



Photo © Trish Carney

# A BARBARIC BLOODSPORT: Ending Wildlife Killing Contests in Colorado

## ABOUT

In Colorado, wild animals are the targets of killing contests—events during which participants compete to kill animals for prizes or entertainment. There have been at least 18 contests held in Colorado over the last five years, primarily targeting coyotes, prairie dogs, and bobcats. Contest organizers are increasingly taking their events underground so the actual number is likely much higher.

At the High Desert Coyote Classic in Pueblo this year, teams paid \$100 to enter the coyote contest, with 100% payback for the winner and side pots for “biggest,” “littlest” and “ugliest dog.” In other contests, prairie dogs are used for target practice. Specialty shots include the “red mist” in which the prairie dog’s body explodes, and the “flipper” whereby the bullet’s impact blasts the prairie dog backwards. In some contests, young children are encouraged to participate, and prizes include high-powered rifles — including AR-15s.

## THE PROBLEM

Countless animals are left orphaned or injured during wildlife killing contests. Participants gather at bars or banquet halls to celebrate, take photos and count the bodies. After the events,

the animals are usually discarded away from the public eye in “carcass dumps/pits.” Aside from the senseless waste and complete disregard for life, killing contests disrupt the equilibrium of ecosystems, ignore the free ecological services wild animals provide, and promote violence.

## NATIONWIDE MOMENTUM

The National Coalition to End Wildlife Killing Contests, in concert with local organizations and advocates, have been working to abolish killing contests state by state. Arizona, California, Massachusetts, New Mexico and Vermont have banned the events in recent years, and a number of other states are working to do so in 2020.

## WHAT CAN WE DO IN COLORADO?

Last year, a number of organizations submitted a citizen petition asking the Colorado Parks & Wildlife Commission to consider revising current regulations to ban killing contests for small game and furbearing animals including coyotes and prairie dogs. Colorado’s current regulations allow each contest participant to kill up to five animals per species over the course of one contest. The Commission will hear the petition at its March 18-19 meeting in Aurora. If the Commissioners decide to advance the petition, the rulemaking process will begin and the public will be given the opportunity to comment. Here’s how to help:

- Join Project Coyote’s E-team:** Add your name to our sign-up sheet (or sign up online at [ProjectCoyote.org](http://ProjectCoyote.org)) to receive our action alerts so you can stay updated about next steps to ban killing contests in Colorado.
- Help us find hunters, ranchers, and members of the outdoor recreation industry:** If you know anyone from these communities who might help our effort, please email us at [info@projectcoyote.org](mailto:info@projectcoyote.org).
- Visit the National Coalition to End Wildlife Killing Contests’ website** at [ProjectCoyote.org/endkillingcontests](http://ProjectCoyote.org/endkillingcontests) to learn more about killing contests and what you can do to end them!



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**PROMOTING COEXISTENCE  
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