



February 8, 2021

Chairman Brad Witt  
 House Committee on Agriculture and Natural Resources  
 900 Court St. NE  
 Salem, OR 97301

**Re: HB 2728**

Dear Chairman Witt and Members of the Committee:

On behalf of our Oregon members and constituents, the undersigned organizations ask for your support of HB 2728 to end coyote killing contests in Oregon for the following reasons:

**Coyote killing contests undermine modern, science-based wildlife management principles and are not an effective wildlife management tool.**

The indiscriminate killing that wildlife killing contests promote is counterproductive to effective wildlife management. The best available science shows that many wildlife populations depleted by unnatural means simply reproduce more quickly due to the sudden drop in competition for resources and changes to social structure from the loss of individuals.<sup>1</sup>

This effect is well documented for coyote populations in particular.<sup>2</sup> Ironically, the indiscriminate killing of coyotes *increases* their populations over time because it disrupts their social structure, which encourages higher levels of breeding and migration. The science is clear: Randomly killing coyotes in contests does not reduce their populations. In fact, since 1850 when mass killings of coyotes began, the range of coyotes has tripled in the United States.<sup>3</sup>

State wildlife management agencies across the country have recognized that killing contests do not control coyote population size. For example, the North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission concluded, after reviewing a large body of scientific and peer-reviewed literature, that indiscriminate, lethal methods of controlling coyotes, such as bounties and harvest incentive programs, are ineffective and counterproductive, that coyotes provide benefits to humans and ecosystems, and that non-lethal measures are the best way to address conflicts with coyotes.<sup>4</sup> The Massachusetts Division of Fisheries

<sup>1</sup> F. F. Knowlton, et al., *Coyote Depredation Control: An Interface between Biology and Management*, 52 *Journal of Range Management* 398, 400-402 (1999). Available at: <https://pdfs.semanticscholar.org/43f7/3adf647447dd472db69c0b4712f1c71fab33.pdf>; Robert Crabtree and Jennifer Sheldon, *Coyotes and Canid Coexistence in Yellowstone*, in *Carnivores in Ecosystems: The Yellowstone Experience* (T. Clark et al., eds, 1999); J. M. Goodrich and S. W. Buskirk, *Control of Abundant Native Vertebrates for Conservation of Endangered Species*, 9 *Conservation Biology* (1995); Elizabeth Kierepka, et al., *Effect of Compensatory Immigration on the Genetic Structure of Coyotes*, 81 *J. Wildlife Mgmt* 1394, 1394 (2017). Available at: [https://www.srs.fs.usda.gov/pubs/ja/2018/ja\\_2018\\_kilgo\\_002.pdf](https://www.srs.fs.usda.gov/pubs/ja/2018/ja_2018_kilgo_002.pdf).

<sup>2</sup> *Id.*; see also S.D. Gehrt, *Chicago Coyotes part I*, 11 *Wildlife Control Technologies* 20-21, 38-9, 42 (2004).

<sup>3</sup> Robert Crabtree and Jennifer Sheldon, "Coyotes and Canid Coexistence in Yellowstone," in *Carnivores in Ecosystems: The Yellowstone Experience*, ed. T. Clark et al. (New Haven [Conn.]: Yale University Press, 1999)

<sup>4</sup> North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission, *Coyote Management Plan 11*, 21-28 (2018). Available at: [www.ncwildlife.org/Portals/0/Learning/documents/Species/Coyote%20Management%20Plan\\_FINAL\\_030118.pdf](http://www.ncwildlife.org/Portals/0/Learning/documents/Species/Coyote%20Management%20Plan_FINAL_030118.pdf).

and Wildlife stated: "...hunting [would not] have an appreciable impact on coyote population size under any realistic scenarios."<sup>5</sup> The Vermont Fish and Wildlife Department made a similar finding, stating: "...we do not believe such short-term hunts will have any measurable impact on regulating coyote populations[.]" The New York State Department of Environmental Conservation also stated: "...random removal of coyotes resulting from a year-round hunting season will not...control or reduce coyote populations."<sup>6</sup> The Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission found: "[r]emoving coyotes for the purpose of eradication is an inefficient and ineffective method to control populations...hunting and trapping place pressure on coyote populations, and the species responds by reproducing at a younger age and producing more pups per litter."<sup>7</sup> Many other state wildlife management agencies, including those in Illinois, Kentucky, Louisiana, Missouri, New Hampshire, Nevada, South Carolina, Tennessee, Washington, West Virginia, and Wyoming, have reached similar conclusions.<sup>8</sup>

### **Coyote killing contests devalue the integral role that coyotes play in healthy ecosystems.**

Coyotes provide a range of free, natural ecological services to our environment and urban and rural communities.<sup>9</sup> They help to control disease transmission by keeping rodent populations in check, consume carrion, remove sick animals from the gene pool, disperse seeds, protect ground-nesting birds from smaller carnivores, and increase the biological diversity of plant and wildlife communities.<sup>10</sup> The Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife states: "Coyotes play an important role in the food chain by controlling mice, rats and other rodents and scavenging on dead wildlife that otherwise could spread disease. Rodents make up the bulk of the coyote diet in both urban and rural settings. Many areas, such as cemeteries and golf courses, have reported declines in damage associated with gophers once coyotes appeared. Coyotes also help to control geese in urban areas and on agricultural lands where flocks can forage and destroy young crops."<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> Massachusetts Division of Fisheries & Wildlife, Public Hearing Notice on Draft Division of Fisheries and Wildlife Regulations at 321 CMR 2.00 and 3.02. (Sept. 20, 2019). Available at [https://www.mass.gov/files/documents/2019/09/20/DFW\\_DRAFT\\_321%20CMR%202.26%2C2.17%2C3.02%20-%20PHN%2C%20Summary%2C%20and%20Proposed%20Regulations.pdf](https://www.mass.gov/files/documents/2019/09/20/DFW_DRAFT_321%20CMR%202.26%2C2.17%2C3.02%20-%20PHN%2C%20Summary%2C%20and%20Proposed%20Regulations.pdf).

