

Are Canada Goose Jackets Inhumane? The Controversy Explained

By Eve Watling

Canada Goose has become the go-to brand for winter jackets—its distinctive red-white-and-blue patch is ubiquitous in New York, Chicago and other cities facing frigid temperatures. Founded in 1957, the company has even become something of a status symbol, with everyone from Emma Stone to Bradley Cooper spotted in Canada Goose coats. In 2010, Drake's clothing brand, October's Very Own, began collaborating with the cult-fave company. Three years later, Kate Upton appeared on the cover of *Sports Illustrated* wearing nothing but a white CG jacket and bikini bottom.

A Canada Goose jacket isn't cheap: The least expensive men's version retails for \$350; the top-of-the-line version is \$1,550. Still, consumers can't get enough: In 2018, Canada Goose's stock price rocketed to \$56 a share, and when it opened its first store Beijing late last year, the line snaked down the street. (Canada Goose plans to operate 20 stores globally by 2020.)

That popularity (and steep price tag) has led to problems: At least one school in England has banned Canada Goose jackets to stop less affluent students from being bullied for not having one. In Chicago, at least six people were held up and robbed of their Canada Goose jackets in a single week.

The Canada Douche tumblr lampoons how "basic" Canada Goose wearers are. "They wear the jacket, drink Starbucks exclusively, use only the latest Apple products and still complain that tuition is too high," one user wrote of CG-loving college students.

But Canada Goose has also been getting blowback for another reason: For the last seven years, PETA has been plastering anti-Canada Goose billboards around North America and Europe and turning up to protest at every new store opening. The animal rights group wants people to stop wearing Canada Goose—not because it makes you look like a douche, but because, it claims, the company is guilty of serious animal cruelty.

Is Canada Goose cruel to animals?

The hoods on Canada Goose's more upscale jackets are lined with fur. But what some consumers don't know is that it's *real* fur—from wild coyotes. Canada Goose say it sources coyote fur ethically, following Canada's Agreement of International Humane Trapping Standards (AIHTS), established in 1997 to set a standard for trapping wild animals. Canada Goose also abides by similar regulations in the U.S., where fur is governed by a policy called Best Management Practices (BMP).

In the U.S. regulations regarding fur-trapping vary greatly from state to state, but in most cases they stipulate that the coyote must be killed less than 24 hours after being caught. "It's not 100 percent effective," wildlife expert Stanley Gehrt told *Newsweek*, "but it's definitely over that 80 percent threshold [required by AIHTS] in terms of harm."

The problem, Gehrt explains, is that not all states are so strict: Wyoming, for example, only requires traps to be checked every three days, by which time a coyote will likely have suffered extreme distress. "It's horrible, to put it mildly," he says. A coyote can try to chew the trap, but wind up gnawing off a numb leg or foot, instead. "You also get muscle tissue damage because they're yanking their paw against the trap," he says. "They become dehydrated. There's a possibility of dying of exposure when they're in a trap that long." And some rogue trappers flout regulations or don't use the traps properly.

State guidelines also vary on how a coyote should be killed once it is discovered. "There are some trappers that will use a hammer or a baseball bat to hit them over the head," Gehrt says. "If states knew about that they would probably legislate against it, but there are places where that takes place." He's quick to add, though, that those bad actors are in the minority. "A vast majority of states and provinces do maintain pretty strict guidelines. And in all of those cases it's a relatively humane exercise."

Does Canada Goose get its fur humanely?

Canada Goose has stated it doesn't believe trapping is intrinsically cruel. "We believe all animals are entitled to humane treatment in life and death, and we are deeply committed to the ethical sourcing and responsible use of all animal materials in our products," reads a statement on the company website.

But a humane trap does not mean the animal doesn't suffer, just that it is suffering less than it would in another trap. Coyotes are sentient, social animals. Being immobilized by a trap—even a "humane" one—would cause some degree of suffering.

And that's just in the best-case scenario: There's no way for Canada Goose customers to know if the fur from their jacket came from a state with strict or lax regulations. Asked by *Newsweek* about exactly where its coyote fur is sourced, Canada Goose only said that "we source all of our fur from areas widely distributed across the Western region of North America." In 2015, the group Animal Justice Canada filed a complaint with the Competition Bureau of Canada, claiming Canada Goose's description of its coyote-trapping process as "humane" was misleading. Customers, the group insisted, would assume the process was cruelty-free.

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