



Coexisting with Wildlife

As human development progressively encroaches on wildlife habitat, conflicts between wildlife and people increase. Each year, in response to such actual or perceived conflicts, people turn to lethal control efforts to kill "offending" animals. In addition to being inhumane, lethal control efforts are generally doomed to fail, as they don't address the root causes of conflicts or provide long-lasting solutions.

The cornerstone of Born Free USA united with API's "Coexisting with Wildlife" campaign is the promotion of educated coexistence with our wild neighbors. Through advocacy at a variety of levels, we use our expertise to take aim at the needless killing of wildlife. We protect animals by educating people about the benefits of peaceful coexistence, providing tools and guidance for nonlethal conflict management, and publicizing solutions that can prevent conflicts from arising in the first place. We also use legislative and regulatory channels to speak for the wild animals who cannot speak for themselves.

Our "Coexisting with Wildlife" campaigns focus on two main areas: "nuisance" wildlife control, which is primarily an issue in urban and suburban areas, and lethal predator control, which occurs more in rural or agricultural regions. We are a recognized leader in the fight against both of these cruel and unnecessary practices.

Protecting Urban Wildlife

"Nuisance" wildlife control — in which people hire wildlife control operators to trap and kill animals in an attempt to mitigate conflicts — is a lucrative, growing, and largely unregulated industry with little accountability or even basic humane animal care and treatment standards.

"Animal damage" or "pest" control trappers — also known as Wildlife Control Operators, or WCOs — number in the tens of thousands nationwide. As urban sprawl increases, so do interactions between humans and wild animals. This has led to greater demand for WCO services, despite the fact that many conflicts between people and wildlife can be mitigated by simple changes in human behavior.

Individuals and businesses contract with WCOs to resolve conflicts between humans and wild animals. State and federal wildlife agencies have traditionally left resolution of such conflicts to individual initiative, and allow people to hire private wildlife control businesses that typically charge a fee for wildlife removal services. Unfortunately, the emphasis by the WCO industry is often on lethal removal of animals. Many WCOs are former or current fur trappers who do urban wildlife damage control trapping on the side.

Oversight of wildlife damage control businesses has lagged behind the industry's growth. State agencies have been hesitant to regulate the business practices of an industry they see as largely commercial in nature, although the wildlife control operators affect hundreds of thousands of wild animals annually. As a result, many states have almost no regulations providing proper oversight or defining humane care and handling of wildlife impacted by this trade.

We provide communities, homeowners, and other stakeholders conflict mitigation solutions and resources

that are humane and designed for the long term.

Protecting Native Carnivores

The killing of native carnivores, or "predators" to benefit private interests is big business, and one of the government's most shameful secrets.

Each year, nearly 100,000 native carnivores are killed by the federal government on public and private lands across the United States. This slaughter is carried out by the Wildlife Services program (formerly Animal Damage Control), under the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA). Lethal control is conducted primarily to protect privately owned livestock grazing on public lands, and also used to ensure "game" stocks for hunters or protect corporate-owned timberlands from being damaged by bears.

The primary methods used to kill native carnivores are cruel and indiscriminate. They include poisons, steel-jaw leghold traps, strangulation neck snares, denning (the killing of coyote pups in their dens), hounding, shooting, and aerial gunning.

We are committed to using legislation, litigation, and public education to stop this wasteful and unnecessary subsidy and the inhumane methods employed to kill native carnivores. We are a recognized leader in providing solutions to coyote/predator conflicts and helped develop a ground-breaking non-lethal predator and livestock protection in Marin County, California that is receiving international recognition. We are also part of the national Coalition to End Aerial Gunning.

Coexisting with Coyotes

Finding effective techniques for resolving negative encounters between coyotes and people is a priority for communities, wildlife managers, animal advocates, and ranchers.

Humanized landscapes — whether agricultural or suburban — offer coyotes and other wildlife an abundant supply of food, water, and shelter. Most conflicts involving coyotes result from people either intentionally or inadvertently providing coyotes (or their prey) with food. Consequently, reducing the availability of food sources of interest to coyotes is fundamental to reducing and eliminating negative encounters with this species. This may include securing pets and pet food and cleaning dirty grills in urban areas, and protecting livestock in agricultural areas. Communities that have adopted such practices often see a marked decrease in conflicts and a reduction in the number of domestic animals lost to coyotes.

Effective resolution of coyote conflicts is dependent on both individual and community action. Historically, the response to coyote conflicts has generally focused on lethal removal through trapping. Such an approach, however, is coming under increasing scientific and public scrutiny because non-selective coyote removal often fails to provide long-lasting resolution of conflicts and raises ethical and animal welfare concerns. As adaptable opportunists, coyotes will move into vacant habitat wherever they exist, especially if there is an ample food source. Consequently, the effectiveness of programs aimed at population reductions is most often short-lived. Any habitat vacancies will soon be filled by other coyotes moving into the area.

Research has also shown that coyote removal can lead to an increase in both rodent and rabbit populations as well as mid-size predators (skunks, raccoons, foxes, and feral cats). This increase in mid-size predators can in turn have a devastating impact on ground-nesting bird populations. Many wildlife ecologists emphasize that maintaining resident coyotes is positive for the environment and for preserving species diversity and ecological integrity. Since most coyotes are not involved in conflicts, maintaining resident coyotes and ensuring that they do not become habituated to people through feeding should be a community goal.

We have taken a leading role in assisting communities with coyote conflicts by offering solutions that are practical, scientifically proven, humane, ecologically sound, and long-lasting. Through our "Coexisting with Coyotes" program, we seek to foster educated coexistence and community action. A cornerstone of our multifaceted program involves proactive public outreach, collaboration with a variety of stakeholders, and enactment of laws that discourage coyote/wildlife feeding. Our "Coexisting with Coyotes" campaign includes such materials as our *Coyotes in Our Midst: Coexisting with an Adaptable and Resilient Carnivore* report,

and our *Coexisting with Coyotes* [brochure](#). We provide the tools, facts, and expertise to help communities implement long-lasting solutions.

Learn More About:

- [How to Take Action »](#)
- [Trapping & The Fur Trade »](#)