



The HSUS has been at the frontlines of the fight to end wildlife contests and our goal is to see them eradicated once and for all. *Photo by John Harrison*

Breaking news: Arizona bans wildlife killing contests

September 4, 2019 [10 Comments](#)

Arizona today banned all wildlife killing contests for coyotes, bobcats, foxes and other animals, joining a growing number of states taking action to stop these gruesome events in which participants vie for cash and prizes for killing the most or heaviest animals within a specific time period.

The ban, proposed in June, was voted on by Arizona's Fish and Wildlife Commission. It received final approval today in a unanimous vote by the Governor of Arizona's Regulatory Review Council and will go into effect in 60 days.

Since the start of 2018, Vermont and New Mexico have passed laws banning coyote killing contests. California, Colorado and Maryland have also banned or restricted wildlife killing contests. The Arizona ban is the most far-reaching of all these because it covers many more species.

The momentum against these contests reflects changing attitudes among citizens and a growing disgust toward the cruelty and inanity of these events. Twenty years ago, this same Regulatory Review Council rejected a similar opportunity to approve a ban, but this time, its members found it difficult to ignore a rising groundswell of citizen opposition. Nearly 5,000 people submitted comments to the Arizona Game and Fish Commission, and an overwhelming majority expressed support for the rule.

Professional wildlife stewardship organizations like [The Wildlife Society](#) have also spoken out against the random killing of wild

carnivores in killing contests, and the events are increasingly being criticized by state wildlife agency leaders.

Organizers and participants have often used livestock conflicts as a reason to justify these contests, but scientific evidence shows that indiscriminately killing wildlife is not only ineffective at curtailing conflicts with livestock and pets, it can actually make matters worse.

The HSUS has been at the frontlines of the fight to end wildlife contests. We've conducted undercover [investigations of these contests in New York and New Jersey](#), and in [Oregon](#), and footage shot by our undercover investigators captures the casual indifference participants at these contests show for the suffering and death of animals. The contests also desensitize children — who are often encouraged to participate in the killing — to animal cruelty. Last year, at Arizona's "Santa Slay Coyote Calling Tournament" in Dewey-Humboldt, advertisements depicted Father Christmas holding a rifle and standing in a pool of blood (the town later [passed a resolution](#) condemning these gruesome spectacles).

Our goal is to see these contests eradicated once and for all. Arizona's pioneering action should inspire other states to follow suit. The Massachusetts Division of Fisheries and Wildlife is considering a regulatory change to outlaw killing contests for species like foxes and coyotes, and there is similar legislation in New Jersey and New York. As part of [the National Coalition to End Wildlife Killing Contests](#), a coalition we co-chair with Project Coyote that is composed of more than 30 national, regional and local wildlife protection organizations, we're taking the fight national.

For today's outcome, we applaud the Arizona Governor's Regulatory Review Council for listening to the voices of thousands of Arizonans and potential visitors to the state who submitted comments to the Arizona Game and Fish Commission. If your state has wildlife contests and you want to learn how to effectively advocate to end them, you can download our [toolkit](#). Wildlife killing contests are vicious and pointless, and there's no justification for any state to condone them or support their continuation.

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Cathy Pohlman

[September 4, 2019 at 8:24 pm](#)

That is so sick. Sounds like a shooting gallery at a carnival.

[Reply](#)



Carolyn Denton

[September 4, 2019 at 8:44 pm](#)

Thank you HSUS for this wonderful news and for all your hard work making it happen. May God Bless all of you.