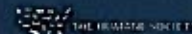


Wildlife Killing Contests in Maryland

Stephanie Boyles Griffin, M.S.
Senior Scientist, Wildlife Protection

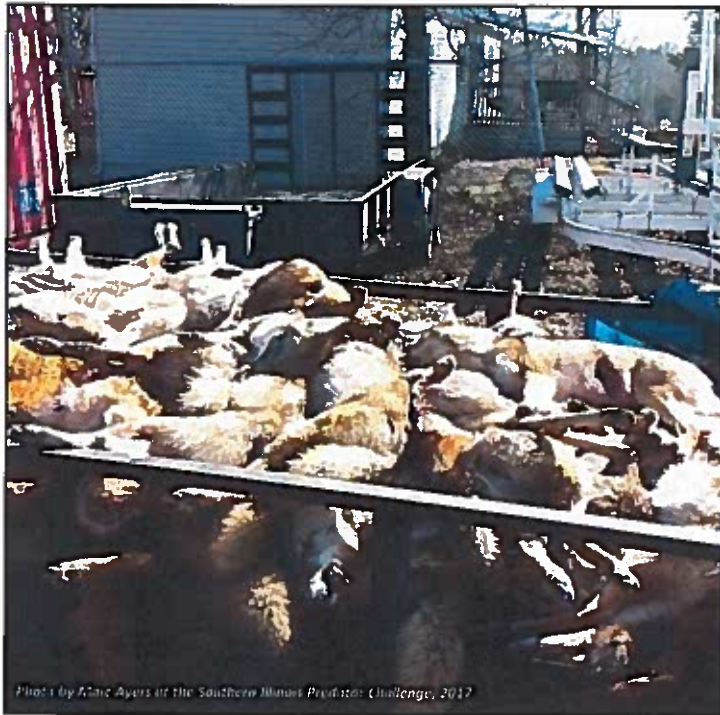


Our position statement on hunting

The HSUS seeks to build a humane society that will move toward protecting and celebrating wildlife, and will develop humane solutions to wildlife conflicts through innovation. The HSUS actively works to eliminate the most inhumane and unfair sport hunting practices, such as the use of body-gripping traps and snares; bear baiting; the hound hunting of bears, bobcats, mountain lions and wolves; contest killing events; and captive-hunting on fenced properties. We oppose live pigeon shoots and other forms of staged hunting where the animals are bred or stocked simply to be shot as living targets. We also oppose the trophy hunting of rare or endangered populations and the use of lead ammunition, since less toxic alternatives are workable and available in the marketplace.

Other position statements on wild animals available at www.humane.org.





Photos by Anne Ayers at the Southern Mammal Predator Challenge, 2017

wildlife killing contests

Organized events in which participants compete for prizes for killing the most or the largest animals within a specified time period.



commonly targeted species

- Coyote
- Red and gray fox
- Bobcat (not in Maryland)
- Crow
- Squirrel
- Prairie dog
- Raccoon



