

Travel Smart. Fly through Bangor.
www.flybangor.com



ADVERTISEMENT

bangordailynews.com

Statewide



- Home
- Jobs
- Real Estate
- Autos
- Classifieds
- News
- Obits
- Sports
- Life
- Travel

Search

- [My Account](#)
- [Jobs](#)
- [Real Estate](#)
- [Autos](#)
- [Classifieds](#)
- [Place an Ad](#)
- [Image Gallery](#)

► [NEWS: STATEWIDE](#)

Suit seeks to end trapping

By [Kevin Miller](#)

Friday, October 13, 2006 - Bangor Daily News << [Back](#)

By [Kevin Miller](#)
Bangor Daily News

- [Comment on this article](#)
- [Email This Article To A Friend](#)
- [Print This Article](#)

A national animal rights organization filed suit Thursday against the Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife alleging that the state is failing to protect bald eagles and Canada lynx from being caught and killed by trappers.

The lawsuit, filed in U.S. District Court in Bangor, seeks a court order to end any trapping that could inadvertently capture, injure or kill eagles, Canada lynx or gray wolves, all of which are protected from harm under the federal Endangered Species Act.

If successful, the lawsuit could end some or all trapping throughout much of Maine.

The California-based Animal Protection Institute first warned top Maine officials in April that it planned to sue under the Endangered Species Act unless the state took additional steps to stop the inadvertent trapping of the animals.

Camilla Fox, director of wildlife programs for API, said her group has exchanged several letters with Maine officials since April in an attempt to avoid litigation.

"We were unable to find a mutually satisfactory resolution to the situation," Fox said. "So the ball is essentially in [DIF&W's] court to implement any regulatory changes to protect endangered species in the state."

The lawsuit filed Thursday specifically targets DIF&W Commissioner Roland "Danny" Martin. Fox said API is suing on behalf of the group's

INTERACTIVE

- [Reader Comments](#)
- [Reader Polls](#)

FEATURES

- [Archives](#)
- [Business](#)
- [Experience Maine](#)
- [Obituaries](#)
- [Personals](#)
- [Public Notices & Legals](#)
- [Recent Editions](#)
- [Site Search](#)
- [Special Sections](#)
- [TV Listings](#)
- [Weekly](#)
- [Weddings & Engagements](#)

NEWS

- [Submit!](#)
- [Statewide](#)
- [State House](#)
- [Aroostook](#)
- [City](#)
- [Down East](#)
- [Hancock](#)
- [Midcoast](#)
- [Mid-Maine](#)
- [Penobscot](#)
- [Penquis](#)

ADVERTISEMENT

GOODYEAR
OCTOBER
Tire Sale

NOW/GET UP TO A \$40 CASH CARD!
BY MAIL-IN OFFER
WHEN YOU BUY 4 SELECT GOODYEAR TIRES!

OR
DOUBLE YOUR CASH CARD VALUE UP TO \$80
WHEN YOU PURCHASE WITH A NEW OR EXISTING GOODYEAR CREDIT CARD

CLICK FOR DETAILS

SULLIVAN TIRE
sullivantire.com

Religion

roughly 250 members in Maine.

VIEWPOINTS

Editorials

Op-Ed

Letters

Danby Cartoon

Todd Benoit

Kent Ward

Whitney Azoy

Dr. Erik Steele

John Buell

Using documents obtained from state and federal agencies, API argues that at least 21 lynx have been inadvertently trapped in Maine since 2001. Most of the lynx were released alive, but fatalities have occurred in recent years. At least two of the five lynx found in traps in 2005 died.

One bald eagle was caught in traps in both 2001 and 2002. Both birds either died of their wounds or had to be euthanized.

SPORTS

High School

Maine Black Bears

Gary Thorne

Larry Mahoney

There have been no reports of gray wolves being trapped in Maine in recent years. State wildlife officials say wolves are not breeding in Maine and that any individuals that show up here are likely transient animals from Quebec, where wolf populations are healthy.

OUTDOORS

Tom Hennessey

John Holyoke

Jeff Strout

DIF&W spokesman Mark Latti defended Maine's trapping program on Thursday, adding that both the state and trappers go to great lengths to avoid catching endangered species. One example, Latti said, is a pamphlet distributed to trappers listing ways to avoid capturing lynx.

COLUMNISTS

Joni Averill

Tom Weber

Family Ties

Maine has roughly 2,500 registered trappers laying thousands of traps throughout the state for a variety of fur-bearing animals such as beaver, fox, fisher, marten, raccoon, otter, skunk and weasel. Yet the number of lynx, eagles or other protected species caught in the traps is "very minimal," Latti said.

LIFESTYLE & ARTS

Living

Happening

Creating

Discovering

Well-Being

Cooking

Finding a Fix

"As a department, we are already doing quite a bit to try to keep this from happening, and we feel we are fairly successful," he said.

Latti predicted that, if successful, the lawsuit could have dire impacts on trapping and the state's wildlife management programs.

"Basically, we would have unchecked populations of small, fur-bearing animals," Latti said. "People can see what kind of damage beavers can do with their numbers in check. Without trapping, their numbers would grow incredibly quick."

Skip Trask, a representative for the Maine Trappers Association, called the lawsuit "frivolous" and said trapping poses no threat to lynx or eagle populations in the state. Trask said he believes there are thousands of lynx in Maine, not the 200 to 500 in official estimates in recent years.

"These animal rights groups don't have a clue of what is going on in Maine, and they obviously don't care," Trask said. "Their goal is to end all trapping ? and they think nothing of using the federal Endangered Species Act to achieve that goal."

API is following a tactic that has proved successful in Maine before.

Animal protection groups used the Endangered Species Act to force DIF&W to suspend Maine's controversial coyote snaring program in 2003 after at least two eagles and one lynx were killed in snares.

