

## STOP THE COYOTE KILLING CONTEST IN GRAYSON COUNTY: FACTS TO CONSIDER



*I am coyote, not villain, not evil, not devil, not scoundrel. I am what I am, I live where I live. I have died millions of times for being what I am, for being that which man has made of me. I sing for others of my kind, I do not hate, nor have I malice, I am not fear, I am not ruin...I am survival, I am adapter, I am dog of my maker.  
[Anonymous]*

Coyote killing contests and trapping/killing are not about protecting elk or deer, not about protecting cattle, not about protecting domestic pets: the coyote killing contest declaration states: **“This is a fun way to engage our hunters.”**

The event **serves no legitimate management purpose**. Proponents like to say it is needed to keep coyote numbers in check thus getting rid of “nuisance” coyotes, but this is indiscriminate and unscientific. In fact, research shows that the opposite is true: because they are territorial, coyotes regulate their own numbers: Killing coyotes **disrupts a stable population** on a variety of levels, and this in turn **INCREASES** the coyote population in an area with **repercussions for farmers and ranchers**.\*[see back of flyer]

Rampant slaughter of any animal is **inhumane**, especially to intelligent, socially-connected animals such as coyotes who mate for life, and form and live in family units where both parents raise the young. So, not only is slaughtering ineffective as a management tool, slaughter for a “prize” and for “fun” is immoral and an embarrassment to the intelligence and moral integrity of the community. It is motivated by a disregard for life.

Slaughtering coyotes is environmentally irresponsible at a time when the rest of the world is trying to live in a sustainable manner and not use up or kill off the resources that help to keep the planet balanced.

**Ranchers all over the United States are turning to non-lethal predator control methods based on the scientific findings found on the back of this flyer.** Highly successful methods of preventing livestock predation include good fencing, night corrals and using llamas, donkeys and guard dogs.

**FOR MORE INFORMATION:** Visit [CoyoteCoexistence.Com](http://CoyoteCoexistence.Com) to see videos about “Coyotes As Neighbors” (at the top of the page) and “Livestock Guardian Dogs: Working on Common Ground” (five posts further down on the page). For questions, and help with individual issues write: [coyotecoexistence@gmail.com](mailto:coyotecoexistence@gmail.com). **TAKE ACTION:** 1) Sign the petition on the sidebar to the left on this website; 2) Call and write your Supervisor & City Officials demanding a halt to the contest.

\*Here is how disrupting stable populations INCREASES the coyote population in an area, with repercussions for farmers and ranchers:

- a. Although initially their numbers will be reduced in a particular area by killing them, **interlopers and loners will soon fill the vacated niches** of those that have been killed, by immigrating into the area. In a stable population, the resident **older coyotes prevent new coyotes from moving in**. These are territorial animals who don't allow intruders into their areas.
- b. Whereas in a stable population **only family alpha pairs reproduce**, once these coyotes have been killed, all other females in the area, which are usually behaviorally sterile, suddenly will begin reproducing.
- c. When **more females reproduce**, there are more pups to be fed, and, and with fewer adults around to feed them (because they've been killed), **there is pressure on the remaining adults to turn to larger prey**. This pressure doesn't exist when there are more adults and fewer litters.
- d. Whereas **usually only 1/3 of pups survive** their first year of life, with fewer adults to eat up the food, there is more food for youngsters, and more of them end up surviving.
- e. In a stable population -- i.e. not one subjected to killings -- coyotes, who are territorial, know their territories and know where to **find the smaller prey** they depend on, such as rodents.
- f. **Coyotes keep rodents in check**, and also the diseases they carry such as plague and hantavirus and rabies. In fact, when one farmer in Oklahoma removed all coyotes, the rodents infested and ruined his crops -- he now values coyotes as rodent-catchers.
- g. In a stable population, coyotes learn from their parents. When parents are killed, coyotes have to learn through trial and error how to coexist with humans.
- h. Studies have shown that coyotes are creatures of habit when it comes to the environments they choose to live in and what food they eat: they learn what is "appropriate" food as pups from their parents, and only try new sources when under stress, as when fewer adults need to feed more litters -- in other words, **killing coyotes FORCES them to try new foods**, such as weaker livestock.
- i. Killing coyotes forces them to **live in a "colonizing" state**: for example, in a stable structure, breeding begins usually at 4 years and declines by 6 years of age. Older coyotes maintain their territories, keeping other coyotes out, but they do not reproduce -- and since there is no need to feed hungry pups, there is a diminished need for them to turn to livestock as a food source. Killing them lowers the age at which they reproduce to 1 or 2 years of age, extending their reproductive life, and increasing social and spatial flux. Killing them actually puts livestock at a higher risk for predation.
- j. **Problem coyotes are few and far-between**. It is impossible to single these out for removal. But "problems" can be solved in non-lethal ways.
- k. "Baiting" coyotes with pieces of meat from livestock actually **gives them a taste for farm animals**, such as cows, sheep and chickens which they didn't have before. If this food is fed to pups, pups will go for this type of food when they are older.

"There is not a single documented instance of a bounty program temporarily or permanently reducing coyote populations or livestock depredation problems."  
Michael Fries, VA Dept. of Game & Inland Fisheries, Commonwealth of Virginia