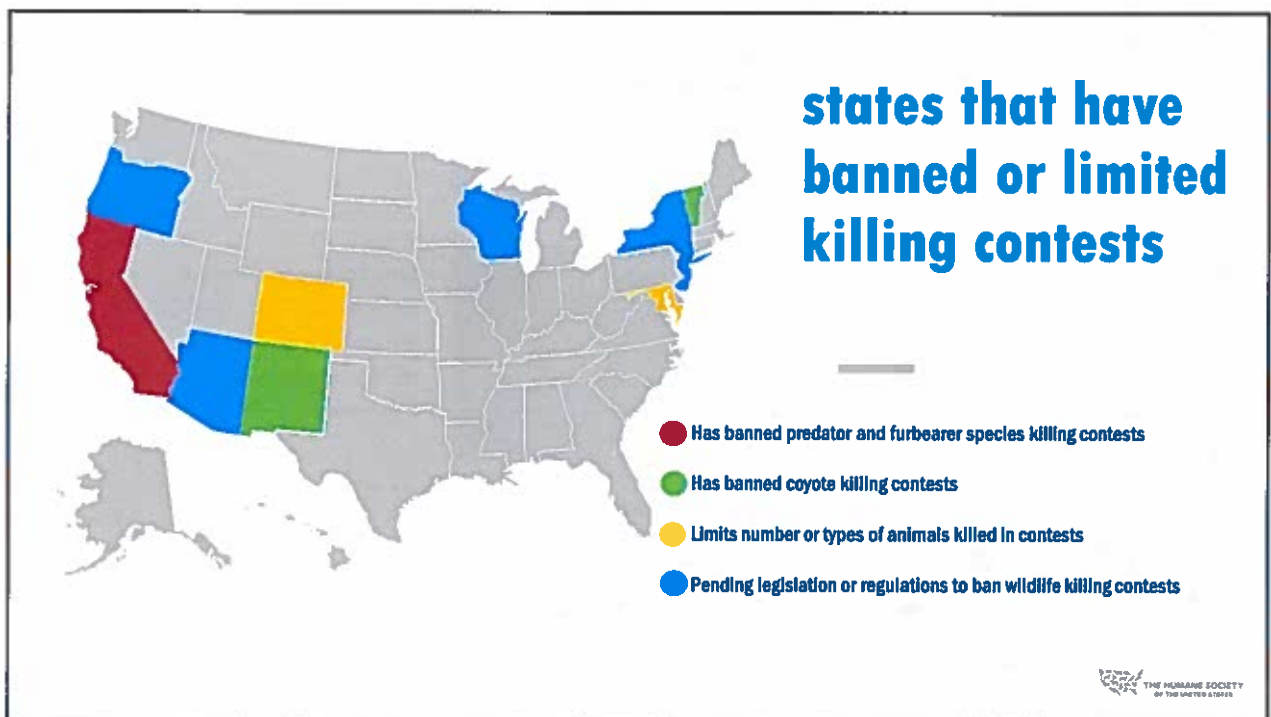
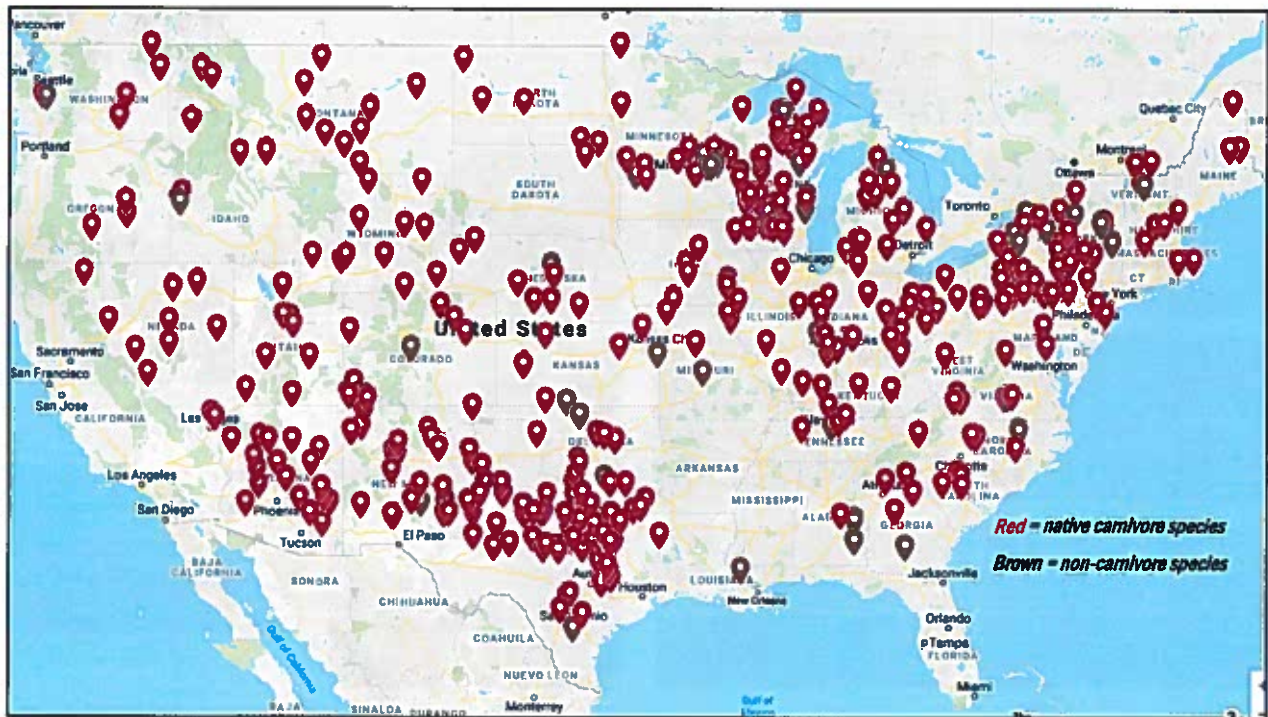
**The 24-Hour Predator Contest
Barnegat, New Jersey
February 20, 2018**



