



What are coyote killing contests?

Coyote killing contests are organized events in which participants compete for prizes—typically cash or firearms—by attempting to kill the most, largest and smallest coyotes over a time period.

In recent years, New Mexico has become the focus of unwelcome global attention due to the many notorious coyote killing contests held across the state. There are at least 25-30 contests held in the state every year.

Why ban these contests?

Killing contests harm our state's reputation. New Mexico killing contests have attracted national and even international outrage. Coyote killing contests promote wanton killing that many people find abhorrent, and they do nothing to help attract businesses and new residents.

Killing contests violate conservation hunting ethics. They are designed to reward people for indiscriminately killing as many animals they can—a concept that conflicts with the conservation values and science-based North American Model of Wildlife Conservation that guides most hunters. Sportsmen and conservationists such as Aldo Leopold have long recognized the importance of predators—the victims of many killing contests—in ecological balance and wellbeing. Killing contests more closely resemble the reckless slaughter of North America's bison over one hundred years ago than today's regulated and responsible wildlife management lauded by conservationists and sportsmen alike.

Killing contests damage New Mexico's rural economy. Scientific studies show coyotes whose pack structures are disrupted by random mass killing will breed more and experience higher pup survival, making them more likely to attack livestock to feed their young. The booklet "Lines of Defense: Coping with Predators in the Rocky Mountain Region," available from the USDA-APHIS website, states that as a livestock producer, "Your first line of defense against predators involves using good animal husbandry practices. As a general rule, the more effort expended with livestock, particularly during vulnerable periods, the less opportunity predators will have to take animals."

Killing contests are ineffective at managing coyotes. A three-year N.M. Department of Game & Fish program (2000-2003) that killed over 1,200 coyotes, aiming to enhance deer herds, was scrapped after there was no evidence the killing increased fawn survival (Albuquerque Journal, 7/16/2003, "State Halts War on Coyotes"). Published research confirms that mass killing of coyotes disrupts pack social structure, which increases breeding within the pack and results in overall population increase.

Killing contests offend our community's sense of fairness and common decency. The coyotes are randomly targeted, lured out of hiding with electronic and manual calling devices. Mass indiscriminate killing, in violation of fair chase ethics, sends a dangerous message to our children that life is cheap in New Mexico and that senseless, indiscriminate killing is a cause for celebration.

Killing contests threaten public safety. These contests occur frequently, all year round, across New Mexico on both private and public lands—and contest promoters rarely share with the public the locations where the contestants are competing, putting at risk *anyone* enjoying outdoor recreation.



Photo of what was likely a "small dog" winner—the smallest coyote killed in a contest—with the electronic calling device on top of the body. Photo acquired from a public online posting.



Coyotes killed in a contest several years ago piled at the check-in location in Valencia County. Photo acquired from a public online posting.

Who opposes coyote killing contests in New Mexico?

New Mexicans from all corners of the state and all walks of life—including **conservationists, hunters, gun owners,** and even **ranchers**—oppose killing contests. Public opposition to killing contests is not based on anti-gun or anti-hunting viewpoints. One-third of New Mexicans who signed a November 2012 petition against a Los Lunas-based coyote killing contest identified themselves as gun owners.



2016 poll numbers

A December 2016 poll conducted by Third Eye Strategies showed that overall, **New Mexico voters oppose killing contests by more than a two-to-one margin.** A majority of people oppose killing contests regardless of age, ethnicity, sex, or region of the state in which they live. The strongest opponents of the contests are Hispanic women, objecting to coyote killing contests by more than a five-to-one margin.

Will ranchers still be allowed to kill offending coyotes?

Will someone still be allowed to hunt coyotes?

Yes. The legislation introduced in New Mexico in 2019, Senate Bill 76, would not prevent a rancher from taking a coyote that threatens their livestock, and it does not prevent coyote hunting in accordance with law. It does not disallow the otherwise legal hunting of coyotes, which can be hunted year-round and without limits on the number that can be killed. The bill simply stops the contests.

Vote YES to banning unethical, unnecessary, wasteful coyote killing contests.

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