



Reforming Carnivore Management:

Proposed Draft Language of the Carnivore Conservation Act of Massachusetts with Testimonials of Support¹

By Jonathan Way, Ph.D., and Louise Kane, J.D.

Background: Currently, carnivores have long hunting seasons with minimal regulations. In February 2018, a well-publicized coyote killing contest at a gun store in Barnstable galvanized the public, local NGOs and scientists to call for a ban of killing contests and other forms of inhumane and controversial carnivore hunting practices. Abundant research indicates carnivores are ecologically important, and are social, sentient, family-oriented animals that regulate their own numbers by defending territories². Sociological research has consistently demonstrated society's decreasing support of lethal control and trophy hunting³. Yet, in the past 10+ years the Massachusetts Department of Fish and Game (MassWildlife) has increased the hunting season lengths for coyote, bobcat, & black bears, among other species. This policy favors biased or outdated research over the best available independent science⁴. The lack of protections from sport trophy hunting illustrates the need for reform.

Proposed Regulatory Changes: Whereas foxes can be hunted November – February, eastern coyotes/coywolves from October – March and bobcats from December – March, this Act will reduce hunting seasons on all wild canids and felids in Massachusetts to 1 month, from December 15 to January 14, excluding Sundays. The Act will prohibit all wildlife killing contests whereby hunters compete for prizes or entertainment to kill the most or biggest of a species. The Act will also prevent ecologically indefensible and unfair chase practices by prohibiting hunting over bait, night-time hunting, electronic calls, using dogs to chase carnivores for hunting purposes, and will establish a 1 bag limit per hunter per animal. The purchase of a \$25 (which can be raised but not lowered) Carnivore Conservation Stamp will be required to hunt one of each species of carnivore. The fees will be allocated specifically to fund research and education efforts on the protected species. Additionally, the Act will establish refuges from hunting for carnivores on state and federal parks, forests, and seashores to allow for research, and to protect species from hunting related stress and mortality.

Whereas black bears can currently be hunted statewide in 3 seasons from September – December, this Act will reduce the hunting season to one week (Monday to Saturday) per year at the discretion of MassWildlife, will maintain a bag limit of one animal per hunter with purchase of the Carnivore Conservation Stamp, will continue to prohibit baiting and the use of dogs to hunt them, and will re-establish the rule of only allowing hunting in Wildlife Management Zones 1-8 (western half of the state) to protect bears colonizing new areas of eastern Massachusetts. Bobcat hunting will also remain legal only in 2017's WM Zones 1-8, as currently implemented.

¹ This legislative/ballot initiative language is a short version of the Carnivore Conservation Act that contains the background and rationale for the Act, and an Executive Summary: Kane, L., and J.G. Way. 2014. Carnivore Conservation Act of Massachusetts. Revised version June 2014 (original version July 2013). 21 pages. URL: <http://www.EasternCoyoteResearch.com/downloads/MACarnivoreConservationActJune2014.pdf>.

² See Way, J. G. 2014. Revised edition (edited and e-book). Suburban Howls: Tracking the Eastern Coyote in Urban Massachusetts. Dog Ear Publishing, Indianapolis, Indiana, USA. 334 pg.; and Eisenberg, C. 2014. The Carnivore Way: Coexisting with and Conserving North America's Predators. Island Press, Washington, D.C., USA. 328 pg.

³ Jackman, J. L., and J. G. Way. 2018. Once I found out: Awareness of and attitudes toward coyote hunting policies in Massachusetts. *Human Dimensions of Wildlife* 23(2): 187-195. DOI: 10.1080/10871209.2017.1397824.

⁴ See Artelle et al. 2018. Hallmarks of science missing from North American wildlife management. *Science Advances* 4(3): eaao0167. DOI: 10.1126/sciadv.aao0167; and Karns et al. 2018. Should Grizzly Bears Be Hunted or Protected? Social and Organizational Affiliations Influence Scientific Judgments. *Canadian Wildlife Biology & Management* 7(1):18-30.

