

## Frequently Asked Questions

### Support A.2917/S.4099 to ban wildlife killing contests in New York

#### Q: What would A.2917/S.4099 do?

This bill would prohibit [wildlife killing contests](#), which are organized events where participants compete to kill the most, the largest, or the smallest animals for cash and prizes. The killing takes place over one or two days, and participants then gather to weigh and count the dead animals, dole out prizes, and take photos next to the piles of carcasses. The animals are typically dumped after the event is over. Hundreds of foxes, coyotes, bobcats, squirrels, raccoons, crows and other animals may be killed at a single event.

#### Q: Do these contests really happen in New York?

Yes. Contests including the “Squirrel Scramble” in Germantown, the “WNY Mini Predator Slam” in Franklinville, and the “Annual Coyote and Fox Contest” in Whitney Point, take places across the state every year. At wildlife killing contests in [Sullivan County in 2020](#) and [Macedon in 2018](#), Humane Society of the United States undercover investigators documented animals thrown in dumpsters, pregnant coyotes dead and cut open with pups nearly ready to be born, children watching as competitors hung bloody animals on scales for weighing, and participants joking about methods used to lure and kill the animals.

#### Q: Why should we ban wildlife killing contests?

The sole purpose of killing as many animals as possible for cash and prizes violates New Yorkers’ humane values and the spirit of traditional hunting ethics. The animals are typically not used for their meat or fur and their bodies are thrown away like trash. These events leave countless animals injured and dependent young orphaned, left to die from starvation, predation or exposure.

#### Q: Does A.2917/S.4099 prohibit people from hunting coyotes, foxes, squirrels or other wildlife?

No. This bill in no way limits a person’s ability to hunt any wildlife species according to the state’s laws and regulations. Coyotes, foxes, bobcats, for example, may still be killed in unlimited numbers.

#### Q: Does A.2917/S.4099 prohibit the use of lethal control to manage animals like coyotes?

No. This bill does not impact current laws related to taking coyotes and other wildlife to protect person, property, or livestock.

#### Q: Does A.2917/S.4099 prohibit big buck contests, turkey hunts, fishing tournaments, or field dog trials?

No. This bill does not apply to contests related to white-tailed deer, turkey, or bear, or special dog training areas or field trials pursuant to sections 11-0925 and 11-0927 or similar canine performance events. As The Wildlife Society [explains](#), “Killing contests differ from typical regulated hunting by the very nature of the organized public competition and prizes being given specifically for killing the largest, smallest, or most animals. ‘Big Buck’ pools or organized record books differ from killing contests because the animals recognized in these competitions are harvested consistent with ordinary and generally accepted hunting practices and then introduced to the competition.”

#### Q: What is the NYS Department of Environmental Conservation’s position on these events?

The DEC does not monitor wildlife killing contests. In a recent statement, the agency [said](#): “The DEC does not condone nor sponsor hunting contests[.]”

**Q: Is A.2917/S.4099 an anti-hunting measure?**

No, the sole objective of this bill is to prohibit inhumane, unsporting, and wasteful wildlife killing contests, which do not reflect well on ethical hunters and are [opposed](#) by a growing number of wildlife management professionals and state wildlife commissions and agencies. It is not the lawful hunting of wildlife species that is at issue here, but rather the turning of those species into an organized competition for cash and prizes. As Vermont Fish & Wildlife [states](#), “[T]hese 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.”

**Q: Isn't this a case of urban vs. rural values and traditions?**

No. When it comes to wildlife, New Yorkers—whether they live in urban or rural areas of the state—do not support pointless, unsporting or wasteful practices. Wildlife killing contests are not rooted in tradition; this is not subsistence hunting—it is a despicable activity that makes a game of killing animals. We can value hunting as a tradition and establish restrictions on cruel and reckless activities, because our wildlife isn't owned by the small percentage of people who participate in this blood sport. Wildlife is shared by all the people of New York.

**Q: Do wildlife killing contests help control wildlife populations, increase numbers of game animals like deer for hunters, or reduce conflicts with livestock and pets?**

No—these are false claims perpetuated by contest participants. The best available science does not support these claims. [According to the DEC](#), indiscriminate killing of coyotes, the most common target of killing contests, “will not: (a) control or reduce coyote populations; (b) reduce or eliminate predation on livestock; or (c) result in an increase in deer densities.” In fact, the DEC [states that](#), “Past experience has shown that attempts to control or limit coyote populations on a large scale basis . . . actually may increase birth rates, thereby accelerating coyote population growth and expansion.” With regard to conflicts with livestock, the DEC has [found that](#), “Most problems can be avoided with proper husbandry techniques. It is much easier to prevent depredation from occurring than it is to stop it once it starts.” It's important to note that, according to USDA data, livestock losses to carnivores is miniscule—*all carnivores combined* are responsible for less than 0.5% of U.S. [cattle](#) and [sheep](#) losses—and that [random removal of coyotes can actually increase conflicts with livestock](#) due to disruption of the coyote pack structure.

**Q: Aren't coyotes just pests anyway?**

No. As the DEC has recognized, coyotes are “[an integral part of our ecosystems](#)” and “[may improve the overall health of the prey population](#)” of deer by removing sick animals from the gene pool. Coyotes provide a range of [benefits](#) including helping to control disease transmission by keeping rodent populations in check, consuming dead animals, increasing biodiversity, and protecting crops and ground-nesting birds. And as the DEC [points out](#), conflicts with humans and pets are minimal. What's more, a [recent study](#) by researchers at Ohio State University found that most people like coyotes.

**Q: Have other states banned wildlife killing contests?**

Since 2014, eight states have banned wildlife killing contests—California in 2014; Vermont in 2018; Arizona, Massachusetts and New Mexico in 2019; Colorado and Washington in 2020; and Maryland in 2021.

**Please pass A.2917/S.4099 to eradicate cruel, senseless, and scientifically unsound wildlife killing contests from New York.**

Contact [bshapiro@humanesociety.org](mailto:bshapiro@humanesociety.org) for more info.

