



SPECIAL IOWA FACT SHEET

IOWA:

Born Free USA's latest undercover trapping investigation — five years after our landmark "Victims of Vanity" investigation (www.victimsofvanity.com) — once again reveals the truth of trapping: that it is ruthless, dangerous, archaic, and takes place in private, public, and protected lands, including in Page County, Iowa.

PAGE COUNTY, IOWA

In late November 2015, our investigator met with a trapper in Page County, Iowa. According to 2015 Responsive Management Trapping Survey, 94% of trappers in Iowa sell their furs. The trapper targeted coyotes and their pelts by setting more than 40 leghold traps and snares startlingly close to public highways and homes, in fields, on trails, and on paths. The traps were placed so close to roads that anyone passing by would be able to observe any animal caught in a trap.

Not content with just killing coyotes for their pelts, the trapper also set a trap line for beavers in Rapp Park and Recreation Area. This park, located north of Shenandoah, Iowa, is a popular 100-acre park managed by Page County. This area is set aside for fishing, boating, kayaking, camping, picnicking, bird watching, and hiking. Neither hunting nor trapping is permitted.





OUR FINDINGS

• Alleged Illegal Activity

According to 2015-2016 Iowa Hunting and Trapping Regulations, trapping is included under the definition of hunting. Upon our investigator's arrival, the trapper showed him three beavers he had trapped in Rapp Park and Recreation Area, where hunting is prohibited [image 1]. The trapper and our investigator continued to check the trap line in Rapp Park and Recreation Area throughout our investigator's time there, although no more animals were caught.

• Proximity to the Public

A basic truth of traps is that they are terrifyingly indiscriminate; they cannot control what they catch. However, this trapper set leghold traps and strangulation neck snares on land next to public roads, private residences, in fields, and along well-worn paths [image 2]. The trapper told our investigator that he had used these locations for years and was unconcerned about how close they were to homes with families and pets.

• Cruelty

The trapper was able to catch two coyotes during our investigator's short time with him, using unpadded leghold traps [image 3]. Both coyotes, muddy and exhausted, had torn up the earth around them in their attempts to regain their freedom. The first appeared eerily calm [image 4], and this seemingly resigned demeanor remained even as the trapper needlessly kicked him to the ground; the only signs of distress were his open mouth and the whites showing around his eyes [image 5].

Even though the second coyote was stumbling from fatigue, he continued to struggle and jump away from the trap with all the strength he had left [image 6]. When he could no longer pick himself up, he feebly pushed against the trap while lying on the ground [image 7]. The trapper just laughed.

The trapper refused to be filmed as he killed the coyotes. In an effort to save the pelt — not spare the animal — the trapper shot both coyotes in the lungs, forcing these two trapping victims to die slow, excruciating deaths as their lungs filled with blood, suffocating them.

The trapper told our investigator that trapped coyotes are regularly kept alive and sold for blood sport. After already enduring the pain, stress, and injury of being trapped, a coyote is put into an enclosure with dogs and condemned to a horrific, violent death, all to the cheers of excited onlookers.

LITTLE FUR TRIM: Undeniably Cruel

The aftermath of this cruelty was two clean coyote pelts, ready for the next step in the fur industry. The dead coyotes had been skinned in a filthy, bloody workshop [image 8], their carcasses simply tossed into the yard to be eaten by any scavenger that came along.

For close to two decades, the fur industry has worked diligently to change the messaging on fur, and has pushed fur trim as a fashionable addition to coats, vests, sweaters, dresses, handbags, gloves, and more. It has made the claim to unsuspecting consumers that fur trim is a “byproduct” or a “fabric.” The truth is, due to its widespread prevalence on affordable clothes and accessories, fur trim may kill more animals than expensive, less-obtainable, full-length fur coats.

It has also become popular to use coyote fur as trim. Perhaps the most infamous example of this comes from retailer Canada Goose, whose signature product is a coat with a hood trimmed exclusively in fur from trapped coyotes. Even if it’s just a strip of fur edging a hood, lining a pair of gloves, or surrounding a pair of earmuffs, that little bit of coyote fur still came from the brutal suffering and death of coyotes. Whether it’s a coat, stole, or brightly dyed pom-pom, the grim reality is undeniable; fur kills.