Testimonials Supporting the Legislation: “*Eastern Coyote/Coywolf Research* believes that this legislation sufficiently protects carnivores enabling them to perform their important ecological roles while also allowing the small fraction of people that hunt carnivores to continue to do so, but in a much reduced capacity.” Jonathan G. Way, Ph.D., Founder of Eastern Coyote/Coywolf Research.

“We write in support of the proposed Carnivore Conservation Act of Massachusetts presented by Jonathan Way, Ph.D., and Louise Kane, J.D. The current regulations do little to protect carnivores from inhumane hunting practices and are based on outdated science. In particular, wildlife-killing contests are unsportsmanlike and antithetical to responsible hunting ethics. Reform is needed to encourage respect for wildlife, to protect wildlife habitats, and to provide education to the public about how carnivores play such a critical role in our ecosystems.” The Friends of Cape Wildlife Board of Directors: Elizabeth Brooke, Paul Carr, Peggy DiMauro, Heather Fone, Joan McLachlan, Margi O’Neill, John Small, and Debby Walther.

“This legislation protects the rights of hunters to hunt, but within a framework that recognizes the important ecological role of predators, thus providing them with important protections that are currently absent.” Britt Beedenbender, Town Councilor, Town of Barnstable, MA.

“There is a widely held perception of coyotes as dangerous pests. My experience with them as an organic farmer has proved this wrong. I have come to view their presence on my farm as an asset. They consume large numbers of rodents which are my most damaging mammalian pests as well preventing smaller more problematic predators from becoming established here. I have come to respect and appreciate these animals and feel this legislation is an appropriate change to current regulations.” Matt Churchill, Pariah Dog Farm, Teaticket, MA.

“The moral shame of traditional conservation is its reliance on killing wildlife as both a strategy of ecological management as well as a core purpose of wildlife agencies themselves. As a matter of science and ethics, this is simply wrong. Way and Kane’s proposed Carnivore Conservation Act directly grapples with these twin problems, and would help turn carnivore management in a more ethical and scientific direction.” William Lynn, Ph.D., Research Scientist, Marsh Institute at Clark University; and Research Fellow, New Knowledge Organization.

“My research on attitudes toward coyotes on Cape Cod has found increasing acceptance of coyotes and opposition to lethal management, especially trapping, baiting, and lack of bag limits and other practices that the public views as cruel and unfair. The Carnivore Conservation Act is compatible with public values and is ecologically sound.” Jennifer Jackman, Ph.D., Associate Professor of Political Science, Salem State University.

“*Predator Defense* does not support the hunting of any carnivore species because there is no scientific or ethical or practical reason to do so. However, we support this legislation as a step on the way toward the end of hunting predators for sport.” Brooks Fahy, Executive Director of Predator Defense.

“Just because we can, doesn’t mean we should. Wildlife killing contests and exceptionally long hunting seasons do not meet a basic tenet of the North American Model of Wildlife Conservation which states that there must be a legitimate reason for killing wildlife. Wildlife is a public resource that should not be killed for frivolous reasons. There is no scientific need to kill carnivores for the entertainment of a vocal minority. This legislation is a reasonable compromise that will allow carnivores to fulfill their ecological niche.” Nancy Warren, Executive Director, National Wolfwatcher Coalition.

“It is heart-breaking to see special interests of hunters dominate wildlife management. Research shows that the majority of people are against cruelty to carnivores and all animals. Most people want to simply coexist with wildlife, especially carnivores, given that they are easy to live with and provide many societal benefits from free ‘pest control’ to aesthetic and photographic opportunities. Like all sentient beings, they too are here for a reason. I wholeheartedly support the passage of the Carnivore Conservation Act to provide more protections for an unfairly persecuted group of animals.” Judith Kennedy, Professor Emeritus, Curry College.

“It is the position of Boston Animal Save that true conservation should involve minimizing human disturbance as much as possible, not continuously encouraging humans to disrupt the ecosystem by killing critical carnivores. Animal lives do not exist to be taken by humans for entertainment. It is my opinion that this legislation

helps ecosystems reach a better equilibrium and balance so humans stop tampering with it and killing indiscriminately.” Dominique Ruzsala, Boston Animal Save.