<sup>6</sup> New York State Department of Environmental Conservation, *The Status and Impact of Eastern Coyotes in Northern New York* (1991). Available at: [http://www.dec.ny.gov/docs/wildlife\\_pdf/coystatnny91.pdf](http://www.dec.ny.gov/docs/wildlife_pdf/coystatnny91.pdf).

<sup>7</sup> Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission, *Coyotes: Living with Coyotes*. Available at: <https://myfwc.com/conservation/you-choose/wildlife/coyotes/>.

<sup>8</sup> Illinois Dept. of Natural Resources, *Coyote*. Available at: <https://www.dnr.illinois.gov/conservation/wildlife/Pages/Coyote.aspx>; Kentucky Dept. of Fish & Wildlife Resources, *Coyotes in the Suburbs*. Available at: <https://fw.ky.gov/Wildlife/Documents/KASpring17coyotes.pdf>; Travis Dufour, *Living with Coyotes*, Louisiana Dept. of Wildlife & Fisheries Wildlife Division - Private Lands Program. Available at: [http://www.wlf.louisiana.gov/sites/default/files/pdf/publication/34726-living-coyotes-low-res/living\\_with\\_coyotes\\_low-res.pdf](http://www.wlf.louisiana.gov/sites/default/files/pdf/publication/34726-living-coyotes-low-res/living_with_coyotes_low-res.pdf); Bill White, *The Bounty Hunter*, Missouri Dept. of Conservation (Aug. 21, 2012). Available at: <https://mdc.mo.gov/blogs/more-quail/bounty-hunter>; New Hampshire Fish and Game, *Eastern Coyote*. Available at: <https://wildlife.state.nh.us/wildlife/profiles/coyote.html>; Nevada Dept. of Wildlife, *Coyote*. Available at: <http://www.ndow.org/Species/Furbearer/Coyote/>; National Wildlife Control Training Program, *Coyotes*. Available at: <http://www.dnr.sc.gov/wildlife/publications/nuisance/coyotes.pdf>; Tennessee Wildlife Resources Agency, *Controlling Coyotes in Tennessee* (Jan. 2003). Available at: <https://www.tn.gov/content/dam/tn/twra/documents/coyotecontrol.pdf>; Washington Dept. of Fish and Wildlife, *Living with Wildlife*. Available at: <http://wdfw.wa.gov/living/coyotes.html>; West Virginia Dept. of Natural Resources, *Eastern Coyote Impacts Of The Eastern Coyote On Wildlife Populations*. Available at: <http://www.wvdnr.gov/hunting/CoyoteResearch.shtm>; Dave Rippe, *Predator Control and Wildlife*, Wyoming Game and Fish Dept., *Habitat Extension Bulletin*: No. 57 (July 1995). Available at: <https://wgfd.wyo.gov/WGFD/media/content/PDF/Habitat/Extension%20Bulletins/B57-Predator-Control-and-Wildlife.pdf>.

<sup>9</sup> Fox, C.H. and C.M. Papouchis, *Coyotes in Our Midst: Coexisting with an Adaptable and Resilient Carnivore* 9 (2005). Available at: [http://www.projectcoyote.com/Coyotes\\_In\\_Our\\_Midst.pdf](http://www.projectcoyote.com/Coyotes_In_Our_Midst.pdf).

<sup>10</sup> S. E. Henke and F. C. Bryant, *Effects of Coyote Removal on the Faunal Community in Western Texas*, 63 *Journal of Wildlife Management* 1066 (1999); K. R. Crooks and M. E. Soule, *Mesopredator Release and Avifaunal Extinctions in a Fragmented System*, 400 *Nature* 563 (1999); E. T. Mezquida, et al., *Sage-Grouse and Indirect Interactions: Potential Implications of Coyote Control on Sage-Grouse Populations*, 108 *Condor* 747 (2006). Available at: [http://repository.uwoy.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1003&context=zooology\\_facpub](http://repository.uwoy.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1003&context=zooology_facpub); N. M. Waser et al., *Coyotes, Deer, and Wildflowers: Diverse Evidence Points to a Trophic Cascade*, 101 *Naturwissenschaften* 427 (2014).

<sup>11</sup> "Living with Wildlife: Coyotes," Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife, [https://www.dfw.state.or.us/wildlife/living\\_with/docs/living\\_with\\_coyotes.pdf](https://www.dfw.state.or.us/wildlife/living_with/docs/living_with_coyotes.pdf)

## Coyote killing contests do not prevent conflicts with humans, pets, or livestock—and may increase them.

Killing contests are not effective at removing individual, problem-causing animals.<sup>12</sup> Most killing contests target coyotes in woodlands and grasslands where conflicts with humans, livestock, and pets are minimal. Studies have found that killing coyotes fragments social groups and can create ecological voids that may be filled by smaller predators with higher population numbers that may prey on livestock.<sup>13</sup> In a signed statement, more than 70 conservation scientists made the following finding about the effect of indiscriminately killing coyotes on livestock depredation:

Some advocates of wildlife killing contests (WKC) believe they are necessary or beneficial for effective management of livestock depredation. We indicated that WKC are unlikely to have this effect. The reason why is that most individual predators do not participate in livestock depredations. Consequently, effective management of depredation requires (1) targeting the offending individual(s), and (2) intervening close to the site where the depredations occurred as well as responding in a timely manner. WKC do not represent the kind of targeted effort required for effective management of livestock depredations. Moreover, indiscriminate killing of predators is likely to exacerbate risks to livestock. The reason is that killing social carnivores like coyotes (and wolves) can lead to the disruption of predators' social and foraging ecology in ways that increase the number of transient individuals. These transient individuals that have not been acculturated (aversively conditioned) to living in areas with livestock may be more likely to kill livestock.<sup>14</sup>