**New York State Predator Hunt
Macedon, New York
January 28, 2018**



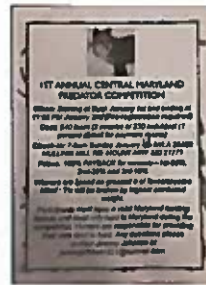
**The Young Farmers &
Ranchers 1st Annual Coyote
Tournament
Hines, Oregon
December 2, 2018**



Recent wildlife killing contests in Maryland:

Annual Central Maryland Predator Competition

- Held at IWLA chapter in Mount Airy
- January 19-20, 2019
- Species targeted: Coyote, red fox, gray fox
- Judged by count



Southern Maryland Predator Hunt

- Held at Fred's Sports #2, White Plains
- January 15-17, 2016
- Species targeted: Coyote, red fox, gray fox
- Judged by point system: Red/gray fox = 1 point, coyote = 2 points



Coexist with Predators



The Myths: Removing a predator will increase wild turkey populations
The Truth: Removing a predator from the landscape has no impact whatsoever on unmanaged turkey populations
 Squirrels, coyotes, raccoons and skunks will eat eggs and baby turkeys, so to nurture it makes sense to remove those predators to boost turkey numbers. However, even if a hunter were to remove and quotas from an area, they'd only create a compensatory effect: another species will fill that void or individuals from the same species, from a different area, will move in.
 Predator control can have an impact on turkeys, but it must be intense, targeted and sustained. Even that won't guarantee significant results. Therefore, removing an occasional predator from your property makes no difference in local turkey populations.
The Myths: Habitat management will do so much more for turkeys than predator management
The Truth: YES! Birds with suitable habitat withstand predator much better than those with poor nesting and brood rearing habitat
 Instead of worrying about predators, focus instead on improving your bird's habitat. Without good nesting habitat, eggs and poult are simply more vulnerable. Turkeys evolved to cope with predators. As long as they have a place to hide their nests and raise their young, they'll do just fine without predator control.
Make the Truth Come True (with some help)
 The NWTF's regional biologists are always looking for landowners interested in making habitat improvements on their land. Meet NWTF biologists on a site visit and build a plan to meet your goals. Some states also have private lands biologists who do site visits and offer recommendations for improvements.
 Hunters who rely on public land can work with their local NWTF chapter and state wildlife agency to improve habitat on public land.




Come to the Right of Truth



Removing a random predator from the landscape has no impact whatsoever on widespread turkey populations

Predator control can have an impact on turkeys, but it must be intense, targeted and sustained. It isn't that easy to guarantee significant results. Therefore, removing an occasional predator from your property makes no difference in local turkey populations.

The Myth: Habitat management will do so much more for turkeys than predator management.

The Truth: Birds with suitable habitat withstand predation much better than those with poor nesting and brood-rearing habitat.

Instead of worrying about predators, focus instead on improving your land's habitat. Unless it's good nesting habitat, eggs and poult are sure to be vulnerable. Turkeys involve a lot of time with predators. As long as they have a place to hide their nests and raise their young, they'll do just fine without predator control.

Make the Truth Come True (with free help)

The NWTF's regional biologists are always looking for landowners interested in making habitat improvements on their land. Most NWTF biologists will do a site visit and build a plan to meet your goals. Some states also have private lands programs that do site visits and offer recommendations for improvements.

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**wildlife killing contests
contravene modern, science-
based wildlife management
principles**

IFG's investigation footage of the 24 Hour Predator Killing Contest in Barnegat New Jersey, 2013



**damage the reputation
of sportsmen and
sportswomen**

**"Hunting is not a contest and it should
never be a competitive activity about
who can kill the most or the biggest
animals."**

*Ted Chu, former wildlife manager
with Idaho Fish and Game*

*Photo by Matt Ayers
of the Southern Illinois
Population Challenge, 2017*



THE WILDLIFE SOCIETY

Leaders in Wildlife Science, Management and Conservation

Issue Statement

Wildlife Killing Contests

Wildlife killing contests are organized, competitive contests where participants compete for cash or other prizes for killing animals in a specified location during a specific time period. They are conducted on a wide range of species including coyotes, bobcats, felines, raccoons, crows, wolves, and prairie dogs. Management of these contests by state and provincial wildlife agencies varies widely. Each state or province, even ones adjacent to each other with similar demographics, can have very different regulations and agency approaches. The public at large may often be unaware that these events take place.

