



## Help Ban Cruel Wildlife Killing Contests in Arizona!

The Arizona Game and Fish (AZGF) Commission has proposed a rule that would ban predator killing contests throughout the state. Predator killing contests are organized events in which participants compete for prizes based on the number of animals killed. Hundreds of animals—including coyotes, foxes, bobcats, and mountain lions are killed at these barbaric events all year long in Arizona.

The Arizona Legislature banned the blood sport of dog fighting in 1979. Many ADLA members volunteered on the citizen initiative campaign to ban cockfighting, which voters approved in 1998. And yet wildlife killing contests remain perfectly legal, with contestants competing for prize money to see who can lure in and kill the most animals in a specified time frame.

This is not the first time a ban on predator killing contests has been proposed. In 1999, ADLA and other groups petitioned the AZGF Commission to ban coyote killing contests. Following stakeholder meetings and a public comment period where 90 percent of letters supported the ban, the Commission voted to prohibit hunting contests. However, that victory was short-lived. In 2000 the Governor's Regulatory Review Council voted to overturn the Commission's decision. Now, 20 years later, we finally have a second chance to end this blood sport.



Last month in New Mexico hikers discovered dozens of dead coyotes that had been killed in a contest hunt and dumped in the desert. Thankfully the New Mexico Legislature passed a law banning coyote killing contests which was recently signed by the governor. We hope that Arizona will be the next state to prohibit this unethical, senseless practice.

### What You Can Do

Arizona's wildlife needs your help! Please write to the Commission urging them to support the proposed rule to prohibit wildlife killing contests. The Commission is accepting public comments on the proposed rule through **May 12, 2019**.

Email comments to the AZGF Commission at [rulemaking@azgfd.gov](mailto:rulemaking@azgfd.gov)

You can say, "I thank the Commission for proposing the rule change to Article 3, R12-4-303 to prohibit wildlife contest hunts. As an Arizona resident I strongly support this rule and changes to it that will remove loopholes and broaden protection for all wildlife."

To be most effective, we strongly encourage you to personalize your message, expressing why abolishing wildlife killing contests is so important to you. Just adding a sentence about your experiences and appreciation of Arizona's wildlife (hiking, camping, wildlife watching) is extremely helpful.

When analyzing public opinion, the Commission sorts comments by original letters and form letters – original, personalized letters will have much more impact.

### Additional Talking Points

Killing contests are counterproductive to science-based wildlife management and disregard the role of predators in healthy ecosystems.

Killing contests are a blood sport like dogfighting and cockfighting, which Arizona banned decades ago. Killing wildlife for thrills and prizes with no respect for their intrinsic or ecological value is senseless and unethical.

The public will no longer tolerate wildlife killing contests. Six city and county governments in Arizona – Tucson, Dewey-Humboldt, Flagstaff, Coconino County, Pima County, and Yavapai County – have passed resolutions condemning wildlife killing contests. New Mexico banned coyote killing contests in April, and California and Vermont have taken similar actions in recent years.

By proposing the rule to ban killing contests, I am encouraged that the Commission recognizes that it's time to stop the mass killing of predators for fun and cash prizes.

Using animals for live target practice and profit violates tenets of the North American Model of Wildlife Conservation and disregards the important role of predators in healthy ecosystems.

Banning wildlife killing contests will prevent a small minority of the population from recklessly slaughtering our wild animals for private gain.

Countless animals are injured or orphaned during killing contests. The events put non-target species (including imperiled wolves) at risk. Participants use electronic calling devices, which mimic the sounds of prey or young in distress, to lure the target animals in for an easy kill.

There is no scientific evidence that indiscriminately killing wild animals reduces their populations, increases populations of game animals like deer, or protects livestock. Randomly killing coyotes, for example, disrupts their pack structure, which can increase their populations and increase conflicts with coyotes. Preventing conflicts with the use of humane, non-lethal methods is more effective.

We do not seek a ban on hunting. We simply call for an end to organized events where participants compete to kill animals for "fun" and prizes.

*Some talking points courtesy of Project Coyote and the National Coalition to End Wildlife Killing Contests. Read comments by scientists on why wildlife killing contests are ineffective [here](#).*

Please send your comments today!

Thank you for being a voice for Arizona's wildlife!

Animal Defense League of Arizona

*Photo of Arizona coyotes by J. Wrieden*