Additionally, exploited coyote packs are more likely to have increased numbers of pups and feeding young has been found to be a significant motivation for coyotes to switch from killing small and medium-sized prey to killing sheep.<sup>15</sup>

In 2018 an article was published by the Oregon State University Extension Program in *Oregon Small Farm News* titled, "Using Coyotes to Protect Livestock. Wait. What?" It underscored that lethal control of coyotes only increased livestock losses and that coyotes with no record of livestock depredation, and who have established themselves in a territory that overlaps with sheep pastures, can prevent livestock losses by excluding coyotes from neighboring packs which may have learned to kill sheep.<sup>16</sup>

As the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife explains:

Prevention is always the best medicine when it comes to avoiding, minimizing or correcting problems with coyotes. By far the greatest number of conflicts between humans and coyotes are those in which the animal has become habituated to a residential area by the behavior of human beings. Nine times out of ten, these problems arise because people have attracted the coyote by giving it access to food or shelter. Giving a wild animal food is never a good idea. Fortunately,

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<sup>12</sup> Adrian Treves et al., *Predator Control Should Not Be a Shot In the Dark*, 14 *Front Ecol Environ* 380, 381 (2016). Available at: [http://faculty.nelson.wisc.edu/treves/pubs/Treves\\_Krofel\\_McManus.pdf](http://faculty.nelson.wisc.edu/treves/pubs/Treves_Krofel_McManus.pdf).

<sup>13</sup> Id.

<sup>14</sup> Statement in Opposition to Wildlife Killing Contests: Signed By More Than 70 Conservation Scientists. Project Coyote (May 23, 2019). Available at <http://www.projectcoyote.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/05/SAB-Letter-Against-WKCs-2019.05.23-FINAL.pdf>. See also F.F. Knowlton, et al., *Coyote depredation control: An interface between biology and management*, 52 *J. Range Mgmt.* 398 (1999); J.D.C. Linnell et al., *Large carnivores that kill livestock: do problem individuals really exist?*, 27 *Wildlife Society Bulletin* 698 (1999); P. Stahl and J.M. Vandel, *Factors influencing lynx depredation on sheep in France: Problem individuals and habitat*, 4 *Carnivore Damage Prevention News* 6 (2001); K.M. Blejwas et al., *The effectiveness of selective removal of breeding coyotes in reducing sheep predation*, 66 *J. Wildlife Mgmt.* 451 (2002); A. Treves et al., *Wolf depredation on domestic animals: control and compensation in Wisconsin, 1976-2000*, 30 *Wildlife Society Bulletin* 231 (2002); A. Treves and L. Naughton-Treves, *Evaluating lethal control in the management of human-wildlife conflict*, in *People and Wildlife, Conflict or Coexistence* 86 (R. Woodroffe et al., eds., 2005); E. Bangs and J.A. Shivik, *Managing wolf conflict with livestock in the northwestern United States*, USDA National Wildlife Research Center-Staff Publications 550 (2001); A. Treves et al., *American black bear nuisance complaints and hunter take*, 21 *Ursus* 30 (2010); K.A. Peebles et al., *Effects of remedial sport hunting on cougar complaints and livestock depredations*, 8 *PloS ONE* e79713 (2013). Available at: <https://journals.plos.org/plosone/article?id=10.1371/journal.pone.0079713>; R.B. Wielgus and K. A. Peebles, *Effects of Wolf Mortality on Livestock Depredations*, 9 *PLoS ONE* e113505 (2014).

<sup>15</sup> F. F. Knowlton, et al., *Coyote Depredation Control: An Interface between Biology and Management*, 52 *J. of Range Mgmt.* 398, 403 (1999). Available at: <https://pdfs.semanticscholar.org/43f7/3adf647447dd472db69c0b4712f1c71fab33.pdf>; B. R. Mitchell et al., *Coyote Depredation Management: Current Methods and Research Needs*, 32 *Wildlife Society Bulletin* 1209 (2004).

<sup>16</sup> At <https://extension.oregonstate.edu/animals-livestock/sheep-goats/using-coyotes-protect-livestock-wait-what>

most of these situations are easily prevented or corrected by removing food sources and access to shelter.”<sup>17</sup>

Furthermore, common arguments about impacts of predator-livestock conflict are exaggerated. According to the U.S. Department of Agriculture (“USDA”), only 0.39 percent of cattle and sheep were lost to all carnivores combined (including coyotes, wolves, unknown predators, and dogs).<sup>18</sup> The North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission has noted that, based on USDA data, dogs are an equal or greater risk to sheep, goats, and cattle as compared to coyotes.<sup>19</sup> Disease, illness, birthing problems, and weather constitute the overwhelming cause of livestock mortality.<sup>20</sup>

### Coyote killing contests do not increase populations of game animals.

The best available science indicates that indiscriminately killing coyotes is not an effective method for increasing game species abundance.<sup>21</sup> Rather, the most important management tool to increase game species is to decrease harvest of female ungulates,<sup>22</sup> followed by protection of habitat.<sup>23</sup> Considering that science, many state commissions and agencies, including those in Illinois, Louisiana, Missouri, New York, North Carolina, Pennsylvania, South Carolina, Vermont, West Virginia, and Wyoming, have concluded that reducing predator numbers will not enhance populations of ungulates, small game animals, and game birds.<sup>24</sup> For example, the Pennsylvania Game Commission found: “[T]he agency finally accepted the reality that predator control does not work. ...To pretend that predator control can return small game hunting to the state is a false prophecy...[Predators] don’t compete with our hunters for game.”<sup>25</sup> The Vermont Fish & Wildlife Department, in addressing wildlife killing contests, similarly stated: “...we do not believe such short-term hunts will...bolster populations of deer or other game species.”<sup>26</sup> Regarding the effect of coyote control on deer and game bird populations specifically, the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation found that “random removal of coyotes resulting from a year-round hunting season will not...result in an increase in deer densities.”<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> “Living with Wildlife: Coyotes,” Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife, [https://www.dfw.state.or.us/wildlife/living\\_with/docs/living\\_with\\_coyotes.pdf](https://www.dfw.state.or.us/wildlife/living_with/docs/living_with_coyotes.pdf)