When informed about killing contests, a segment of the public, including hunters and groups seeking ethical hunting and humane treatment of wildlife, find these contests offensive. Pictures and disturbing language posted on social media or other electronic communications can further negative perceptions about hunting. Because of controversy around killing contests, some jurisdictions have sought to limit or ban such killing contests. As of 2019, our state legislature has banned killing contests, some state wildlife agencies have banned them, other state agencies require permits or other special conditions to conduct them, and some states currently support killing contests for some species on the basis that removing predators improves prey populations.

Killing contests differ from typical regulated hunting by the very nature of the organized public competition and prizes being given specifically for killing the largest, smallest, or most animals. "Big Buck" hunts or organized secret hunts differ from killing contests because the animals harvested in these competitions are harvested consistent with ordinary and generally accepted hunting practices and then introduced to the competition.

Killing contests are viewed in widely different perspectives. Some people view them as nothing a game of killing animals, then deconstructing disrespect for and devaluing animals; others view them as a potential management tool to be used to control predators and increase prey populations, or as entertainment without a perceived legitimate use of the harvested animals. In some cases, particularly for predators, justification for the killing contests is often based on flawed use of science. For example, coyote killing contests are often justified on the basis that coyotes kill deer or other game; however, that fails to recognize that predation is a primary cause of mortality, but not necessarily the ultimate cause that limits a species' population.

The policy of The Wildlife Society regarding wildlife killing contests:

1. Discourages contests that adversely affect the wildlife resource or the public appreciation of wildlife resources.
2. Supports that wildlife killed must be put to legitimate uses.
3. Opposes all contests that:
 - a. intentionally wound animals in a manner that causes excess pain and suffering,
 - b. kill parents resulting in orphaned, dependent young,
 - c. or devalue wildlife by showing disrespectful photos of piles of dead animals.

429 Barlow Place, Suite 200, Edmonds, Maryland 20714 301-497-4770 www.wildlife.org

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 - a. intentionally wound animals in a manner that causes excess pain and suffering, kill parents resulting in orphaned, dependent young, or devalue wildlife by showing disrespectful photos of piles of dead animals.
4. Discourage contests that portray hunting in an unethical fashion. If a contest is held, all applicable permitting and hunting regulations must be followed during the contest by all parties involved.
5. Support public attitude surveys to determine societal values regarding killing contests and encourage agencies to consider these survey results when managing and regulating killing contests.
6. Recognize that there is little evidence to support the use of killing contests for controlling predator populations.
7. Recognize that while species killed in contests can be legally killed in most states, making a contest of it may undermine the public's view of ethical hunting.

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Wild Researcher Identifies Small Farm Program
 Wildlife Society's research shows that small farms are more likely to have a wildlife management plan in place than larger farms. The study, published in the journal *Wildlife Management*, found that small farms are more likely to have a wildlife management plan in place than larger farms. The study, published in the journal *Wildlife Management*, found that small farms are more likely to have a wildlife management plan in place than larger farms.

Using Coyotes to Protect Livestock: Wait, What?
 The Wildlife Society, Conservation Clubs, Benton County Agricultural and Wildlife Protection Program



Study in a 10-year USDA study at the University of California
 Wildlife Research and Conservation Center showed that in 2006, 100% of small farms had a wildlife management plan in place, while only 50% of large farms had a wildlife management plan in place. The study, published in the journal *Wildlife Management*, found that small farms are more likely to have a wildlife management plan in place than large farms.

will not reduce or mitigate livestock conflicts

Numerous studies indicate that the random killing of coyotes will not mitigate conflicts with livestock—and could even increase them.



will not increase game populations

In a new study, North Carolina researchers evaluated deer harvest numbers in South Carolina, North Carolina, Ohio, Florida, New Jersey, and New York and found that coyotes are not limiting deer numbers in those states, and that coyote removal programs will do little to increase regional deer numbers.



TRIB LIVE

Habitat, not predators, seen as key to wildlife populations

TRIB LIVE BOB FRYE | Monday, July 25, 2016 5:21 p.m.