“The North American Wolf Foundation (Wolf Hollow) supports the vital need for reform on predator control in the state of Massachusetts. The future of the Eastern Coyote, Red Fox, Bobcat and Black Bear that inhabits our beautiful state depends on it.” Zee Soffron, Assistant Director of the North American Wolf Foundation, Ipswich, MA.

“Wild animals are a public trust asset and it is the government's duty to preserve them for future generations including transparent accounting and prudent management of current uses. The proposed legislation balances public interests in carnivores much better than current management practices do.” Adrian Treves, PhD, Founder of the Carnivore Coexistence Lab.

“It is critical to protect our nation’s carnivores, which play a vital role in ensuring healthy ecosystems. Trophy hunting, especially under the guise of wildlife killing contests, is unethical and has no place in today’s world. We urge Massachusetts to be a leader in this field and protect our wildlife for future generations to enjoy.” Andrea Santarsiere, Senior Attorney, Center for Biological Diversity.

“As President and founder of a Vermont-based wildlife protection organization that just banned coyote killing contests in that state, it is clear that current hunting laws are antithetical to science-based wildlife management. There is still much work to be done to stop the persecution of coyotes and other predators and thus I strongly support language in the Carnivore Conservation Act to better protect carnivores.” Brenna Galdenzi, Protect Our Wildlife.

“The Carnivore Conservation Act of Massachusetts should be the cornerstone for all decisions made regarding the wildlife of Massachusetts. This Act is based in science and in mind of good stewardship toward essential predators. Without coyotes, the state of Massachusetts would be overrun with rodents of every kind--underlining the need to respect nature's prey/predator balance. Surely, '*killing contests*' and other unfair and draconian methods to 'manage' the state's wildlife have no place in today's world.” Linda Camac, Founder of GOOD WOLF.

“Public Employees for Environmental Responsibility (PEER) supports this legislation as a practical first step in protecting the Commonwealth’s top predators and the critical role they play in stabilizing our ecosystems.” Kyla Bennett, Ph.D., J.D., Director of New England PEER.

“As a 20 year resident of Vermont, I applaud the action Vermont citizens and legislators have just taken to ban wildlife killing contests in Vermont. Protection for predators is needed in Massachusetts as well. The Pettus Crowe Foundation is pleased to support the proposed Carnivore Conservation Act of Massachusetts as a valuable and necessary improvement in management of carnivores in Massachusetts.” Irene Crowe Ph.D., President, Pettus Crowe Foundation.

“The Pegasus Foundation believes that management of predators throughout most of the United States and Massachusetts in particular is a scientific embarrassment. It is simply unethical to allow or encourage the killing of carnivores as a form of recreation. The Pegasus Foundation supports the Massachusetts Carnivore Conservation Act as an important step toward improving the scientific and ethical basis for carnivore management in Massachusetts.” John W. Grandy, Ph.D., Executive Director, The Pegasus Foundation.

“Nevada Wildlife Alliance agrees with your concerns. Random intense killing of coyotes has adverse consequences that are well documented and should be avoided for the benefit of domestic livestock producers, pet owners and all who care about stability for our wildlife friends. Here in a demonstration from Nevada, showing that after a 5 year coyote killing program to benefit deer numbers, there was no increase in deer numbers but the coyote population dynamics changed significantly and in an undesirable direction: Wildlife Services was killing more coyotes, annually, at the end of the 5 year project than at the beginning, the average age of the coyote killed dropped by half, litter size tripled, and the female/male ratio tilted towards males. So what Wildlife Services gave local residents was a large batch of undisciplined juvenile coyotes with a predominance of males with many more mouths

to feed than if the population had been unmolested by random intense killing⁵.” Don Molde, co-founder Nevada Wildlife Alliance.

“As a wildlife biologist whose focus is carnivores and our relationship with them, I have experienced a powerful shift in our people's readiness to value and coexist with our recovering carnivores. And so our laws have a great need to follow the will of the people, and the will of the people is succinctly expressed in this important document. We owe this to future generations.” Geri Vistein, Carnivore Conservation Biologist and President, Coyote Center for Carnivore Ecology and Coexistence.