<sup>18</sup> See U.S. Dept. Agriculture, Cattle and Calves Death Loss in the United States Due to Predator and Nonpredator Causes, 2015 (2015). Available at: [https://www.aphis.usda.gov/animal\\_health/nahms/general/downloads/cattle\\_calves\\_deathloss\\_2015.pdf](https://www.aphis.usda.gov/animal_health/nahms/general/downloads/cattle_calves_deathloss_2015.pdf); U.S. Dept. Agriculture, Sheep and Lamb Predator and Nonpredator Death Loss in the United States, 2015 (2015). Available at: [https://www.aphis.usda.gov/animal\\_health/nahms/sheep/downloads/sheepdeath/SheepDeathLoss2015.pdf](https://www.aphis.usda.gov/animal_health/nahms/sheep/downloads/sheepdeath/SheepDeathLoss2015.pdf)

<sup>19</sup> North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission, Coyote Management Plan 10 (2018).

<sup>20</sup> Id.

<sup>21</sup> Melodie Edwards: “Killing Coyotes Is Not As Effective As Once Thought, Researchers Say.” Wyoming Public Radio, June 14, 2019.

<https://www.npr.org/2019/06/14/730056855/killing-coyotes-is-not-as-effective-as-once-thought-researchers-say>

<sup>22</sup> C.A. DeYoung, *Population dynamics, in Biology and Management of Whitetailed Deer* 147 (D. G. Hewitt, ed. 2011); J.C. Kilgo, et al, *Coyote removal, understory cover, and survival of white-tailed deer neonates*, 78 *J. Wildlife Mgmt.* 1261 (2014); North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission, Evaluation of Deer Hunting Seasons and Structures and Deer Management Units in North Carolina (2015). Available at: <http://www.ncwildlife.org/Portals/0/Regs/Documents/Evaluation-of-Deer-Hunting-Seasons-and-Mgt-Units.pdf>.

<sup>23</sup> C.J. Bishop, et al., *Effect of Enhanced Nutrition on Mule Deer Population Rate of Change*, 172 *Wildlife Monographs* 1 (2009). Available at: <https://nrm.dfg.ca.gov/FileHandler.ashx?DocumentID=27710&inline=true>; Hurley, M. A., et al., *Demographic Response of Mule Deer to Experimental Reduction of Coyotes and Mountain Lions in Southeastern Idaho*, 178 *Wildlife Monographs* 1 (2011).; T.D. Forrester and H. U. Wittmer, *A review of the population dynamics of mule deer and black-tailed deer *Odocoileus hemionus* in North America*, 43 *Mammal Review* 292 (2013); K.L. Monteith, et al., *Life-history characteristics of mule deer: Effects of nutrition in a variable environment*, 186 *Wildlife Monographs* 1 (2014).

<sup>24</sup> See, e.g., Illinois Dept. of Natural Resources, *Illinois Digest of Hunting and Trapping Regulations: 2018-2019*. Available at: <https://www.dnr.illinois.gov/hunting/documents/huntrapdigest.pdf>; Travis Dufour, *Living with Coyotes*, Louisiana Dept. of Wildlife & Fisheries Wildlife. Available at: [http://www.wlf.louisiana.gov/sites/default/files/pdf/publication/34726-living-coyotes-low-res/living\\_with\\_coyotes\\_low-res.pdf](http://www.wlf.louisiana.gov/sites/default/files/pdf/publication/34726-living-coyotes-low-res/living_with_coyotes_low-res.pdf); Missouri Dept. of Conservation, *Coyote*. Available at: <https://nature.mdc.mo.gov/discover-nature/field-guide/coyote>; West Virginia Dept. of Natural Resources, *Eastern Coyote Impacts Of The Eastern Coyote On Wildlife Populations*. Available at: <http://www.wvdnr.gov/hunting/CoyoteResearch.shtm>; Dave Rippe, *Predator Control and Wildlife*, Wyoming Game and Fish Dept., *Habitat Extension Bulletin: No. 57* (July 1995). Available at: <https://wgfd.wyo.gov/WGFD/media/content/PDF/Habitat/Extension%20Bulletins/B57-Predator-Control-and-Wildlife.pdf>.

<sup>25</sup> Jeff Mulhollem, *Pennsylvania Game Commissioners Reply to Unified Sportsmen of Pennsylvania on Predator Questions*, *Outdoor News* (July 33, 2016). Available at: <https://www.outdoornews.com/2016/07/22/pennsylvania-game-commissioners-reply-to-unified-sportsmen-of-pennsylvania-on-predators-questions/>.

<sup>26</sup> Vermont Fish & Wildlife, *Eastern Coyote Issues – A Closer Look* (Jan. 2017). Available at: <https://vtfishandwildlife.com/sites/fishandwildlife/files/documents/Hunt/trapping/Eastern-Coyote-Position-Statement.pdf>.

<sup>27</sup> New York State Dept. of Environmental Conservation, *The Status and Impact of Eastern Coyotes in Northern New York* (June 1991). Available at: <http://www.nysenvirothon.org/Referencesandother/coyotes.pdf>.

