

State Agencies and Wildlife Management Professionals — Statements and Quotes on Predator Control

- “There are things that people from a social standpoint have a difficulty with, and commissioners listened to that.” —Kurt Davis, Arizona Game and Fish Commissioner; June 11, 2019ⁱ
- Mike Finley, chair of the Oregon Fish and Wildlife Commission: “Killing 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.”ⁱⁱ
- Michael Sutton, former president of the California Fish and Game Commission: “Awarding prizes for wildlife killing contests is both unethical and inconsistent with our current understanding of natural systems. Such contests are an anachronism and have no place in modern wildlife management.”ⁱⁱⁱ
- Ray Powell, former New Mexico Commissioner of State Lands: “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.”^{iv}
- Ted Chu, former wildlife manager with Idaho Fish and Game: “Hunting is not a contest and it should never be a competitive activity about who can kill the most or the biggest animals.”^v
- The Nevada Board of Wildlife Commissioners: “[T]he wildlife management profession does not generally recognize the use of contests as a tool with substantial wildlife management effect.”^{vi}
- New Mexico Land Commissioner Stephanie Garcia Richard: “These are not hunting contests. They are animal cruelty contests. It is an inexcusable practice, and today I used my authority to ban organized killing contests of unprotected species on any of the nine million acres of State Trust Land that I am charged with overseeing.”^{vii}
- Vermont Fish & Wildlife: “Coyote hunting contests are not only ineffective at controlling coyote populations, but these kinds of competitive coyote hunts are raising concerns on the part of the public and could possibly jeopardize the future of hunting and affect access to private lands for all hunters.”^{viii}
- The Arizona Game and Fish Commission: “Extensive public controversy exists about predator/fur-bearing contests that award prizes to participants who kill the largest number or variety of predator/fur-bearing animals or the contest is based on the combined weight of animals a participant kills. To 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.”^{ix}
- The Pennsylvania Game Commission: “After decades of using predator control (such as paying bounties) with no effect, and the emergence of wildlife management as a science, the agency finally accepted the reality that predator control does not work.”^x
- The West Virginia Department of Natural Resources: “Predator control of coyotes because of wildlife predation is unwarranted and unnecessary. Predator control of coyotes preying on livestock should be restricted to targeted animals.”^{xi}
- The New York State Department of Environmental Conservation has pointed out that the random removal of coyotes “...will not: (a) control or reduce coyote populations; (b) reduce or eliminate predation on livestock; or (c) result in an increase in deer densities.”^{xii}
- Massachusetts Division of Fisheries and Wildlife (MassWildlife): “The contest is being offered by a private business, it has nothing to do with managing wildlife...I do want to make it clear, coyote contests are not a management tool by any stretch of the imagination.”^{xiii}

- From the North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission: “Bounties and harvest incentive programs are prone to corruption, expensive, do not increase harvest, and do not target problem animals. Ample evidence from case studies supports the conclusion that these methods are ineffective at reducing conflicts with coyotes or impacting coyote populations.” ... “While coyote population reduction (“coyote control”) is often the first and only management approach that people suggest, it has proven ineffective.”^{xiv}
- In a 2014 deer harvest report, the South Carolina Department of Natural Resources concluded that trying to control coyotes to manage predation of deer was ineffective.^{xv}
- Hunter and Chairman of the Oregon Fish and Wildlife Commission Mike Finley recently called the contests “slaughter fests” and “stomach-turning examples of wanton waste.”^{xvi}
- Vermont Fish and Game: The Department does not sponsor, promote, or encourage coyote hunting tournaments. Although these activities follow Vermont laws and regulations, we do not believe such short-term hunts will have any measurable impact on regulating coyote populations, nor will they bolster populations of deer or other game species. Attempts to eradicate or control coyote numbers in western states have been extremely costly and have met with failure. Such efforts now are generally focused on eliminating individual coyotes that are causing livestock losses. Where significant reductions in coyote numbers are locally achieved, the missing animals are soon replaced with young coyotes moving in from other locations, so any local population reduction is only short-term. Coyotes can increase their reproductive rates in response to hunting, so populations rebound quickly from efforts to control their numbers directly by hunting or trapping. Coyote hunting contests are not only ineffective at controlling coyote populations, but these kinds of competitive coyote hunts are raising concerns on the part of the public and could possibly jeopardize the future of hunting and affect access to private lands for all hunters.^{xvii}
- Montana State Senator Mike Phillips, hunter and wildlife biologist, stated: “Predator-killing contests are abominations, an insult to the history of life on this planet. If you are going to remove wolves or coyotes because there are identifiable problems, okay, do it if it’s necessary, but be strategic. Predator killing contests turn that on its head. When is needless, thoughtless killing ever justified?”^{xviii}
- Quotes from North Carolina’s Wildlife Resource Commission regarding bounties and South Carolina and Georgia’s killing contests.^{xix}
- In a new study, 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 will do little to increase regional deer numbers.^{xx}

