

2025 NEWSLETTER



MAINE FRIENDS OF ANIMALS

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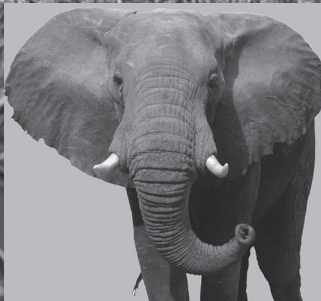
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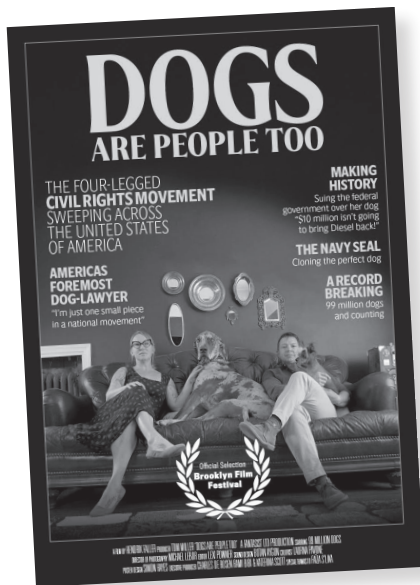
Thank You Donors

Making A Legacy For Animals



MFOA Bulletin Board

"Dogs Are People Too"



MFOA is very pleased to announce it will be hosting a wonderful and timely documentary film entitled, 'Dogs Are People Too.' London producers Tom Miller and Hendricks Fallor recently premiered the film at the Brooklyn Film Festival. It focuses on the issue of pets being considered just "property" legally, how that affects their treatment (including death) by some enforcement agents, and why laws must be created to bridge the classification issue. A sentient companion animal that 90% of homes call "family" cannot be considered/classified as equal to a dining room set or lawnmower. Connecticut and Maine are the only two states that have passed a Courtroom Animal Advocacy Program, which the film cites as one small way to begin addressing this legal oversight.

In 2023 MFOA passed a pet custody bill that requires judges to consider various criteria when assigning the custody of a pet dog or cat in a contested divorce. This legislation, as well, speaks to legally treating pets differently than inanimate objects.

In October, 'Dogs Are People Too' was shown in Ann Arbor's Michigan Theater. It was sponsored by the State Bar Association with a Zoom Q&A that included MFOA's Robert Fisk, Jr.. MFOA will be hosting the event this coming Spring in the greater Portland area. We will keep you posted of the date and time on our website and through Action Alerts.

Canned Hunting Update

In 1999, MFOA began legislative efforts to ban newly established "canned hunting" ranches in which non-native species such as elk, red deer, fallow deer, bison and wild boar are "hunted" in a fenced acreage. These "hunts" are usually with a guide, often for out-of-state 'trophy hunters' and with a "no kill, no bill" guarantee.

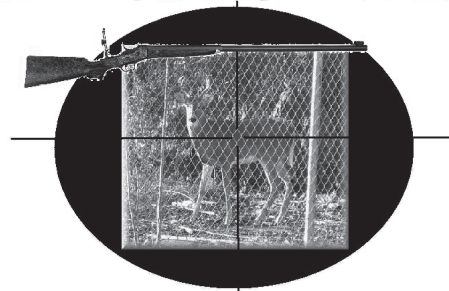
The majority of hunters, as well as respected national hunting groups, are against these operations and consider them unethical, void of fair chase traditions, and a threat to the image of traditional Maine hunting. It is morally and ethically wrong to enclose animals and charge fees to kill them.

The original legislation to ban these operations received considerable support from many hunters and then-Governor John Baldacci. It was decided that the state did not want to promote this activity, but there was concern about the business investments already made. Thus, the state grandfathered the 11 licenses/operations in place at the time, prohibiting their sale with the intent of eventually phasing them out. However, the Department of Agriculture Conservation and Forestry has not enforced that statute. Not only have licenses not decreased, but new licenses for new owners have been granted. Of the original 11 licenses, only three now satisfy the statute and there are currently at least 18 licenses granted in which the vast majority are

simply place holders with no operation.

