

Pennsylvania State Fox & Coyote Hunters inc.

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Spring Newsletter – March 2021



Mercer County Kids Show How It's Done!

Member Dave Evans has provided this photo of a recent hunt during which some youngsters enthusiastically took part. Notice the camo-clad kids who helped out as dog handlers, with leashes in tow. What a wonderful way to get the kids outdoors for some quality family time with hounds added in as a bonus. Our thanks to Dave for passing this fine photo along for our use and identifying those pictured as follows:

“From left to right front row. Adam Mcferren, Marley, Adam’s son Jake, Hayden, my son Eli, my daughter Finley, Me, and my nephew Wyatt Lawrence. Back row-left to right-Brian Taylor, and my Dad D.C. My nephew, Wyatt (14 years old) got to see the coyote three times before he was finally able to get a shot at it and get his very first coyote. He is truly hooked and actually killed his second coyote this past weekend”.

From the President's Pen...

2021 will present a carry-over of uncertainty for your Association, due to the issues connected with covid-19. At this point, it is unlikely that we will hold an Annual Meeting or Family Day Picnic. It may be safe to assume that the Sporting Dog Owner's Meeting with the PGC may be held virtually as well.

Nevertheless we will face daunting legislative issues during this year. In addition to the HSUS efforts to ban tournaments, HB 337 was re-introduced in January. It is essentially a rehash of previous versions of the anti-tethering bill, which would banish keeping hounds outdoors without exception.

HSUS Vows to Ban Tournaments and Trapping in Pennsylvania

During a recent discussion with representatives from the HSUS, PGC personnel were advised that the anti-hunting organization has prioritized Pennsylvania in their targeted campaign to end coyote tournaments and trapping. They produced a series of graphic videos and photos depicting unsightly scenes of carcasses piled high or thrown in dumpsters at tournament sites.

Please see the report below of our recent phone conference with PGC Staff and Commissioners regarding this threat.

PGC/PA State Fox & Coyote Hunters Assn. /PA Trappers Assn. Conference Call to Address HSUS Threat

Within the past few weeks, the PGC took the initiative to arrange a phone conference designed to brief us about the HSUS threat and to request our input regarding measures which should be taken to mitigate the damage done by unsightly photos and videos. The agency also produced the article below, on our behalf, to depict the positive affects produced by coyote tournaments. We are grateful to the PA Game Commission for their proactive approach and technical assistance in helping us to protect this aspect of our sport.

Predator Hunting Contests in Pennsylvania

(Editor's note: The summary below has been provided to us by the PGC. It is designed for our use to depict the actual impact and benefits of coyote tournaments in the Commonwealth).

Between 35 and 50 predator hunting contests are known to occur in Pennsylvania each year usually during the late winter months of January and February. Some are more conspicuous or publicized than others.

Contests occur both statewide and over a smaller geographic region including individual counties.

Coyotes are the main species harvested during these contests but species including raccoons, foxes, and bobcats may also be part of the contests.

The largest known contest in Pennsylvania has occurred over the last 28 years and over the last 4 years has attracted as many as 4,914 contest entrants per year while recording a high of 227 coyotes harvested (average = 212 since 2017). The second largest contest occurred in limited counties, attracted ~600 entries per year recently, and < 50 coyotes were harvested.

The total numbers of coyotes harvested during predator contests are low compared to the total estimated harvest of coyotes in Pennsylvania. Since 2015, an estimated 176,053 coyotes have been harvested (average = 35,911± 7,092 per year) across Pennsylvania. Additional information on furbearer harvest numbers and trends can be found in the PGC's annual reports available on the Commission's website.

The specific rules for contests, including times of the hunts, species included, and method of harvest are established by the parties responsible for the contest, but they must follow all regulations for hunting as established by the Pennsylvania Game Commission.

All participants of Predator Contests must follow Commonwealth game laws including those found in Title 34: section 2305 which states: It is unlawful for any person who kills or wounds any game or wildlife while engaged in any activities permitted by this title to refuse or neglect to make a reasonable effort to retrieve, retain or lawfully dispose of such game or wildlife.

All legal means of hunting are used during the contests including stand-hunting, still-hunting, hunter-drives, and dogs.

