

The Humane Society of the United States investigates slaughter of coyotes in New York killing contest

Controversial cash-prize killing contest in Sullivan County results in wildlife bloodbath.



Over a three-day period, from Feb. 7 to Feb. 9, 2020, the Federation of Sportsmen’s Clubs of Sullivan County, Inc., in New York sponsored a coyote killing contest in which participants from New York and six Pennsylvania Counties (Pike, Susquehanna, Wayne, Lackawanna, Monroe and Tioga) killed as many coyotes as they could lure to their deaths. The fire house in White Sulphur Springs, New York, was used as a weigh-in location. The winner for the heaviest coyote received \$2,000 for killing a 50.3-pound female who he shot over bait. The cash prizes paid out to the 636 participants totaled \$10,000.¹

Wildlife killing contests are prohibited in California, Vermont, New Mexico, Arizona and Massachusetts. Bills or proposed regulations to ban such killing contests are currently being considered in Oregon, New Hampshire, Maryland, Colorado, New Jersey, New York and Washington state.

Organizers and participants in wildlife killing contests attempt to justify their activities by claiming they are performing a wildlife management service. But science has long established that wild carnivore species regulate their own numbers according to available habitat and prey, and that the random and mass killing of coyotes will not prevent conflicts with livestock, people or pets—and it may increase problems by disrupting their stable breeding structure and, paradoxically, increasing their numbers.



Many state wildlife management agencies and professionals also oppose killing contests for these reasons and more.

Key investigation findings

- The HSUS investigator found dead coyotes thrown in the fire house’s dumpster, along with trash. One participant stated, *“If it’s not useful, we throw them in the dumpster. Some of them are pretty messed up.”*
- Female coyotes are often pregnant when killed. Talking about a heavy female killed in the contest, a participant told our investigator, *“She might be right full of babies too, you know?”* He went on to tell the investigator that an obviously pregnant female coyote had been cut open at the event and *“...the babies already had hair on them – they were ready ya know...”*
- Organizers claimed that participants often try to cheat by bringing the same coyote in twice, so two toes are cut off from each dead coyote to discourage this practice. *“When it comes to this... people will do anything. Yeah, because the winner gets \$2,000. Anytime you put money into the equation in a contest, people are going to figure out a way to – and that’s what we do – that’s why we [cut off the toes].”*

¹ David Figura: “Upstate NY coyote hunt contest winner earns \$2,440, record number killed this year” at www.syracuse.com/outdoors/2020/02/upstate-ny-coyote-hunt-contest-winner-earns-2240-record-number-killed-this-year.html

- Killing methods allowed in the contest were shooting over bait, leghold traps and luring coyotes using digital calling devices.
- A shooter explained to our investigator that coyotes are easy to kill at night with a special scope, and that some of the contestants had spent \$3,000 on such scopes.
- Showing the investigator his kill, a participant called the animal a “beautiful dog” and said, “I can’t explain it to you until you do it but to see that animal come out under a moonlit on the snow ... man, fascinating.”

Other New York wildlife killing contests:

- Danby Pirate’s Club 4th Annual Coyote (& fox) Hunt, Spencer
- FoxPro’s New York State Coyote Hunt, East Bloomfield
- Northern New York Hound Club’s Coyote Hunt, Carthage
- 3 day Coyote Contest, White Sulphur Springs
- Crow Down, Palenville
- Coyote Hunt and Rabbit Hunt, Canajoharie
- 1st Annual Coyote Hunting Tournament, Hancock
- 1st Annual Coyote Contest, Whitney Point
- Big Coon Contest, Sinclairville
- Cuba Rod & Gun Club Squirrel Slam, Cuba
- Smoke-N-Yote’s Early Season Yote Hunt, Cuba
- D&H Transport/Savage Arms Woodchuck Derby, Chaffee
- 2018 5th Annual Predator Harvest Contest, Wynantskill
- Coyote Hunt, Fultonville
- “Final Fling” For Fox A fox-calling contest, Macedon
- The Fox Bowl, Arcade
- 18th Annual Cal Dewitt Memorial Rabbit Hunt, Penn Yan
- Memorial Predator Hunt, Pompey Squirrel Derby, Verona Beach
- Last Call Coyote Hunt, Van Etten
- End of the Road Inn Coyote Contest, Pavilion
- One Wiley Weekend: Dobbers vs. Callers Shootout, Addison

New York legislation introduced

A.9775 (Glick) / S.4253B (Martinez) has been introduced in the state legislature to prohibit these wildlife killing contests in New York.



Photos by: The HSUS

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