



COLORADO

Parks and Wildlife

Department of Natural Resources

Policy and Planning
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To: Colorado Parks and Wildlife (CPW) Commission

From: Katie Lanter, CPW Policy and Planning Supervisor

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Subject: Wildlife Contest Status in the U.S.

At the November 2019 Colorado Parks and Wildlife Commission meeting, the Commission formally requested information on states' regulations on wildlife killing contests and any related limitations or prohibitions. This memo provides background and summarizes an initial analysis of contest bans and related guidelines in other states.

Background

As described in The Wildlife Society's [issue statement](#) on wildlife killing contests, such events are "organized, competitive contests where participants compete for cash or other prizes for killing animals in a specified location during a specific time period." Some segments of the public find such contests objectionable for the wildlife deaths incurred, the provision of rewards for killing wildlife and because they do not see a biological basis for such an approach. Contest proponents argue that contests are a cost-effective management tool, particularly for predators that are a threat to livestock or a nuisance, and a form of entertainment and recreation.

Colorado's Statutes and Regulations

In Colorado, we have a partial ban on wildlife killing contests. Colorado Revised Statute [C.R.S. 33-6-118](#) prohibits contests to kill big game. Contests are allowed for some species of small game and furbearers, provided no more than five (5) of each species is taken by any individual participant during the event.

CPW regulations chapter W-03 Furbearers and Small Game, Except Migratory Birds has section #303 - Manner of Take as follows:



#303 - Manner of Take:

The following are legal methods of take for game species listed in this chapter. Any method of take not listed herein shall be prohibited, except as otherwise provided by Statute or Commission regulation or by 35-40-100.2-115, C.R.S.

A. Special Conditions

1. Contests Involving Small Game or Furbearers are allowed, except:
 - a. No person shall advertise, conduct, offer to conduct, promote or participate in any competitive event which involves:
 1. The taking of any small game or furbearer species for which the daily bag or possession is unlimited, including but not limited to coyotes and prairie dogs. Provided, however, that such events are allowed if no more than five (5) of each species are taken by each participant during the entire event.
 2. The taking of marked or tagged small game released as part of such contest and where money or other valuable prizes are awarded for the taking of such small game and game birds. "Valuable prizes" shall not include certificates or other similar tokens of recognition not having any significant monetary value.
 - b. Commercial and noncommercial wildlife parks and field trials licensed by the Division are exempt from these provisions.

Contest Bans and Related Guidelines

An initial analysis of related regulations and guidelines in other states found five states currently have some form of a ban on wildlife killing contests:

- Arizona: banned predator and furbearer killing contests in 2019
- California: banned predator and furbearer killing contests in 2014
- Massachusetts: banned predator and furbearer killing contests in 2019
- New Mexico: banned coyote killing contests in 2019
- Vermont: banned coyote killing contests in 2018.

In 2019, two states—Nevada and Oregon—had legislation introduced to ban coyote contests that did not pass. New Jersey, New York and Wisconsin are considering legislation to prohibit wildlife killing contests during their current legislative sessions.

In addition to Colorado, partial bans exist in Idaho, Montana, North Carolina, Utah and Washington. Idaho's Policy for Avian and Mammalian Predation Management says, "the Department will not support any contests or similar activities involving the taking of predators which may portray hunting in an unethical fashion, devalue the predator, and which may be offensive to the general public." The Wildlife Society's wildlife killing contest policy contains

similar language and says there is little evidence supporting the use of killing contests to control predator populations. State statute in Montana (Mont. Code Ann. [§ 87-6-214](#)) specifies circumstances when prizes may be offered for the taking of game, fowl, fur-bearing animals or any bird or animal protected by law. In North Carolina, coyote hunting contests are prohibited on public lands in five counties (15A N.C. Admin. Code [10B.0219](#)). Utah bans big game contests with prizes valued at over \$500 (Utah Admin. Code r. [R657-5-16](#)). In Washington, state statute (Wash. Rev. Code Ann. [§ 77.65.490](#)) requires a permit from the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife director for hunting contests.

The following map shows the status of wildlife contests in the U.S.

