March 2, 2020

S.7542 (Martinez)/A.722-B (Glick)

Purpose: This bill will make it unlawful for any person to organize, sponsor, conduct, promote or participate in any contest, competition, tournament, or derby with the objective of taking or hunting wildlife for prizes for other inducement, or for entertainment. The bill does not prohibit the organization of or participation in fishing derbies or field trials.

Statement of Support: Competitions by individuals or teams to kill the most animals, or the heaviest or largest animal, promote excessive and unnecessary killing of wildlife and may lead to unintended consequences for ecosystems.

The species targeted for these contests are usually those seen as nuisance predators or foragers — such as coyotes, woodchucks, squirrels, pigeons and crows — that in some way are perceived to negatively impact human activity, either by competing for prey species with man, damaging human crops or being responsible for property damage. Whether or not and to what degree any of these allegations are accurate, there is no scientific evidence to indicate these contests do anything to address issues of prey species decline or forage competition. In fact, the opposite may be true.

Coyotes, for example, can be useful in controlling the population of rodents, such as the white-footed mouse, which is the main reservoir for Lyme disease. The incidence of this disease is soaring in New York State, so preserving coyotes instead of killing them as nuisance predators may reduce Lyme disease and promote ecosystem balance.

The optimal functioning of any ecosystem depends on balance and moderation. It’s a complex system, but it’s also imbued with numerous mechanisms for self-monitoring and regulation. Wildlife killing contests not only disrupt this balance by targeting single species, but they also give our children the wrong message if we want to inspire them with a sense of wonder and respect for nature and wildlife.

Sierra Club Atlantic Chapter urges your support of A.722-B/S.7542