

Fact Sheet

Fox and Coyote Pens

In the Southeast, foxes and coyotes are live-trapped and artificially stocked in fenced enclosures for the purpose of allowing dogs to pursue the captive animals. Several hundred dogs may be released during a pen competition. Dogs often catch and rip apart the foxes and coyotes.



A coyote takes refuge in a refrigerator in between pen competitions.

In the fall of 2007, a multi-state sting of fox and coyote pens uncovered the interstate smuggling of wildlife for sale to pens. In Alabama alone, 18 individuals were arrested for activities related to pens and the live market. In the fall of 2009, the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission arrested 12 individuals for illegally selling and possessing foxes and coyotes to stock pens.

Animal Welfare

Fox and coyote dealers pack the wild animals into a truck and often ship them long distances in cramped cages with no access to food or water or ability to move. When the animals reach their final destination they are released in an unfamiliar fenced territory and forced to run for their lives.

Competitions last one to three days with the dogs judged on how they chase the wildlife. Pens may be as large as 1,000 acres, but the largest enclosures also claim the thickest density of animals. The captive wildlife subsist unnaturally on a diet of dog food and den in abandoned house appliances or plastic tubes.

In these rigged events, dogs tearing apart the animals leads to the constant demand for re-stocking of enclosures with fresh wildlife. For example, just one fox pen in South Carolina stocked almost 2,000 foxes and coyotes in just three years.

Disease and Commercialization of Wildlife

Studies have found that transporting live, wild animals for pens has directly led to the spread of rabies, and other devastating diseases dangerous to other animals and people. There is not a better recipe for spreading wildlife disease than stocking stressed wildlife in an enclosure in unnaturally high densities.

The American Veterinary Medical Association and the International Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies have adopted resolutions in favor of increased restrictions or prohibitions on transporting wildlife for penning purposes.

It is a founding principle of American wildlife management that wildlife is held in trust for all citizens – not for the private amusement of a few. Selling animals removed from the wild and creating markets for live wildlife is strongly discouraged and often illegal. Allowing foxes and coyotes to be commercialized in this manner is a dangerous precedent for how wildlife is treated.



Winners pose with cash after the conclusion of a competition



THE HUMANE SOCIETY
OF THE UNITED STATES

Printed on recycled paper.

Celebrating Animals | Confronting Cruelty

2100 L Street, NW Washington, DC 20037

t 202.452.1100 f 202.778.6132 humanesociety.org