In a 2014 deer harvest report, the South Carolina Department of Natural Resources concluded that trying to control coyotes to manage deer predation was ineffective.<sup>28</sup> North Carolina researchers evaluated deer harvest numbers in South Carolina, North Carolina, Ohio, Florida, New Jersey, and New York and found that coyotes are not limiting deer numbers in those states, and that coyote removal programs do little to increase regional deer numbers.<sup>29</sup> The West Virginia Department of Natural Resources has found: “[p]redator control of coyotes because of wildlife predation is unwarranted and unnecessary.”<sup>30</sup> Regarding game birds, the North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission found that coyotes actually benefit game bird species because they suppress populations of smaller predators and because “most coyote diet studies document low to no prevalence of wild turkey or other gamebirds in diets.”<sup>31</sup> These findings demonstrate that this common rationale for holding killing contests that target coyotes is scientifically unfounded.

### **Coyote killing contests contravene hunting ethics.**

Coyote killing contests violate fundamental principles of ethical hunting, and the majority of Oregon residents are likely to view enthusiasm for the mass killing of animals as barbaric, cruel, and wasteful, which could gravely taint the image of sportsmen and sportswomen and of hunting in general. The concept of fair chase is frequently disregarded in these events, and the carcasses of the animals killed in such contests are usually wasted.

State agencies, officials, and professionals in the field of wildlife management have acknowledged the damage that killing contests inflict on the tradition of hunting. Some recent examples include:

- In support of a ban on killing contests, Kelly Susewind, director of **Washington State Department of Fish and Wildlife**, said, “[P]art of my job, and frankly part of my soul, is to promote hunting, to get our youth hunting, to really have this be a core piece of what our society supports. And frankly, that job is a lot harder if we’re condoning these types of contests, and for that reason, I personally support this language.”<sup>32</sup>
- Also in support of Washington’s ban on killing contests, **Washington Fish and Wildlife Commission member Brad Smith** said, “I am a hunter, I’ll clarify that, and I’ve never perceived hunting as a contest. I think these are not hunting contests, they’re killing contests.”<sup>33</sup>
- Dan Gibbs, hunter and executive director of **Colorado Department of Natural Resources**, stated, “For me, hunting contests don’t sit well. As a sportsman I’d never participate in one personally. Hunting is an important reverent tradition in Colorado and powerful management tool but I also think wildlife killing contests give sportsmen and sportswomen a bad name and damage our reputation.”<sup>34</sup>
- In its recent position statement on wildlife killing contests, **The Wildlife Society**, which promotes science-based management and conservation, urges professionals and managers in the field to “Recognize that while species killed in contests can be legally killed in most states, making a contest of it may undermine the public’s view of ethical hunting.”<sup>35</sup>
- **Vermont Fish and Wildlife** has stated that “Coyote hunting contests are not only ineffective at controlling coyote populations, but these kinds of competitive coyote hunts are raising concerns

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<sup>28</sup> Charles Ruth, 2014 South Carolina Deer Harvest Report, South Carolina Dept. of Natural Resources. Available at: <http://www.dnr.sc.gov/wildlife/deer/2014DeerHarvest.pdf>.

<sup>29</sup> Eugenia V. Bragina et al., *Effects on white-tailed deer following eastern coyote colonization*, 83 J. of Wildlife Mgmt. 916 (2019).

<sup>30</sup> West Virginia Dept. of Natural Resources, *Impacts of the Eastern Coyote on Wildlife Populations*. Available at: <http://wvdnr.gov/hunting/CoyoteResearch.shtm>.

<sup>31</sup> North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission, *Coyote Management Plan 16* (2018).

<sup>32</sup> Washington State Fish and Wildlife Commission Meeting, August 1, 2020 <https://www.tvw.org/watch/?eventID=2020081003>

<sup>33</sup> Washington State Fish and Wildlife Commission Meeting, August 1, 2020 <https://www.tvw.org/watch/?eventID=2020081003>

<sup>34</sup> Colorado Parks and Wildlife Commission Meeting, April 30, 2020 [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5Vv7x\\_gx5PY](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5Vv7x_gx5PY)

<sup>35</sup> The Wildlife Society: “Issue Statement: Wildlife Killing Contests.” Approved March 7, 2019 [https://wildlife.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/05/TWS\\_IS\\_WildlifeKillingContest\\_ApprovedMarch2019.pdf](https://wildlife.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/05/TWS_IS_WildlifeKillingContest_ApprovedMarch2019.pdf)

on the part of the public and could possibly jeopardize the future of hunting and affect access to private lands for all hunters.”<sup>36</sup>

- The **Arizona Game and Fish Commission** similarly advised, “[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.”<sup>37</sup>
- The **Massachusetts Division of Fisheries and Wildlife** also found: “...public controversy over this issue has the potential to threaten predator hunting and undermine public support for hunting in general[.]”<sup>38</sup>

Other professionals have acknowledged the lack of sportsmanship and science-based wildlife management principles behind these contests:

- Mike Finley, former chair of the **Oregon Fish and Wildlife Commission**, stated: “[k]illing large numbers of predators as part of an organized contest or competition is inconsistent with sound, science-based wildlife management and antithetical to the concepts of sportsmanship and fair chase.”<sup>39</sup> He also called the contests “slaughter fests” and “stomach-turning examples of wanton waste.”<sup>40</sup>
- Jim Zieler, hunter and chair of the **Arizona Game & Fish Commission**, said: “There has been a lot of social outcry against this, and you can kind of understand why. It’s difficult to stand up and defend a practice like this. It’s just not enough to say, ‘Science will tell us it doesn’t have a significant impact on the predator population.’”<sup>41</sup>
- Ted Chu, former wildlife manager with **Idaho Fish and Game**, has stated: “Hunting is not a contest and it should never be a competitive activity about who can kill the most or the biggest animals.”<sup>42</sup>
- Ray Powell, the former **New Mexico Commissioner of State Lands**, has said: “The non-specific, indiscriminate killing methods used in this commercial and unrestricted coyote killing contest are not about hunting or sound land management. These contests are about personal profit, animal cruelty...It is time to outlaw this highly destructive activity.”<sup>43</sup>

We agree with these wildlife management professionals and believe that Oregon should likewise defend its renowned reputation as a recreational destination by banning these cruel and wasteful killing contests.