MFOA has engaged legal counsel with the hope to convince the Department to correct its mismanagement of the program so that the initial legislation is enforced under its original intent and language.

Ban Canned Hunts



*Canned hunts take place on fenced-in property where high paying customers enter to kill captive animals.

*There is no sportsmanship or skill involved in canned hunts, and no chance at all of a fair chase.

*Nine canned hunting areas exist in Maine today.

Contact Maine Friends of Animals for more information or to get involved in the campaign to ban canned hunting.

MAINE FRIENDS OF ANIMALS

Silence is the Voice of Complicity - Speak up for Animals

visit <http://www.mfoa.net> or call (207) 781-2187



New MFOA Staff

Madeline Spalding was recently hired as our new Operations Director. MFOA had an unexpected staff loss in early 2024 and was in immediate need of filling the vacancy. In a remarkably timely way, Madeline had just expressed interest in volunteering. It was apparent her background and skill sets were a perfect fit, and once hired, she transitioned seamlessly, as has been her collaboration with an active Board. Madeline's home town is Kennebunkport; she is a successful property manager and has degrees in Computer Technology and Political Science. She lives in Falmouth with her fiancé, Dean, and her two Sato project dogs from Puerto Rico, Sunny and Lily.



Volunteers

Board member Sandy O'Rourke has accepted the position of MFOA's Volunteer & Program Coordinator, which includes Facebook management. She lives in South China with her cat, Shadow. Sandy is welcoming all past, current and new volunteers to join our team in a capacity that engages you in our mission to help prevent animal abuse, neglect, cruelty and needless suffering in Maine. The volunteer program has been re-structured to give our supporters better opportunities in helping. If you are more inclined to work from home, we have options such as writing / emailing local newspapers and your state legislators. If you want a more activist role, we have options like tabling events around the state or in your local community. Help us get the word out about what a more humane state looks like. If you have not already done so, please go to our website, www.mfoa.net, click on "Volunteer" and let us know your interests. You can also email Sandy for more information at info@mfoa.net.



Coalition of State Animal Advocacy Organizations

Two years ago, MFOA became a founding member of a new group named The Coalition of State Animal Advocacy Organizations (CSAAO) to provide a small platform for state animal protection 501(c)(3) and 501(c)(4) non-profit organizations to discuss common issues. Robert Fisk, Jr. is on the Executive Committee and reports the group is not a formal entity with By-laws and a website, but is coalescing well, sharing ideas and experiences on operational matters and legislation via Zoom meetings. Although state animal protection organizations often work with national groups, as MFOA does with The Humane Society of the United States and the Animal Legal Defense Fund, CSAAO looks to operate without national influences. There are currently 20 member states from Maine to Oregon, mostly located in the Midwest.

Animal Protection Legislation in the 132nd Legislature

Bills for the new legislature are being printed in January; generally, there are around 2,200. MFOA reviews them all to see which affect the well-being of Maine animal life and our Legislative Committee will monitor those bills. As time permits, we will provide testimony in support of certain bills and in opposition to those we feel are harmful. We are always looking for supporters to give testimony. If you would like to be updated on MFOA's legislative work, sign up for Action Alerts on the homepage of www.mfoa.net.

MFOA BOARD OF DIRECTORS / STAFF

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MFOA Legislation

Wildlife Management Run Amuck

By Robert Fisk, Jr.

One of MFOA's first pieces of legislation in 1999 was an intense two-year campaign to end the gruesome activity of coyote snaring. Every year since then hunting and trapping groups and legislators have continued to sponsor countless bills on various forms of coyote killing, while time after time there has been no scientific based evidence that showed any of these ideas or practices had any meaningful effect on deer populations or coyotes numbers.

Moreover, since 1972 when coyotes were first trapped in Maine, we have seen nearly a hundred bills to kill coyotes come before the legislature. Besides the flurry of legislative activity, there have been countless studies, plans, working groups, legislative reviews, species assessments, and programs all prioritized on coyote control. In 2011, Sportsmen's Alliance of Maine rolled out its integrated Coyote Control Plan, with input from the DIF&W that included various hunting assumptions and a half dozen methods — nothing was left to chance.