“Northeast Oregon Ecosystems supports this proposed Act as a way to minimize the unnecessary and unethical killing of carnivores, a practice especially repulsive when done for sport or bragging rights, which applies equally here for both coyotes and bears.” Wally Sykes, Co-Founder, Northeast Oregon Ecosystems.

“The recreational activity of hunting creates an unfair disparity between the small minority who hunt and the vast majority who do not. Wildlife, as a public resource, should be equally accessible to all who appreciate being in the presence of other species, whether viewing, photographing, or simply enjoying the fact of their existence on Earth. Hunters are claiming, exploiting, destroying, and in some cases, monetizing public natural resources for themselves. This is an injustice, but the Carnivore Conservation Act resolves some of these issues by better protecting carnivores, an ecologically important group of animals.” Nan Zyla, Dr.P.H., HARP, Inc. (Humane Alternatives for Resolving Problems).

“We enthusiastically support this long-overdue effort to eliminate killing wildlife, specifically carnivores, for “prizes” and in the most unprincipled ways. No private entity should be permitted to gamble with or profit from the public’s wildlife resources. Currently there is gradual but widespread awakening to what state agencies mean when certain species are labeled “sustainable”: No bag limits. Legal “killing contests”. Trapping. Hunting with shotguns, rifles, handguns, bows and crossbows. Hunting over bait piles and nighttime hunting. Hunting with dogs. What species can be so “sustainable” that it can withstand such unimaginable carnage? If ethical hunters, state wildlife agencies and wildlife advocates seek common ground, they will find it in the Carnivore Conservation Act of Massachusetts.” Gail Clark, Founder, NY Residents Opposed to Contest Killing (NY-ROCK).

“The world is changing; in 2018 there is awareness among the public that hunting as a rule is unfair and harmful to animals and the environment. Animals are sentient, intelligent and serve an ecological purpose in the landscape. Sport hunting in particular is widely condemned as being little but legalized slaughter for fun - witness the outcry over the horrific killing of Cecil the lion who was lured out of his home in a national park and slaughtered by a dentist who paid \$50,000 to get a 'trophy.' This sparked an international outcry and greater scrutiny of trophy hunting, plus pledges from several airlines to refuse transporting this miserable cargo. Hunting laws across the country are over 100 years old - and humane participants on decision-making are banned, which is grossly discriminatory and guarantees a lethal outcome for wildlife. In 2018 it's time for a change starting with the Carnivore Conservation Act of MA.” Kiley Blackman, Founder of Animal Defenders of Westchester (NY).

“The science of wildlife management is selective because it is used to justify exploitation of wild animals to meet the interests of so-called *sportsmen*. It reinforces the false Cartesian view of other animals as soulless, non-thinking and non-feeling objects when in fact, the current body of scientific knowledge shows that comparisons of emotional and cognitive capacities between nonhumans - in this case carnivores - and humans reach across species lines. Furthermore, current wildlife management’s utilitarian view of animals as renewable natural resources who serve only as means to an end is out of step with the values and beliefs held increasingly by the public, characterized by a shift from a utilitarian to a mutualism belief system with a focus on compassion for other animals. While I oppose the killing of wild animals for scientific and ethical reasons, I do support this legislation as a step in the right direction.” Anja Heister, PhD., Wildlife Conservation, Ethics & Policy, Missoula, MT.

⁵ Schroeder, C. and Kevin Lansford. “Projects 14 and 15 Coyote Removal for Deer Enhancement” *Nevada Department of Wildlife*, 2009, pp. 1-12.

