

Snowmobiles Aren't Weapons (SAW) Act

What it does: Prohibits the use of snowmobiles and other motor vehicles to intentionally run down and run over wolves, coyotes, and other wildlife on federal lands.

- The running down and crushing of an adolescent female wolf triggered worldwide condemnation by hunters and non-hunters alike on the use of snowmobiles to maim and kill wildlife for pleasure, turning snowmobiles into weapons. Cody Roberts of Daniel, Wyo., **chased down a female yearling wolf** on a snowmobile, running her over and grievously injuring her before taping her mouth shut, outfitting her with a shock collar, and tormenting and torturing her at a local bar before finally shooting her in a back alley.
- Cody Roberts is part of a subculture of individuals who engage in depraved acts of “whacking.” There are **multiple accounts** of these practices, including this **deeply disturbing video** of a man, apparently in Wyoming, filming himself repeatedly running over coyotes on his snowmobile, in one case trapping the victim under his snowmobile and driving it forward at high rates of speed. He then peeled the flattened animal from the base of his vehicle. In 2018, Wyoming hunter, ranch manager, and Sublette County resident John Fandek noted it’s “very common for people to take their entire families out on snowmobiles and train their kids to run down coyotes.” He added that “there’s no question they do it with wolves too.... If they can’t run them down, they’ll chase them until they fall in the snow from exhaustion and then shoot them.”
- The SAW Act is modeled on a prohibition in place in Minnesota since 1986. The



Before tormenting and killing an adolescent wolf, Cody Roberts ran her over with his snowmobile.

Minnesota law against hunting and killing wildlife with a motor vehicle has been in place for nearly four decades with no objections ever voiced from ranchers, farmers, sportsmen, or other stakeholders in wolf and coyote policies. Minnesota has more wolves than any other state in the lower 48 and is a snowmobiling mecca, so the



application of the law is an important practical example of its universal social acceptance.

- Center for a Humane Economy legal research has only uncovered three states — Minnesota, Washington and Oregon — with laws to prevent people from using motor vehicles to “harass,” “chase,” or “pursue,” or “run over” wildlife. In fact, Wyoming lawmakers **rejected a bill** to ban “whacking” in 2019 to address the practice.
- While several states have enacted laws prohibiting hunting of wildlife “from motor vehicles,” it is unclear and untested whether such laws would apply to cases of “whacking,” where hunters actually use the motor vehicle itself as a weapon to injure, incapacitate and kill animals. Given the recent occurrences in Wyoming and the use of **snowmobiles to chase, hunt and kill predators in neighboring Montana and Idaho**, the SAW Act will make it clear that these actions will not be tolerated in a civilized society.
- Responsible sportsmen have accepted and many supported other prohibitions on grossly unethical forms of killing of wildlife such as chasing and hunting them from aircraft and the baiting of waterfowl. In 1969, NBC showed a documentary entitled “The Wolf Men,” in which there were several scenes depicting the slaughtering of wolves and other animals from aircrafts. This resulted in a public outcry for government intervention, and in 1971 Congress enacted the **Airborne Hunting Act**. That effort was shepherded to passage by the late Congressman John Dingell, a lifelong hunter and former board member of the National Rifle Association.
- Teddy Roosevelt introduced the concept of “fair chase” in hunting in 1893, and it’s become a norm in the sport. The notion is embedded in social contracts such as the North American Model of Wildlife Conservation, which includes the tenet that “wildlife may only be killed for a legitimate, non-frivolous purpose.”