THE COYOTE: A Symbol of American Wilderness

This trapper valued the pelt of the coyote above all else, but this animal is worth more than just fur. The extermination of coyotes, fueled by hate-driven rhetoric, began in earnest in the early 1800s, but the coyote has existed and thrived in North America for countless millennia. These clever, adaptable animals are an integral keystone species for a wide range of ecosystems across the U.S.

Through competition and predation, coyotes are able to regulate both prey and smaller predator species, including foxes, raccoons, and skunks: animals also frequently labeled as “pests.” Consequently, the presence of coyotes results in healthy, flourishing ecosystems with abundant biodiversity and rich landscapes, all of which benefit humans. Indeed, in the northeastern U.S., coyotes may help control the further spread of Lyme disease by preying on white-tailed deer.

In today’s fur market, a coyote pelt is valued in the range of \$45-\$95. What is that price — or any price — compared to the infinite value of one of our continent’s oldest keystone predators?

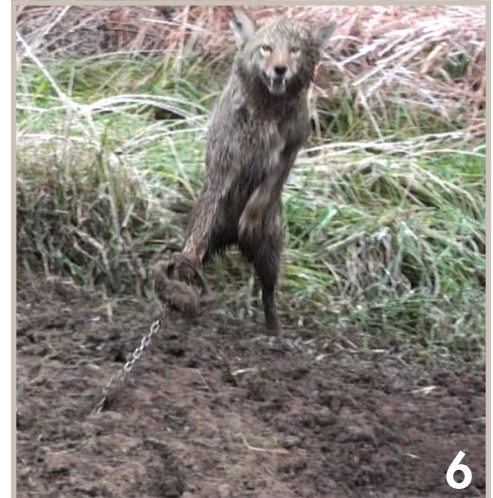


PHOTO: JIM ROBERTSON



PHOTO: ALBERTA INSTITUTE OF WILDLIFE CONSERVATION



TAKE ACTION:

This compelling follow-up investigation makes the truth resoundingly clear; trapping is cruel, barbaric, and dangerous. Using this footage, Born Free USA will work to limit trapping by supporting federal legislation to ban trapping on federal public land, ban federal employees from using traps in the line of duty, and to ban the interstate transport of Conibear and leghold traps.

We will work with the Iowa Department of Natural Resources regarding the alleged illegal trapping our investigator witnessed. We will also push the Iowa State Legislature to significantly restrict or ban leghold traps and snares.

You can make your voice heard by speaking up in favor of local, state, and federal legislation aimed at limiting or banning the use of traps, and by not buying fur — even fur trim — or shopping at stores that sell fur. Visit www.furfreeretailer.com.

RESOURCES

- The comprehensive website of this investigation, with video >> www.bornfreeusa.org/victimsofvanity2
- The original 2011 "Victims of Vanity" investigation website >> www.bornfreeusa.org/victimsofvanity
- Information on the Refuge from Cruel Trapping Act (RCTA), 114th Congress >> www.bornfreeusa.org/rcta
- Born Free USA's Trapping Report Card, grading states on trapping regulations >> www.bornfreeusa.org/trapreportcard
- Born Free USA's database listing non-targeted victims of traps >> www.bornfreeusa.org/database

ALL PHOTOS: BORN FREE USA UNLESS OTHERWISE NOTED

Born Free USA is a national animal advocacy non-profit 501(c)(3) organization whose mission is to end the suffering of wild animals in captivity, rescue individual animals in need, protect wildlife in their natural habitats, and encourage compassionate conservation. We also operate the Born Free USA Primate Sanctuary.

For more information, visit www.bornfreeusa.org/victimsofvanity2

KEEP WILDLIFE IN THE WILD®

P.O. Box 32160, Washington, DC 20007

(202) 450-3168 • www.bornfreeusa.org • info@bornfreeusa.org