“Meso-predators like coyotes and fox eat rodents, which are frequently vectors for black legged ticks and Lyme disease. With warming climate, ticks carrying the Lyme bacteria are increasing in number and proportion of infected ticks, as are lone star ticks and dog ticks, which carry many diseases including Rocky Mountain Spotted Fever. Nature is a top down system in which predators control the numbers of other species ranging from rodents to deer, and are in turn controlled by the availability of prey. Legislation should be based on the best available science, not the selling of hunting permits.” Steve & Wendy Hall, NY State Licensed Wildlife Rehabilitators, *Adirondack Wildlife Refuge & Rehabilitation Center*.

"It is imperative that wild dogs such as foxes and coyotes, along with other carnivores, receive better protections than they currently are given. The Carnivore Conservation Act is a good compromise reflecting a range of values for a diversity of stakeholders. I support its passage." Frank Vincenti, Founder of Wild Dog Foundation (NY).

“I strongly support the Carnivore Conservation Act of MA. I have raised livestock for 40 years and have successfully co-existed with predators. The important ecological role occupied by the Eastern Coyote needs to be acknowledged by hunters, farmers, ranchers, and the general public. Nature does not need a hand from *Homo sapiens* to make things ‘right’ again.” Marie Malo, Autumn Mist Farm, Marstons Mills, MA.

“As a Cape Cod native, and wildlife biologist, I fully support this ecological and humane legislation which speaks to coexisting with predators rather than eliminating them.” C. Diane Boretos PWS, Call of the Wild Consulting and Environmental Services, Sangerville, Maine.

“There is an abundance of science indicating the ecological importance of predators yet our state wildlife agencies cater to a minority of people who want to kill them. I strongly support our legislators offering more protections for carnivores by passing the Carnivore Conservation Act.” William Buckley, Associate Professor, Curry College, Milton, MA.

"Massachusetts must revise its treatment to wild animals including eliminating coyote killing contests and unfair chase practices like baiting, using electronic calls, and allowing dogs to chase and potentially kill carnivores. Seasons should be shortened or eliminated entirely and hunters should have limits on how many can be killed. Presently these legal and wasteful slaughters - sometimes for cash prizes - are antithetical to sound wildlife management policy and to the principles of conservation. The Carnivore Conservation Act is urgently needed to protect and intelligently manage carnivores in our state." Ann Marie Cotton, Barnstable (MA) resident.

“An excellent and much needed piece of legislation, making an effort to bring some fairness to wild animals that are not hunted for human consumption. This is especially true when it comes to contests that purport to make it fun and rewarding for the killing of a wild animal in quantity. These days there is a lot of talk about our humanity in dealing with law breakers. What about our humanity in dealing with defenseless wild animals that are merely trying to live out their lives? This legislation goes a long way to demonstrate that our humanity does exist in that regard.” Walter L. Pepperman II, Attorney, Wildlife Advocate, and Registered Maine Guide.

“Carnivores, including wild canids, are critical to the healthy functioning of ecosystems. Some years ago a wild wolf (one of several wolves killed south of the St. Lawrence River) was killed in Massachusetts in violation of the Endangered Species Act, after a state biologist unknowingly authorized that it be killed. Massachusetts is well within dispersal distance of wolves from Canada and northern New England. It’s time for the northeast states to recognize the potential for natural wolf recolonization by minimizing the chances that they will be killed, either accidentally or intentionally. Coyotes are very similar in appearance to wolves and should be given the protection that this Act will provide.” John M. Glowa, Sr., President, The Maine Wolf Coalition, Inc.

"I am not a professional in the area of wildlife management, just a citizen of the world who shares our planet with a huge range of wildlife. I have a home on Cape Cod, and we have a number of Eastern Coyotes with whom we share this beautiful peninsula. I have witnessed 1, 2, 3 and more Coywolves many times, as they move about the neighborhood. They mind their own business, as they are busy keeping the rodent and rabbit population under control. To my knowledge, there has never been any threatening incident in the 26 years I have had a home here. To kill them, for sport, is akin to shooting a neighbor's dog or pet. They do no harm, and have adapted to maintain their

population at a food sustainable level. They maintain an extraordinary balance. Coywolves are part of our way of life, as are the foxes, herons, song birds, and rabbits. They most certainly should not be subject to a perpetual open sport hunting season." Bill Treene, East Orleans, MA