Nearly all contests offer prize money based on entry fees.

Contests are held for fund raising, to ostensibly aid in predator control, and to provide opportunities to hunters.

Prizes may be awarded for the largest coyote harvested, the quickest time it took to harvest the animal, or the highest total number of coyotes harvested.

Money from these contests is generally donated or provided to local charities, municipalities, or other groups (e.g., local volunteer fire stations). For example, \$4,000 has been donated to support the Harford and Troy Fair Queens; \$14,400 has supported six county Envirothons; \$32,000 has been donated to fund the annual trapping school held by the National Trappers Association; \$4,000 has gone to support the Pennsylvania Trappers Association, and \$8,000 has been donated to US Sportsman's Alliance. This is not a complete list on donations, but an example.

Researchers often use these contests to collect samples for disease, genetics, or diet studies from coyotes or other species such as foxes. Each year, the US Department of Agriculture sends a scientist to many contests to take samples from harvested animals for disease analysis, specifically diseases that also impacts humans.

Some Practical Advice to Tournament Sponsors/Organizers

During our conference call with the PGC mentioned above, the following measures were suggested for those who sponsor, organize or publicize coyote tournaments. Hopefully most organizations already follow these common sense practices. All are designed to mitigate any poor imagery created by activities considered poor taste or tarnish public image.

- 1) Call the tournaments 'Hunts' vs 'Contests'
- 2) Do not offer prizes for **most** critters killed.
- 3) Where practical, maintain a policy that all suitable carcasses/pelts will be used for a secondary by-product – scientific studies, sold to fur dealers, etc.
- 4) Do not represent the disposal of carcasses in dumpsters, or accumulated in large piles, or promote the photos of such.
- 5) Eliminate/Manage filming.
- 6) Refrain from postings on social media.

Pennsylvania State Fox & Coyote Hunter's Assn. Renews Scholarship Program

The Executive Committee voted to continue our scholarship program for **five students**. Each will receive a \$500.00 award.

The first two scholarships to be awarded will be designated the **Dick Ross Memorial Scholarship** and the **Roy Rosenbaum Memorial Scholarship**, which have been funded by memorial contributions made in their honor. The third scholarship will be earmarked as the **Western Boys Coyote Team Honorary Scholarship** funded by the Mercer County group.

Please see the details and scholarship application below. Any questions may be directed to Dick Bednarczyk (570) 586-9270 or, Jerry Ross (570) 423-3389. Our 2020 winners were Kendall Peterson, Cole Spencer, Zoie McDermott, Karlee Keane and Elena Altmiller.

Western Boy's Coyote Team Continues Significant Donation!

Recently, Director Jay Roberts presented a \$250.00 contribution to the Association on behalf of the Western Boy's Coyote Team of Mercer County. This represents the third time the group has done so in the recent past. In recognition of this thoughtful gesture the Executive Committee has determined to earmark one of our 2021 scholarships as the 'Western Boy's Honorary Scholarship'. The scholarship will be awarded in June.

Reminder –Raffle Drawing

Although we indicated a March 31st deadline for raffle ticket returns, we can continue to receive them up to the moment of our drawing, which will be held at the end of April. This fundraiser has become an integral part of our overall financial scenario for the year. The grand prize is a Garmin Alpha Bundle GPS with the improved TT/15 collar valued at approximately \$800.00 retail or an \$800.00 Cash Award. In the event that you have not yet made your returns, we encourage you to support your organization by doing so.

PA State Fox & Coyote Hunter's Coyote Tournament

This is a reminder that our season-long coyote tournament will end on March 31st. Successful participating hunters should return their weight cards to Dick Bednarczyk by Saturday, April 10th.

Welcome New Members!

Recruiting efforts for 2021 are off to a good start. YTD 15 hunters have joined the Association. Since our last newsletter, Barry, Richard & Parker Sands, Jeb & Wyatt English, George Peterson, Larry Nevel Jr., Adam & Jacob McFerren, Zachary Derr, Jeff Lee, Braylee Kennedy, Slater Sandor, Ryland Clark and Jim Hoodak have come aboard. We are delighted to see the number of youths and family groups which have joined the Association over the past few years. Welcome hunters!