ⁱ https://www.azfamily.com/video/state-commission-could-make-coyote-killing-contest-illegal-in-arizona/video_8d14641f-1b9f-5e40-808c-fca7c03df36a.html

ⁱⁱ Testimony by Mike Finley to the Oregon Senate Judiciary Committee, March 18, 2019

<https://olis.leg.state.or.us/liz/2019R1/Downloads/CommitteeMeetingDocument/200547>

ⁱⁱⁱ Ted Williams, “Coyote Carnage: The Gruesome Truth about Wildlife Killing Contests,” *Yale Environment* 360, May 22, 2018

<https://e360.yale.edu/features/coyote-carnage-the-gruesome-truth-about-wildlife-killing-contests>

^{iv} Letter, Ray Powell, Jr. to Mark Chavez, owner of Gunhawk Firearms, November 15, 2012.

^v Todd Wilkinson, “Shoot biggest wolf, win trophy and cash.” *Jackson Hole News & Guide*, December 18, 2013

https://www.jhnewsandguide.com/opinion/columnists/the_new_west_todd_wilkinson/article_260cbc66-0bf6-544b-bcf2-b5e9220247bb.html

^{vi} Draft meeting minutes of the Nevada Board of Wildlife Commissioners, Administrative Procedures, Regulations, and Policy Committee, June 13, 2016 at http://www.ndow.org/uploadedFiles/ndoworg/Content/Public_Meetings/Committees/APRP-Committee-2016-June-Minutes-and-Testimony.pdf.

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- vii Press Release: “Garcia Richard Signs Executive Order Banning Killing Contests on State Trust Land,” January 10, 2019
http://www.nmstatelands.org/uploads/files/1_10_19%20KillingContest%20EO.pdf
- viii “Eastern Coyote Issues – A Closer Look,” Vermont Fish & Wildlife, January 2017
<https://vtfishandwildlife.com/sites/fishandwildlife/files/documents/Hunt/trapping/Eastern-Coyote-Position-Statement.pdf>
- ix The Arizona Game and Fish Commission: Notice of Proposed Rulemaking, Title 12. Natural Resources Chapter 4.
<https://s3.amazonaws.com/azgfd-portal-wordpress/azgfd.wp/wp-content/uploads/2019/03/25093742/R12-4-303-NPRM.pdf>
- x Bob Frye, “Habitat, not predators, seen as key to wildlife populations,” *Trib Live*, July 25, 2016
<http://triblive.com/sports/outdoors/10756490-74/game-predator-predators>.
- xi West Virginia Department of Natural Resources at <http://wvdnr.gov/hunting/CoyoteResearch.shtm>
- xii New York State Department of Environmental Conservation. (June 1991). *The Status and Impact of Eastern Coyotes in Northern New York*, <http://www.nysenvirothon.com/Referencesandother/coyotes.pdf>.
- xiii Tim Dunn, “MassWildlife Holds Hearing in Response to Local Coyote Kill Contest.” *CapeCod.com*, April 5, 2019.
- xiv North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission, “Coyote Management Plan,” March 1, 2018
https://www.ncwildlife.org/Portals/0/Learning/documents/Species/Coyote%20Management%20Plan_FINAL_030118.pdf
- xv Charles Ruth, South Carolina Department of Natural Resources Deer Research & Management Project: “2014 South Carolina Deer Harvest Report” <http://www.dnr.sc.gov/wildlife/deer/2014DeerHarvest.pdf>
- xvi <https://mountainjournal.org/hunting-in-america-faces-an-ethical-reckoning>
- xvii <https://vtfishandwildlife.com/sites/fishandwildlife/files/documents/Hunt/trapping/Eastern-Coyote-Position-Statement.pdf>
- xviii <https://mountainjournal.org/hunting-in-america-faces-an-ethical-reckoning>
- xix https://www.ncwildlife.org/Portals/0/Learning/documents/Species/Coyote%20Management%20Plan_FINAL_030118.pdf
- xx Eugenia V. Bragina, Roland Kays, Allison Hody, Christopher E. Moorman, Christopher S. Deperno, L. Scott Mills. “Effects on white-tailed deer following eastern coyote colonization.” *The Journal of Wildlife Management*, March 20, 2019.