We have trapped coyotes, we have snared them, we changed and increased the hunting seasons on them, we used hounds on them, we allowed night hunting and increased that season, we have baited them, used bounties on them, used calling devices, and worst of all, we have used killing contests. In Maine now coyotes can be killed every day of the year, 24/7.

The grand results? We have more coyotes today than ever! Despite every piece of legislation imaginable and countless studies, programs and methods, 50 years later we continue to hear the same hollow arguments of largely anecdotal evidence of temporary improvement in deer wintering habitat or "it is better than doing nothing." Is this the basis for scientific wildlife management? Not to mention the wasted time in the legislature and Department of IF&W and the misuse of taxpayer dollars. This is wildlife management run amuck. It is time to rethink this endless, ineffective inhumane cycle and build a new paradigm about living with this important component of nature's ecosystem.

The most egregious reminder of that mismanagement is killing contests. Also known as derbies or tournaments, these are organized events that reward people of various ages with cash prizes, weapons, or other incentives for killing coyotes such as the biggest, the most, or the most by different methods, during

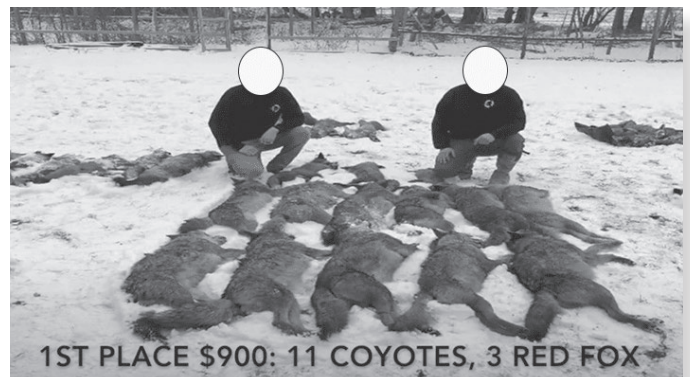
an established time period. These events only serve to perpetuate a culture of violence and send a message that wild animals have little intrinsic value and are disposable. They are promoted as "wildlife management" programs, conducted for profit, entertainment, and the "fun" of killing. They are often sponsored by hunting outfitters and hosted in places like restaurants and bars. This mass indiscriminate slaughter is an embarrassment to a state that prides itself on its hunting ethics and traditions.

This is yet another test for Maine hunters, their lobbyists and legislative allies, as to whether they will continue the antiquated notion that there can be no changes in any hunting practice regardless of how cruel, useless or unethical it is. Will they continue to try to defend the defenseless, or will they finally see it for what it really is? Mindless and senseless killing that is a

public relations problem for a sport that is already at all time low numbers. In 2005, then-Governor Baldacci and many legislators came out against these derbies. Sportsmen's groups, however, continued to do nothing.

Now there is national legislation and ten other states, including Vermont and New York, that ban some form of killing contests, and five other states, including Maine, are considering it. A common refrain in past testimonies has been, "it is a black eye for hunting."

Please contact your state legislators and express that this brutal practice damages not only the state's hunting reputation and responsible hunters, but also violates conservation and hunting ethics. There is a national trend to end these blood sport activities and it is long overdue for Maine to follow suit.



A New Paradigm to Maine's Obsession with Killing Coyotes

Given the long mismanagement of coyotes in Maine, and the antiquated thinking, intolerance and myths about them, it is time for Maine legislators and responsible hunters to seriously look at the state's senseless and ineffectual history of trying to eradicate coyotes. Not only are killing contests and other methods horrifyingly cruel and ethically indefensible, they are scientifically unjustifiable, and are counter to legitimate and compassionate conservation.

The new reality is learn to live with coyotes because they are here to stay. Man cannot regulate coyotes. They are eminently resourceful. Native American cultures view them as powerful, mythical figures, respected for their intelligence and mischievous nature. Simply killing them does not solve the problem; in fact, it has proven to be counterproductive as birth rates typically increase. Coyotes are abundant everywhere and have an enormous ability to adapt to a wide variety of habitat and food, as evidenced by its presence throughout New England. They exist in deserts and in Chicago alleyways, so why not try and understand this intelligent animal and learn how we can best cohabitate?

