

Wildlife Killing Contests

Ending the cruel slaughter of America's native wildlife

“[t]o 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 & Fish Commission



These events are an irreverent degradation of Illinois' wildlife, which belong to all state residents.

Wildlife killing contests target and kill coyotes, foxes, raccoons and other wildlife for prizes or entertainment. These events do not align with Illinois' hunting tradition of sportsmanship, fair chase principles and instead incentivize maximizing the killing of fur-bearing mammals for a prize, which undermines the public's view of hunting. Killing contests are promoted across Illinois. These contests exploit the loopholes in liberal seasons for the targeted species, including night-hunting, the absence of bag limits and reporting requirements. Coyotes, the most targeted species, can be hunted using dangerous weapons *not allowed for any other species*, “including large capacity semi-automatic rifles and shotguns with any type of shell” (huntillinois.org). Such practices go against the core tenets of responsible wildlife management.

There is no credible science supporting the indiscriminate killing of wildlife as an effective method for management.

Justifying these events as “predator control” is unsupported by scientific evidence. Predator populations self-regulate, preventing overpopulation. Claims of coyote overpopulation are subjective and unsubstantiated. Indiscriminate killing can boost coyote populations, exacerbate conflicts, and doesn't reliably increase prey numbers, which are more affected by habitat and climate, a view shared by professional wildlife and hunting organizations.

Mass removal of vital wildlife species from the environment impairs the ecological benefits these animals provide to both urban and rural communities.

Bobcats, foxes, and coyotes control rodent and rabbit populations, which in turn helps keep cities clean, protects crops, and reduces the transmission of zoonotic diseases such as Lyme disease, which is continually on the rise in Illinois. More specifically, coyotes consume animal carcasses, remove sick animals from the gene pool, disperse seeds, indirectly boost plant and wildlife biodiversity, and protect ground nesting birds. WKC's impair these vital ecological services.



Participants in wildlife killing contests do not follow fair chase hunting ethics, instead using high-powered weaponry, night vision equipment, and electronic call devices. These contests damage the reputation of ethical hunters.

Opposition to wildlife killing contests is growing rapidly.

Ten states have banned wildlife killing contests: Arizona, California, Colorado, Massachusetts, Maryland, New Mexico, New York, Oregon, Vermont and Washington. In addition, local governments in Arizona, Michigan, Minnesota, Nevada, New Mexico, Pennsylvania and Wisconsin have condemned the events. In April 2022, Congress introduced the Prohibit Wildlife Killing Contests Act of 2022, which would prohibit organizing, sponsoring, conducting, or participating in wildlife killing contests on more than 500 million acres of U.S. public lands.

HB 2900 is not a ban on hunting and does not impact other laws or contests.

Individuals will still be allowed to hunt coyotes and other wildlife according to state laws. This bill does not prohibit contests, such as ‘buck’ or ‘bass’ contests, or those targeting species classified as ‘invasive’.

A Pointless Bloodsport

“Bloodsport”: a sport involving the shedding of blood, especially the hunting or killing of animals. Wildlife killing contests are organized events in which participants compete for cash or prizes for killing the most, the largest, or sometimes the smallest animals over a certain time period. Each year thousands of coyotes, foxes and racoons and in some states bobcat, mountain lion and wolves are killed during these competitions. The carcasses are damaged beyond use.

Support HB2900

The following organizations support HB2900 (Moeller), which would make it unlawful for any person to organize, sponsor, conduct, promote, or participate in any contest, organized competition, tournament, or derby with the intent of taking or hunting fur-bearing mammals for cash, prizes or other inducements, otherwise known as wildlife killing contests: the Illinois Chapter of the Sierra Club, Project Coyote and its Illinois membership, the Illinois Bobcat Foundation, and the Humane Society of the United States (HSUS).

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