

ISPCA



Indiana Coyote Rescue Center

In September, Florida's Fish and Wildlife Commission voted to ban permanently penning, the practice of training dogs to chase and kill foxes and coyotes within enclosures. Several states including NC and SC are considering similar action.

It appears that Indiana's captive wildlife may not be so fortunate.

On Nov.16, the IN Natural Resources Commission will address a proposal to establish regulations governing the one penning operation in the state, which has been investigated by the DNR and is expected to be licensed According to Linnea Petercheff, operations staff specialist with the IN Div. Of Fish and Wildlife, "Regulations will provide for the welfare of the coyote as well as provide for fair chase and prevent new pens from opening." Opponents of penning see it differently. They point to photos, undercover videotapes and eyewitness accounts of captive coyotes and foxes being released into pens, chased, caught and torn to shreds by frenzied dogs.

Providing live bait for this sport are the trappers, some of whom claim to have been offered \$200 for a live coyote while pelts may sell for \$12. The trade in live bait is so lucrative that in 2008, a cooperative seven-state raid of traffickers illegally shipping animals across state lines to penning facilities resulted in 18 arrests, Animals confiscated in the raid included 25 coyotes, 55 foxes, and 2 bobcats Also found were 33 cardinals and a moonshine still. This defies trappers' claims that most animals survive the hunt.Coyotes, foxes and raccoons are trapped alive; some injured in the process, caged, trucked and sold to penning operators. Traumatized, they cower in cramped pens until released before a baying mob of hounds. Comments on trapper websites indicate that the animals are sometimes wounded to ensure capture by the dogs. Field trials may last two and three days as the victims seek shelter in unfamiliar territory.

The DNR's stated concerns about penning include lack of fair chase, and disease transmission between captive and wild animals within enclosures which poses a significant threat to both the wild populations and human beings. It encourages illegal activities in trafficking from other states. KY and OH wildlife officials have relayed concerns to Indiana's DNR about the transportation of wildlife across state lines. Other concerns include privatization and commercialism of wild animals, hunter ethics and public perception and funding for enforcement.

Federal funds from the Pittman-Robertson Act that support DNR activities are ineligible for use in regulating and inspecting services and property of material value to individuals or groups for commercial purposes. This means that IN taxpayers will be picking up some of the tab for monitoring the running pens. We will be paying for this small percent of IN Hoosiers who participate in this “blood sport” to kill our wildlife.

At the March NRC meeting, the DNR was against the running pens operating in IN. Since then, for some reason, they have reversed their thinking. The brutality of penning plus lack of intelligent wildlife practice should ensure that dog-training enclosures are outlawed throughout IN.

Public comments will be heard at the Nov. 16, 10a.m., NRC meeting to be held at The Garrison at FT Harrison State Park. Although this is a public meeting, the public does not have a right to be heard. Who may comment is at the discretion of Mr. Poynter, chairman of the Commission.

Note: After the meeting, the contact details will change.

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