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Clark County Commission condemns coyote killing contests

By

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The Clark County Commission unanimously passed a resolution Tuesday condemning animal-killing contests and urging the state to take “immediate action to ban” the practice in Nevada.

Nevada is among several states that have enacted similar bans of animal-killing contests amid pressure from animal protection groups and growing public outcry in recent years.

New Mexico and Arizona banned coyote-hunting tournaments in 2019, as did Vermont in 2018. California in 2014 outlawed all predator-hunting contests.

In the past few years, more than 24 wildlife killing contests have occurred in Nevada, including in and around Clark County, according to Animal Wellness Action who sponsored the measure.

Passage of the [resolution](#) marks the first successful attempt to condemn wildlife killing contests in the state of Nevada. A ban is [expected](#) to be considered by the Nevada Wildlife Commission.

In 2015, the Wildlife Commission [voted 7-1](#) to reject a petition seeking to ban coyote hunting contests. In 2019, opponents of coyote killing contests, hoping to dry up prize money for the events, [argued to Nevada gaming regulators](#) that the contests violate gambling laws. Gaming commissioners rejected the effort to ban the killing for prizes.

Commissioner Justin Jones, who proposed the resolution said it will serve as a “signal to the Nevada Department of Wildlife that Clark County, the most populous county in Nevada, stands against cruel killing contests.”

“I am proud to have sponsored this resolution, which will help to ensure that the public is safe from stray bullets by unethical shooters in a hurry to kill as many animals as possible and protect our state’s wildlife from inhumane practices and unnecessary slaughter,” said Jones in a statement.

Participants in such contests typically compete in teams of two or single shooters, to kill the most animals or the heaviest cumulative weight of animals, for prizes and bragging rights.

Critics of the practice say indiscriminate killing can disrupt the social structure of pack animals like coyotes and damage the food chain by leaving lead ammunition strewn on public lands for other wildlife to ingest.

“With the passage of this historic resolution to condemn the scourge of Wildlife Killing Contests in our state, Nevada has been put on the path toward joining the bevy of other states that have already eliminated these barbaric practices,” Annoula Wylderich, Animal Wellness Action’s Nevada State Director, said. “This resolution galvanizes the movement to ban contest killing, which rewards participants for killing the most, the heaviest, and the smallest of a given species and is not sportsmanship.”

"Wildlife killing contests are a barbaric anachronism that has no place in a civilized society," Patrick Donnelly, Nevada state director at the Center for Biological Diversity, said. "There is no evidence that killing coyotes in any way reduces human conflict or livestock depredation. We need to show respect for our native wildlife, not treat it as fodder in some sick bloodsport. Nevada needs to join the 21st century and end this practice today."