Remember to Nominate Your Youngsters for "First" Award

Recently we expanded our award program to include "First Turkey", "First Bobcat" or "First Coyote" in addition to the "First Deer" or "First Bear" awards. The PA Game Commission will provide certificates for youngsters who take a deer, bear or turkey, while the Association will present our own "First Bobcat" or "First Coyote" Certificate. Members are requested to notify Dick Bednarczyk about the successful hunters and provide a digital photo, if one is available.

Remember To Support Our Sponsors

Please support these loyal sponsors, who continually provide substantial donations to insure the success of our events. Each of these sponsors willingly provides their support. Some do so automatically each year, without the need for personal solicitation from us;

Johnson's Telemetry, Prowler/Quick Track, Sportmix Dog Food, Thunder Valley Pet Pantry, Gundog Supply, PA Outdoor News, Double U Hunting Supply, Sacandaga Dog Supply, Down Home Rice Pudding and Hunter's Horn magazine.

All companies listed provided gift certificates, subscriptions or merchandise.

PA State Fox & Coyote Assn. Members Enjoy Success in Tournaments

Many members continue to appear among the successful hunters at regional tournaments. A partial listing follows:

District Nine Trappers – Tunkhannock

There were 62 entries overall.

Successful members were; Bob Cragle, Jack Johnson, Guy Michlowski, Ron Taylor, Bob Brown, Corey Luther, Dave Podunajec, Bill Zdziarski, Josh Cragle, Mike Sullivan (2 coyotes), Barry Kytte, Logan Jennings, Pat McPeak, Chris Meeker, A.J.Riscavage (2 coyotes) and John Tanmines. Members of the PA State Fox & Coyote Hunter's Assn. harvested 18 coyotes during the event. The winning coyote weighed 45.7 pounds.

2021 Memberships Now Due

At this point, everyone should have received their 2021 membership billing. We are requesting prompt payment of dues so that we may continue to fund our various activities and maintain our advocacy of hound owners' rights with the various governing bodies which affect our sport. In the event that you may have misplaced your billing, you may remit your dues to Pat Carr, using the address which appears on the letterhead.

In Memorium

James Curley

PA State Fox & Coyote Hunter's Assn. continues affiliation with PA Federation of Sportsmen & Conservationists

We are pleased to report that your Association has renewed our membership with the PA Federation. This move will enhance our effectiveness in the pursuit of our rights as Houndsmen. Harold Daub, the Executive Director, is a registered lobbyist who will provide valuable insight and assistance as we continually deal with the PA Legislature.

Their headquarters are in Harrisburg.

The linkup also affords a \$5.00 discount to anyone who enjoys a personal e-membership with the Federation (reduced from \$15.00 to \$10.00).

The Pennsylvania State Fox & Coyote Hunters Association announces the 2021 Scholarship Award!

As decided by the Officers and Board of Directors, the Association will provide \$500 scholarships to five eligible students. The award will be presented during the month of June, 2021

Details:

1. Student must complete the application below and submit by June 1st, 2020. One application per student. Families with multiple students may copy the application below. Mail application to RJ Bednarczyk, President.
2. Student must be a PA State Fox & Coyote Hunters Association member or the child or grandchild of a current, paid member.
3. The Scholarship opportunity is open to:
 - a. All graduates from the class 2021 who meet the above qualifications, regardless of state or province of residence.
 - b. Previously graduated students currently enrolled in further education programs, who meet the above qualifications, regardless of state or province of residence. Currently enrolled college students must not have entered into the 4th year of their chosen program.
4. A qualifying further education program refers to a 2 or 4 year college, trade or specialty school or any other higher education program for which the student is paying for.
5. In an effort to be fair and objective to all qualified and deserving applicants, the name of each applicant will be placed in a hat for a random drawing to determine the winners.
6. The winning students will be required to submit proof of current enrollment or planned continuation of education beyond high school. (i.e., acceptance letter)
7. Student need not be present at Family Day picnic to win.
8. Previous winners are ineligible.

Students Name (please print):		Date:
Address:		
Town:	State or Province:	Zip Code:
Phone Number:	e-mail Address:	
Member's Name (student, parent or grandparent):		
College or Trade School you are/will be attending:		
Students Signature:		