### Seven states have banned wildlife killing contests.

These include our neighboring state of **Washington**, the western states of **Arizona, California, Colorado**, and **New Mexico**, as well as **Massachusetts** and **Vermont**. In 2014, the California Fish and

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<sup>36</sup> Vermont Fish & Wildlife, Eastern Coyote Issues – A Closer Look (Jan. 2017). Available at:

<https://vtfishandwildlife.com/sites/fishandwildlife/files/documents/Hunt/trapping/Eastern-Coyote-Position-Statement.pdf>.

<sup>37</sup> Arizona Game and Fish Commission, Notice of Proposed Rulemaking, Title 12. Natural Resources Chapter 4. Available at: <https://s3.amazonaws.com/azgfd-portal-wordpress/azgfd.wp/wp-content/uploads/2019/03/25093742/R12-4-303-NPRM.pdf>.

<sup>38</sup> Massachusetts Division of Fisheries and Wildlife, “Proposed Regulations to Ban Predator Contests and Prohibit Wanton Waste,” July 25, 2019 <https://www.mass.gov/news/masswildlife-proposes-regulations-to-ban-predator-contests-and-prohibit-wanton-waste>

<sup>39</sup> Testimony by Mike Finley to the Oregon Senate Judiciary Committee, March 18, 2019. Available at: <https://olis.leg.state.or.us/liz/2019R1/Downloads/CommitteeMeetingDocument/200547>.

<sup>40</sup> Todd Wilkinson, *A Death of Ethics: is hunting destroying itself?*, Mountain Journal, Dec. 12, 2018. Available at: <https://mountainjournal.org/hunting-in-america-faces-an-ethical-reckoning>.

<sup>41</sup> “Coyote-killing contests face growing outrage, state bans,” Washington Post, May 17, 2019, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/science/2019/05/17/predator-hunting-contests-face-bans-amid-backlash-several-states/>

<sup>42</sup> Todd Wilkinson, *Shoot biggest wolf, win trophy and cash*, Jackson Hole News & Guide, Dec. 18, 2013. Available at: [https://www.jhnewsandguide.com/opinion/columnists/the\\_new\\_west\\_todd\\_wilkinson/article\\_260cbc66-0bf6-544b-bcf2-b5e9220247bb.html](https://www.jhnewsandguide.com/opinion/columnists/the_new_west_todd_wilkinson/article_260cbc66-0bf6-544b-bcf2-b5e9220247bb.html).

<sup>43</sup> Ray Powell, Letter to Mark Chavez, owner of Gunhawk Firearms, Nov. 15, 2012.

Game Commission banned killing contests targeting game species, furbearers, and nongame mammals. In 2018, the Vermont General Assembly banned coyote killing contests. And in 2019, the New Mexico General Legislature banned coyote killing contests and both the Arizona Fish and Game Commission and the Massachusetts Division of Fisheries and Wildlife banned killing contests for predator and furbearer species. In 2020, the Colorado Parks and Wildlife Commission and the Washington Fish and Wildlife Commission prohibited contests for species including coyotes, bobcats, and foxes. We ask that Oregon align itself with this positive trend in ethics and science-based wildlife management.

### **HB 2728 would not prohibit lawful, regulated hunting activity.**

This legislation would not prohibit anyone from hunting coyotes or taking predatory animals, or the lethal control of predating coyotes. There is no closed season or bag limits for taking coyotes. The laws and regulations related to trapping coyotes are unaffected by the proposed law. Specifically:

ORS 610.105, “Any person owning, leasing, occupying, possessing or having charge of or dominion over any land, place, building, structure, wharf, pier or dock which is infested with ground squirrels and other noxious rodents or predatory animals, as soon as their presence comes to the knowledge of the person, may, or the agent of the person may, proceed immediately and continue in good faith to control them by poisoning, trapping or other appropriate and effective means.”

### **Conclusion.**

Wildlife killing contests, which make a game of killing animals and serve no legitimate purpose, have no place in a civil society or in modern wildlife management. Such contests are antithetical to the respectful, ethical, and pro-conservation message that our state should strive to promote. The undersigned organizations therefore ask for your support of HB 2728 to end cruel, wasteful, and unsporting coyote killing contests in Oregon. Thank you.