Predators take a lot of heat for pursuing prey species that sometimes also are pursued by sportsmen.

Their impact is more imagined than real, though.

That's the word from Pennsylvania Game Commission, anyway. At its recent meeting, the agency devoted a lot of time to debunking the idea predators are driving game populations radically downward.

At the request of the board, two of the agency's biologists, Matt Lovallo and Dan Brauning, gave predator presentations.

DETAILS

The statement

Here's the text of the Game Commission's full response to the predator management question.

"During the late 1800s and early 1900s, the Game Commission focused much of its energy and resources into predator control efforts. During this period, we did not understand the relationship between predators and prey. After decades of using predator control (such as paying bounties) with no effect, and the emergence of wildlife

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After decades of using predator control (such as paying bounties) with no effect, and the emergence of wildlife management as a science, the agency finally accepted the reality that predator control does not work.

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"Predator control of coyotes because of wildlife predation is unwarranted and unnecessary. Predator control of coyotes preying on livestock should be restricted to targeted animals."

The West Virginia Department of Natural Resources

The random removal of coyotes "...will not: (a) control or reduce coyote populations; (b) reduce or eliminate predation on livestock; or (c) result in an increase in deer densities."

The New York State Department of Environmental Conservation

"Bounties and harvest incentive programs are prone to corruption, expensive, do not increase harvest, and do not target problem animals. Ample evidence from case studies supports the conclusion that these methods are ineffective at reducing conflicts with coyotes or impacting coyote populations." ... "While coyote population reduction ("coyote control") is often the first and only management approach that people suggest, it has proven ineffective."

The North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission

In reference to studies finding that trapping coyotes to manage predation of deer fawns did not yield significant increases in fawn survival: "Given these results and the difficulty and high cost of coyote control, it seems apparent that making adjustments to how we manage deer, particularly female deer, is more important now [than] prior to the colonization of the state by coyotes."

The South Carolina Department of Natural Resources

"[T]he wildlife management profession does not generally recognize the use of contests as a tool with substantial wildlife management effect."

The Nevada Board of Wildlife Commissioners



Coyote Management Plan March 1, 2018



NORTH CAROLINA WILDLIFE RESOURCES COMMISSION





foxes and coyotes provide vital ecological services

- Controlling disease transmission
- Keeping rodent populations in check, curtailing rodent- and tick-borne diseases such as hantavirus and Lyme
- Protecting crops
- Increasing biodiversity
- Removing sick animals from the gene pool



HHSUS investigation footage of the New York State Predator Hunt, Ticonderoga, New York, 2018



HHSUS investigation footage of the Young Farmers & Ranchers Coyote Tournament, Hines, Oregon, 2019

killing contests are fundamentally inhumane

The enthusiasm for the mass killing of animals is likely to be viewed as barbaric, sadistic, and wasteful by the people of Maryland.



"Competitive killing seems to lack the appreciation of and the respect for wildlife fundamental to any current definition of an ethical hunter."

*Jim Posewitz, retired biologist,
Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife & Parks, and author of
"Beyond Fair Chase and Intent to Hunt: A Journey into American Hunting"*

"Coyote hunting contests are not only ineffective at controlling coyote populations, but these kinds of competitive coyote hunts are raising concerns on the part of the public and could possibly jeopardize the future of hunting and affect access to private lands for all hunters."

Vermont Fish & Wildlife

"Extensive public controversy exists about predator/fur-bearing contests that award prizes to participants who kill the largest number or variety of predator/fur-bearing animals or the contest is based on the combined weight of animals a participant kills. To the extent these contests reflect on the overall hunting community, public outrage with these events has the potential to threaten hunting as a legitimate wildlife management function."

*The Arizona Game and Fish Commission in its April 12, 2019 proposed rule
to ban killing contests for predator/fur-bearing species*

"The non-specific, indiscriminate killing methods used in this commercial and unrestricted coyote killing contest are not about hunting or sound land management. These contests are about personal profit, animal cruelty. ... It is time to outlaw this highly destructive activity."

Ray Powell, former New Mexico Commissioner of State Lands

"Awarding prizes for wildlife killing contests is both unethical and inconsistent with our current understanding of natural systems. Such contests are an anachronism and have no place in modern wildlife management."

Michael Sutton, former president of the California Fish and Game Commission



Discussion:

Killing contests for furbearer species in Maryland.



Questions?



Working to End the Worst Cruelties Facing Wildlife