First, a stable coyote population is critical to a healthy ecosystem. We know coyotes have moved into the habitat and predator role previously held by wolves and big cats before man exterminated them. Let coyotes do their job. They help control populations of rodents and rabbits, regulate smaller predators, eat animals who harbor ticks / Lyme disease, and cull injured and sick animals. Coyotes are ecologically vital top



carnivores in Eastern US biodiversity.

Healthy coyote families are typically wary of humans, and attacks are extremely rare. Irresponsible human behavior is most often the root cause of wildlife conflicts. There are many simple ways we can eliminate or reduce coyote interactions, such as keeping cats indoors, walking dogs with a leash, not leaving out pet food, securing garbage cans, eliminating artificial water sources, clearing brush, using motion lighting, and walking trails with a whistle. Livestock issues can also be reasonably mitigated with good husbandry practices.

People providing easy access to food is the main driver of any rare conflict, along with presenting as a threat to young pups. If you want to scare them from your yard, simply run out and scream at them, throw sticks or bang together a pot and pan. As we continue to expand into wildlife habitat and coyotes adapt to our increasing presence, encounters will naturally occur.

It is up to us to reduce, if not eliminate, these negative interactions. It can be done by abandoning ineffective, repeated and outdated methods, educating communities

about humane techniques for co-existence, and fostering a new understanding, appreciation and implementation of this new paradigm of living with this sentient being - a species that is 98.6% genetically the same as your dog. Fifty plus years of trying to kill the animal in Maine in every conceivable and inhumane way has not worked at all. Let's try a new way.

Sign petition now!

Support "An Act to Prohibit Coyote Killing Contests"

Ethical Hunters Against Killing Contests

- Hunters, click on QR and sign petition to ban coyote killing contests in Maine.
- Contact you state Representative and Senator and ask them to support the ban.
- Speak to fellow hunters and pass along the QR code for them to sign the petition that will be submitted to legislators.
- Go on social media and pass the word this is not the Maine hunting tradition and gives ethical hunters a black eye.
- Contact local hunting associations and ask them to speak out against these events.
- Provide written, Zoom or in-person testimony at the bill hearing. Contact info@mfoa.net for more information.





When is Slamming a Terrified Piglet to the Ground Kid-friendly Entertainment?

Maine's 25 fairs are enjoyed by hundreds of thousands of visitors each year to celebrate Maine's agricultural heritage and traditions. Unfortunately, there is one activity that is an outdated form of entertainment that fairs should consider discontinuing - pig scrambles.

Modern science shows pigs share human characteristics like creativity, self awareness, the ability to perceive the passage of time, fierce devotion to family, the ability to trick social companions, feelings of joy and disappointment, and pain. Scientists compare the intelligence of pigs to that of dogs or young children. Now envision what a pig scramble is for that animal.

Piglets (generally 8–12 weeks old) are terrified on many levels between being taken from their mothers, then forced into a show ring with dozens of screaming children chasing them, brutally tackled, and pulled at, and ultimately stuffed into bags. They are prey animals, so it is their nature to be frightened by someone larger, who represents a predatory threat. You have 8-12 year old children tackling, teaming up and pulling at the limbs of 16-22 pound terrified infant animals.

Piglets may sustain serious injuries during the chase, such as dislocated shoulders/hips/knees/elbows, serious internal injuries, crushed organs, broken bones, and other pain and harm. Yet animal cruelty is never charged.

These scrambles are violent events disguised as a fun fair game for children. The kids are not to blame, but when we normalize violence and cruelty towards animals for our children, we teach them that it's acceptable to hurt those who

are vulnerable. When we condone events like pig scrambles, we instill lessons that permeate children's morality and show them that this behavior is acceptable.

How can you help? Join MFOA's initiative to contact Maine's 25 fairs and request they consider ending these events.