The Animal Legal Defense Fund

Think Wild

Audubon Society of Portland

Cascadia Wildlands

Center for Biological Diversity

The Cougar Fund

The Humane Society of the United States

The Humane Society Veterinary Medical Association

The Humane Society Wildlife Land Trust

Humane Voters Oregon

The Mountain Lion Foundation

The National Wolfwatcher Coalition

Northeast Oregon Ecosystems

Oregon Humane Society

Oregon League of Conservation Voters

Oregon Wild

Predator Defense

Project Coyote

Sierra Club Oregon Chapter

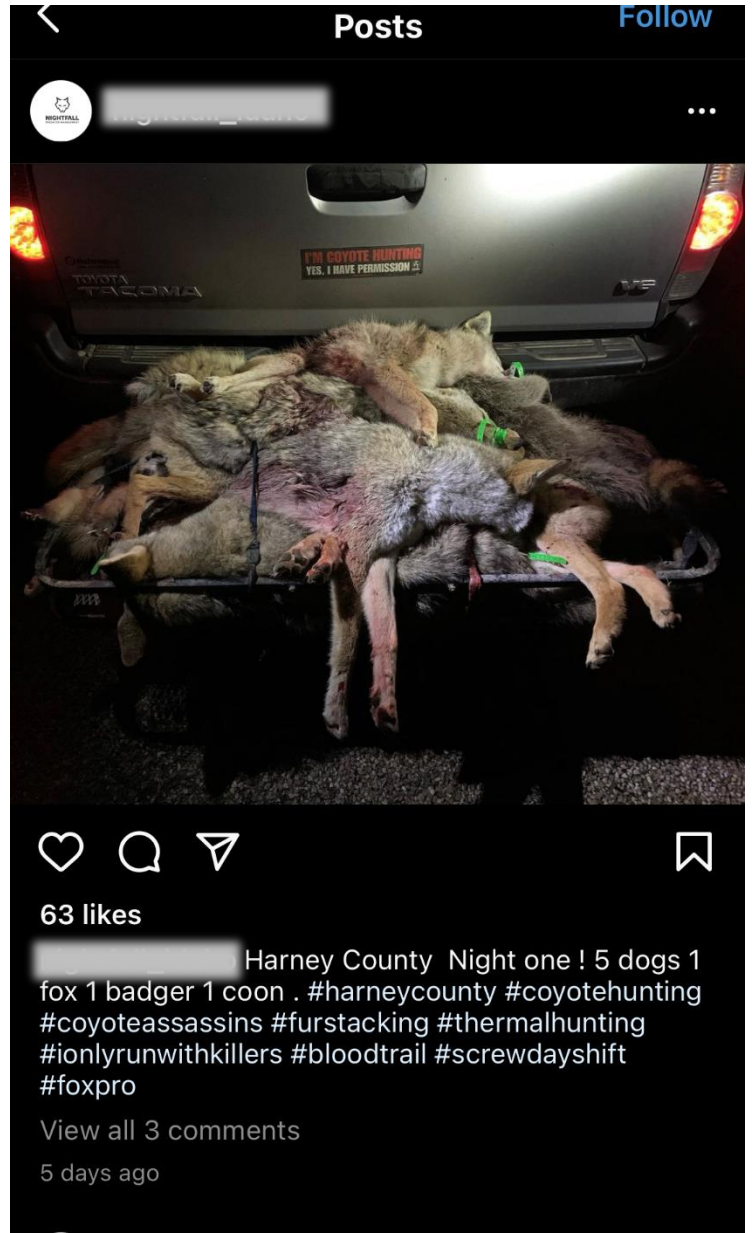
WildEarth Guardians



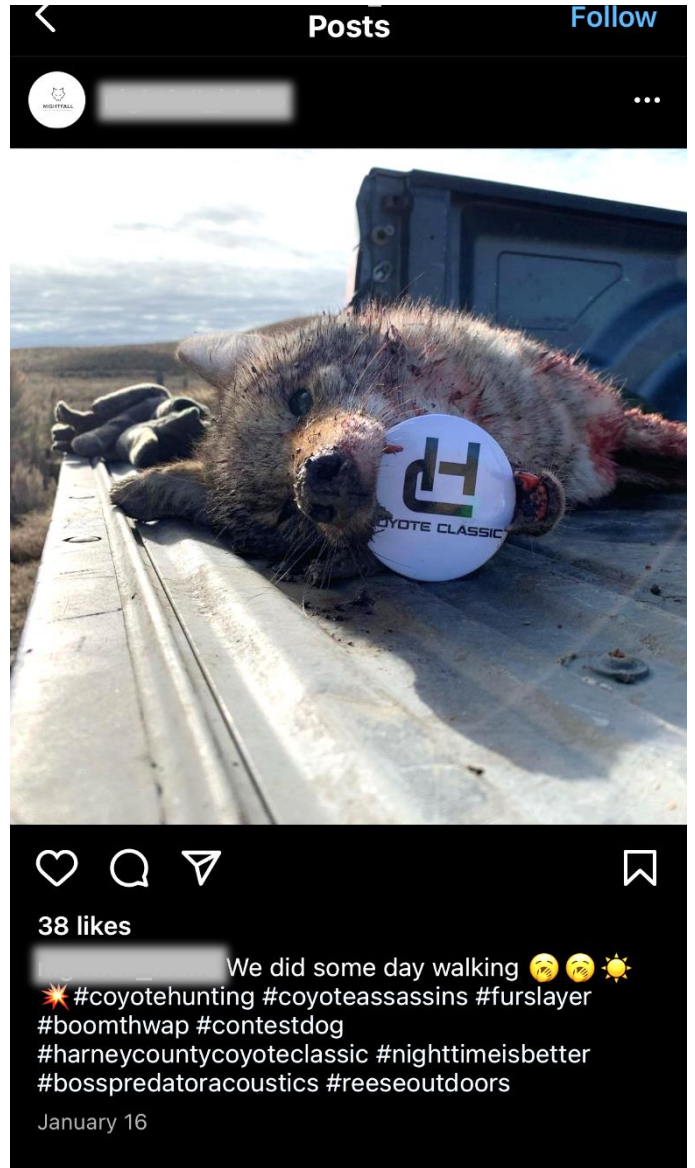
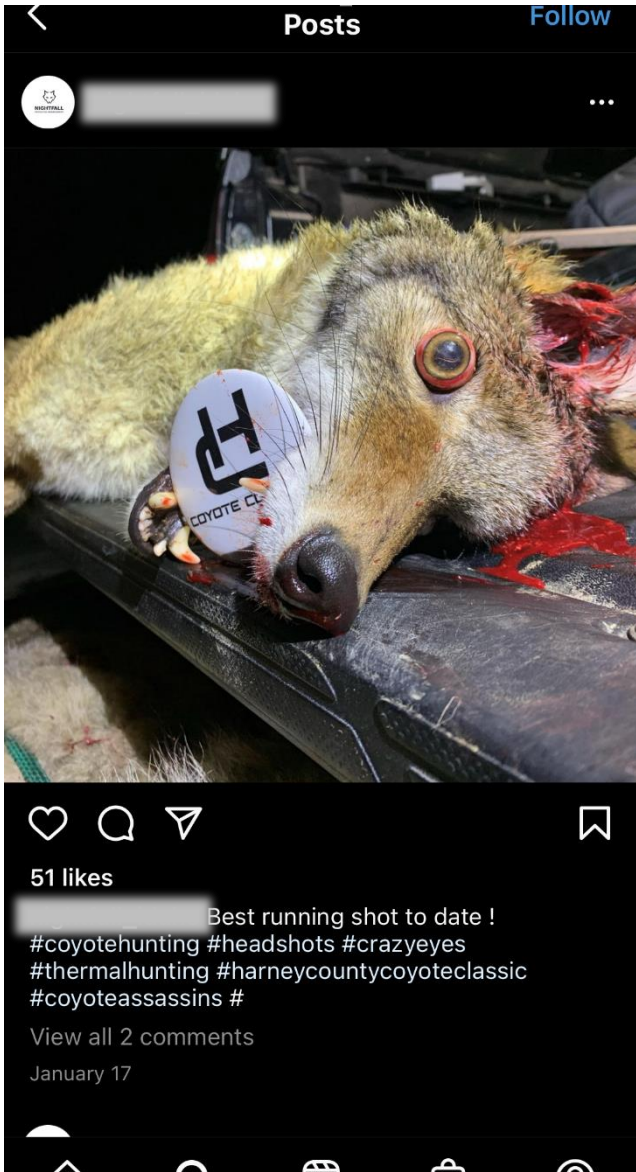
# APPENDIX

