



New York State Predator Hunt,
Macedon, New York



24-Hour Predator Killing Contest,
Barnegat, New Jersey

Gruesome wildlife killing contests exposed

Undercover investigation reveals need for state legislation to end these wasteful and cruel events.

IN EARLY 2018, investigators with the Humane Society of the United States attended the weighing in and judging portions of the Parlin Buck Club's 24-hour Predator Killing Contest in Barnegat, New Jersey, and the Bark at the Moon Coyote Club's New York State Predator Hunt in Macedon, New York. Investigators witnessed:

- Participants slinging the dead bodies of coyotes and foxes into piles, and gloating and joking about the methods used to lure and kill the animals
- Participants in both competitions vying for cash and prizes for killing the most or the heaviest wild animals.
- Men drinking beer, laughing and posing for a photo at the New Jersey event in front of a row of dead foxes who are hung by their feet from a rack.
- About 200 animals being brought in and piled up to be counted, weighed and displayed at the New York event, in front of a crowd that included young children.
- One participant at the New York event admitting, "I gotta say, it's a good time whether you do or don't get 'em...it's a good time.
- Some of the dead animals at the New York event were purchased by a fur buyer, who told investigators that fox are "...mating now."
- A prize being awarded at the New York State Predator Hunt awards ceremony to "Team Snow Viper," a father and son team that killed three coyotes and seven foxes in the contest.

Wildlife killing contests are held in almost all U.S. states. Sponsors are often sportsmen's clubs and manufacturers of hunting rifles and predator calling equipment, but can also include local bars and restaurants, municipal service organizations and agencies and even city or county chambers of commerce.

Bills introduced this year in the New York legislature, A.4116a/ S.5148a, would prohibit the killing of wild animals in the state for prizes or other inducement, or for entertainment. Legislation to ban



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coyote killing contests, H.636, has passed the Vermont House of Representatives and awaits a Senate floor vote.

In California, it is illegal to offer a prize or other inducement worth \$500 or more as a reward for the killing of wildlife in a contest, tournament, or derby. Colorado prohibits advertising, conducting, promoting or participating in contests that award prizes when the object of the contest involves killing big game, and prohibits competitive events involving the killing of small game or furbearer species (such as coyotes or prairie dogs) unless no more than five of each species are killed by each participant during the entire event. While these laws in California and Colorado are good first steps, both states have loopholes that allow killing contests to continue. In 2017, Maryland enacted a two year moratorium on cownose ray killing contests in the Chesapeake Bay.



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Additional information:

- Wildlife killing contests are organized events in which participants compete for prizes—typically cash or guns, such as AR-15s—to see who can kill the most or the largest animals within a certain time period. Thousands of animals—including coyotes, foxes, bobcats, mountain lions, prairie dogs, rabbits, crows and squirrels—are killed in these events every year across the United States.
- These competitive killing events are a bloodbath for entertainment purposes, with participants glorifying kill numbers and showing no respect for wild animals and their habitat. Participants often dump the bodies after the prizes are awarded. At the 24-hour Predator Killing Contest in New Jersey, our investigator was told that some participants would not bother to drive the animals they killed to the weigh-in and judging site because of they didn't want to brave the bad weather.
- Misunderstood species, deemed by some to be “pests” or “varmints,” are the animals most frequently killed during these events because there are almost no laws protecting them. They often can be killed in unlimited numbers, all year long, and using almost any method.
- Participants in wildlife killing contests use cruel and unsporting methods such as electronic calling devices to attract coyotes into rifle range with sounds that imitate the cry of a coyote or prey in distress. Dependent young may also be orphaned during these events and left to die from starvation, predation or exposure.
- Wildlife killing contests are counter-productive to sound wildlife management. All species—especially native carnivores—play a vital role in healthy ecosystems. Coyotes, for example, provide a number of free, natural ecological services: helping to control disease



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transmission, cleaning up carrion (animal carcasses), keeping rodent populations in check, increasing biodiversity, removing sick animals from the gene pool and protecting crops.

- Last fall, the Humane Society of the United States launched, “Wildlife Killing Contests: A Guide to Ending the Blood Sport in Your Community,” a resource for wildlife advocates, organizations and city governments. The Humane Society of the United States has also joined with Project Coyote and other like-minded local, state and national organizations to form the National Coalition to End Wildlife Killing Contests.

For more information, please contact Jill Fritz, director of Wildlife Protection at the Humane Society of the United States, at jfritz@humanesociety.org or 301-258-1464.



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