Note to them that this request has nothing to do with fairs in general, farmers, 4H, agriculture, etc. Emphasize this is just about one outlier activity at the fair. Moreover, it can be replaced, as it has in other fairs, with elementary school children carrying watermelons slicked with vegetable oil around an obstacle course of hay bales, under a limbo stick, and around a barrel in a timed race. One of Maine's largest fairs, the Common Ground County Fair in Unity, has banned pig scrambles as they view them as inhumane. Our goal is to get as many Maine fairs as possible to do the same.

Here is how you can help!

Go to <https://www.maineairs.net/> and you will find a list of the 25 fairs in Maine on the right side of the homepage. Each has a 'contact us' link or it is at the bottom of the homepage. Find the fair closest to you. The information may vary, but most have fair officials' email and/or phone number. Be sure to mention where you live and that you appreciate the fair, but politely explain the reasons for your request. This is just about needless animal abuse and teaching our children a more humane way to interact with animals. Request a response and please keep MFOA informed of your appeal.

THANK YOU TO OUR DONORS

We want to thank those who have contributed financially to Maine Friends of Animals. We could not list all our donors in the space allowed, but all donations large and small are most appreciated, and are used entirely to make the lives of Maine's animals better. MFOA is a 501(c)(3) non-profit and your donation is tax deductible. A special thank you to our major donors.

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THANK YOU! In the past, you, our faithful supporters, have provided us with donations to help us tackle the many animal protection issues we have chose to champion. We could not have done it without your generosity. To know we have people who believe in us and our mission means a lot; we carefully utilize our donations for the best

results. The more funding, the more motivation and the more animals we can help secure better and more humane lives.

Our supporters seem to respond most to issues that are egregiously inhumane and coyote killing contests certainly fall into that category. As you have read herein, prohibiting these contests in Maine will be our major focus for the upcoming legislature. Your past contributions have made a difference and they are equally important now.

Please consider becoming a 'MFOA Protector.' A monthly donation, large or small, will provide a predictable income pledge, which will help us plan and budget accordingly, especially for specific campaigns. A \$10 pledge can purchase 250 MFOA bumper stickers or pay for a tabling event fee. A \$25 pledge can cover the costs of legislative materials on a cruelty bill or increase the budget for a MFOA program. Your donation for these and other MFOA activities continue to keep us Maine's leading animal protection organization. Becoming a MFOA Protector is a quick, easy and modern way to make your contribution toward a more humane state.

However you wish to contribute to MFOA, know your donation will go directly to affecting change in how we view and treat animals. Thank you again for giving us the means to do what we do and for being a part of the MFOA team.

Robert Fisk, Jr.,
Founder and President



Support MFOA



Become a 'MFOA Protector'



*Good legislation is the
difference between a warm bed and
another night in the cold.*



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Creating a Legacy of Humane Compassion

Creating a will or trust is something many people put off until later in life, but in truth, directing your assets - whether modest or significant - is an expression of love for the people and causes you care most about and it is not complicated nor costly.

After providing for your loved ones, you can easily offer continued support for the cause(s) you believe in, like MFOA. There are multiple ways you can bequeath your varied assets from real estate to the residue of your estate. For more information, click on the 'Support' button on the MFOA website and scroll down to Estate Planning, or contact us at info@info.net or 207-781-2187. In support of bequeathments, MFOA will be happy to provide a longevity statement and Endowment Trust information. You can be assured your commitment to animals becomes a living legacy and help sustain MFOA's mission to make Maine a more humane state.



Wildlife Tourism for Wildlife

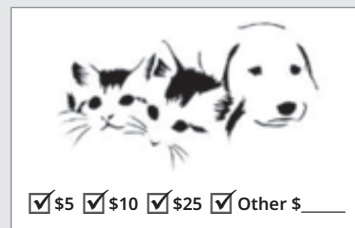


Scan the QR code or go to the website to learn how you can see wildlife the way it should be.

<https://thewildlifetravelhub.com>



Income Tax Form Check Off



Make a voluntary contribution to Maine's Companion Animal Sterilization Fund on your income tax return. On your Maine Tax Form, check the box called ***The Companion Animal Sterilization Fund***.

The fund will be used to save lives by:

- spaying/neutering cats and dogs preventing unwanted litters
- lowering shelter intakes
- lowering shelter euthanasia
- reducing the number of feral cats
- reducing dog bites