



Food banks will feel fallout for months

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JOURNAL & COURIER

MONDAY, NOVEMBER 17, 2025 | JOURNALANDCOURIER.COM

PART OF THE USA TODAY NETWORK



An Indiana bobcat is pictured in the winter of 2019. PROVIDED BY INDIANA DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

Bobcat season's return controversial

Indiana DNR allows trapping in 40 southern counties

Karl Schneider Indianapolis Star | USA TODAY NETWORK

Nick Erny spends an hour or two each day with his 12-year-old son, walking through the Dubois County woods and checking on a dozen or so bobcat traps they set out earlier this month. • This year marks the first time in more than 50 years that trappers like Erny have been able to target bobcats in Indiana. But not everyone is welcoming the news that bobcat trapping in Indiana is back; animal rights advocates say it is premature and the data is not robust enough to support killing Indiana's only native cat.

Bobcats were hunted and trapped to near extinction in Indiana before they were listed as an endangered species in 1969. For decades the cats precariously held their ground in the state before the Indiana Department of Natural Resources deemed the population healthy enough in 2005 to be removed from the endangered list. After numerous previous attempts to make bobcat trapping legal again, in 2024 state Sen. Scott Baldwin, R-Noblesville, introduced a bill that eventually opened the trapping season on bobcats. He told IndyStar at the time he wanted to ensure bobcats do not overrun other species, such as birds and rabbits. Over the course of last year and into early 2025, the Indiana Department of Natural Resource's Natural Resources Council held a series of public meetings and decided to allow trapping in 40 southern counties stretching from Vermillion in the west to Franklin in the east. The rule-making committee set a statewide quota at 250 bobcats for the

season and allowed each trapper to take a single cat. Other states, like Illinois, Kentucky and Michigan, have long allowed bobcat trapping, so Erny has been able to trap there in the past. Trapping in his home state, however, has been a "different kind of cat and mouse game," he said. Bobcats are fun to trap and make good table fare, Erny said, adding he will use the pelt he gets to craft ear muffs, headbands and drink coozies. Erny uses the same restraint-style and nonlethal traps he sets for coyotes but adds a little extra flair. Because bobcats are visual hunters, the traps need to be high-appeal, he said. He hangs CDs and flashy objects above the traps and will sometimes add feathers and other fluttering objects. The season this year is all about humanely managing Indiana's growing bobcat population, Erny said, since the species' only real predator other than man is nature.

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Delphi trial exhibits released

Filing may signal killer's appeal is imminent

Ron Wilkins
Lafayette Journal & Courier
USA TODAY NETWORK

A judge released more than 1,200 pages of exhibits from Delphi murderer Richard Allen's case on Monday, Nov. 10, then sealed the exhibits, which signals that Allen's appeal is about a month from being filed. Monday's filing appears to comply with an Oct. 22 appeals court order to produce the missing exhibits from earlier motions in the trial case. If the filing complies with the Indiana Appeals Court's order, Allen's appellate attorneys have 30 days from Nov. 10 to file his appeal brief. The exhibits might hint at what Allen's attorneys plan to challenge. Special Judge Frances Gull's rulings that barred Allen's trial attorneys from presenting evidence that other people might be responsible for the Feb. 13, 2017, killings of Abby Williams and Libby German. It also might argue that Gull should have vacated the verdicts. Several news outlets published the exhibits, which have since been blocked from public inspection. The Journal & Courier downloaded the file from Fort Wayne's WANE 15 website on Tuesday and verified the filing of 1,201 pages of exhibits on Wednesday through sealed court records that detailed the number of pages. The specific content, however, was no longer accessible to the public. Among the exhibits are an affidavit from Todd Click, a former Rushville assistant police chief, who investigated the possible involvement in the killings of Odinists in the eastern part of Indiana. In September 2023, Allen's attorneys presented a lengthy memorandum about how the girls' killings might have been human sacrifices by people who worship Odin, an ancient Nordic pagan religion that today is often associated today with white supremacy cultures. Gull refused to allow Allen's attorneys to introduce evidence of Odinism or that the girls might have been human sacrifices in a pagan ritual. The exhibits also include transcriptions of Indiana State Police interviews with Kathy Allen, Richard's wife. Among the exhibits are also transcribed depositions of Indiana State

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Man sentenced for child molesting 40 years later

Ron Wilkins
Lafayette Journal & Courier
USA TODAY NETWORK

LAFAYETTE – Justice caught up with Scott Wheeler more than 40 years after he molested a boy living next door to him.

Wheeler, now 62, pleaded guilty to a Class C felony child molesting for his 1985 crimes against an 11-year-old boy. He was sentenced Friday, Nov. 14, to seven years in prison. With credit for good behavior, Wheeler will spend a little more than three years in prison.

As an adult, the victim came forward in November 2024 to report being sexually abused by Wheeler, according to prosecutors who filed felony charges on March 5. Police interviewed Wheeler in late January, and he admitted the assaults, according to prosecutors. Wheeler's

recollection of the assaults were similar to the victim's recollections. Wheeler pleaded guilty to child molesting in September. Two other charges of child molesting and one count of vicarious sexual gratification were dismissed Friday at sentencing, as per the plea agreement.

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Volume 107 | No. 271
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