

Vermont Could Become the Second State in the U.S. to Ban Coyote Killing Contests

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
May 10, 2018
Protect Our Wildlife

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Stowe, VT - A passionate and persistent coalition of landowners, biologists, farmers, hunters, wildlife enthusiasts, and others overcame opposition from paid lobbyists and Vermont's own Fish and Wildlife Department to ban coyote killing contests for prizes. Vermont will be only the second state in the country to do so.

Last year, Protect Our Wildlife (POW) was approached by Vermont residents who were appalled by the wastefulness and cruelty involved with coyote killing contests. Vermont residents wrote and called their legislators, and the Vermont Fish and Wildlife Department; they signed petitions; demonstrated against the hunts and many posted their land against all hunting in protest of the contests. In February 2017, POW helped organize a protest of a coyote killing contest that was scheduled to be held in Bristol, which likely led to the contest being canceled. In December 2017, POW tenaciously opposed a statewide coyote killing contest that was organized by a Londonderry business. That contest was also canceled.

These contests occur all throughout Vermont and often operate out of public view. They award prizes to those who kill the most coyotes, the biggest, the smallest, even the ugliest coyote. Prizes have included cash, guns and other items. Hunters routinely use electronic calling devices that lure these curious and social animals by imitating the sounds of a fellow coyote or prey in distress. They also use radio collared dogs to chase a coyote to the point of exhaustion and then either shoot the coyote or allow their dogs to descend on the injured animal. Contest participants often toss away the bodies like trash. Social media has provided a stark view into this underworld of "hunting", since contest participants post photos of piles of bloodied coyotes as they're being weighed in at contests.

While Governor Scott must still sign H.636 into law, supporters are hopeful given the support for the legislation in both chambers of the Statehouse. *"Banning these cruel, wasteful contests is common sense and in keeping with the Vermont tradition of respecting wildlife, especially respecting the important role that predators play in the health of our ecosystems,"* said Linda Huebner with the [Vermont Coyote Coexistence Coalition](#).

Holly Tippett, POW's Co-Founder shared, *"I have been fighting these coyote killing contests in Vermont for over a decade. I am overjoyed that the legislature acknowledged the public's opposition to this aberrant behavior that is not only egregiously cruel, but casts a dark shadow over the Green Mountain State."*

Coyotes can still be hunted 24 hours/day, 7 days/week, 365 days/year in Vermont. This open season results in dependent young becoming orphaned and left to die from starvation, predation, or exposure.

"While we still have more work to do to bring Vermont Fish and Wildlife's policies into the 21st century, this is a step in the right direction. These contests violate hunting ethics and display zero respect for the animals that are killed," said Brenna Galdenzi, President of Protect Our Wildlife.

You can write to Governor Phil Scott [here](#) and ask him to sign H.636 into law. You may also call his office at 802-828-3333.

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[Protect Our Wildlife](#) is an all-volunteer, Vermont-based 501(c)3 dedicated to protecting Vermont's wildlife from exploitation and working to end the fur trade.