## Photos from Harney County Coyote Classic (Jan. 2021):

Participants killed 272 coyotes at the HCCC in January 2021.







2021 Harney County Coyote Classic Results

	Weight	In town	Amount
1st	279.74	[Redacted]	\$1,800.00
2nd	275.12	[Redacted]	\$1,500.00
3rd	265.31	[Redacted]	\$1200.00
4th	250.76	[Redacted]	\$900.00
5th	205.01	[Redacted]	\$600.00
6th	180.76	[Redacted]	\$300.00
Day 1 Avg	31.55	[Redacted]	
Day 2 Avg	29.44	[Redacted]	
Light Dog	12.21	[Redacted]	
Heavy Male	37.8	[Redacted]	
Heavy Female	31.8	[Redacted]	
Last place wt.	12.21	[Redacted]	
		Out of town	
1st	273.07	[Redacted]	\$1,800.00
2nd	254.82	[Redacted]	\$1500.00
3rd	252.3	[Redacted]	\$1,200.00
4th	239.52	[Redacted]	\$900.00
5th	235.14	[Redacted]	\$600.00
6th	162.24	[Redacted]	\$300.00
Day 1 Avg	32.96	[Redacted]	
Day 2 Avg	30.57	[Redacted]	
Light Dog	17.99	[Redacted]	
Heavy Male	36.8	[Redacted]	
Heavy Female	30.9	[Redacted]	
Last place wt.	21.43	[Redacted]	
Total # of Coyotes		272	

15th Annual  
Harney County  
**COYOTE CLASSIC**

Burns, Oregon

**January 15-17, 2021**

STARTS JANUARY 15<sup>TH</sup> AT 6:00 PM - ENDS JANUARY 17<sup>TH</sup> AT 4:00 PM

CHECK IN JANUARY 15<sup>TH</sup>  
AT HARNEY COUNTY FAIRGROUNDS  
KICK OFF MEETING 6:00 PM

**1-3 Man Teams**  
**\$125 per person**

**MUST BE REGISTERED BY DECEMBER 15, 2020**

Mail Forms and Fees to:  
HC Coyote Classic • PO Box 11 • Hines, OR 97738

Cash & Prizes for 1st - 3rd Places

- Day 1 - Average Wt.
- Day 2 - Average Wt.
- Heavy Dog
- Light Dog

Over  
15 guns to be  
Given Away!

Over \$50,000  
in Cash & Prizes  
to be given away

**Grand Prize \$1000 Rifle**  
(one ticket for every paid entry)

**Early Bird Giveaway**  
Due November 15, 2020

For More Information check us out on Facebook  
Harney County Coyote Classic  
or call Ty Reid 541-589-2166



Photos from “Young Farmers & Ranchers First Annual Coyote Hunt” in Hines (Dec. 2018)



Photos from Harney County Coyote Classic (Jan. 2020):



1 weeks ago  
68 likes  
1 comments

Coyote #8 of 2020 hit the dirt the other night. Calling has been hit and miss lately, but looking forward to more calling in February. Also looks like I need to get myself a @kuiu\_official bino case! Bino straps hardly work out. #skinnyguyproblems #kuiunation #mulederinsurance #garylewisoutdoors #easternoregon #coyotehunting #predatorcontrol #primos #ackleyimproved #dogdown #conservation #oregon #callingcoyotes #dirtnap #vortexoptics #scentblocker #fawnkiller #coyote #oregonhu



1 weeks ago  
85 likes  
1 comments

We had an awesome time at the Harney County Coyote Classic last weekend. 255 coyotes were taken out and turned in by participating hunters. Thank you Dusty Robey and all the volunteers for putting on a great event for an even greater cause! #coyotehunting #predatorcontrol #conservation #hccclassic #vortexoptics #kuiunation #kuiu #snomaster #oregonhunting #easternoregon #dogdown #coyotefever #hammerdown



@starkeyboys

2 weeks ago

Harney county coyote classic was a success! Predator management is a big part of keeping big game populations. [#saveadeershotacoyote](#) [#teamkillinit](#) [#starkeyboys](#) [#harneycountycoyoteclassic](#) [#luckyduckpredatorcall](#) [#rugerprecisionrifle](#) [#sitkgear](#)

Edit

Download

79 likes

2 comments

f SEPHORA SHOP NEW SCENTS V-D Scents Love +