

SUBJECT: Bill: H60 An act relating to the hunting of coyotes

February 17, 2017

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I want to thank the committee for allowing me to speak for a few minutes on H60 as a 4th generation Vermonter. In the past, I worked and represented the National Wildlife Federation and Natural Resources Defense Council here and in the Northeast on gray wolf and Canada lynx ESA protection which have gave me the opportunity to educate on the eastern coyote. My work took me into Quebec, Ontario, the Great Lake States and the Northern Rockies. This experience taught me that common ground is needed in the discussion of species protection and restoration. Presently, I am no longer working for any environmental NGO but have continued to be a strong advocate for our native flora and fauna.

The recent “coyote killing contests” have brought to the forefront that the coyote has no protection in our state. When I was in the public working on canid issue, it always surprised me, that the majority of people did not realize that coyotes had no protection in our region. Most people believed the species is regulated similarly to our beaver, otter, bobcat, bear, and deer to name a few species. They were surprised you could kill coyotes 24/7 – 365 days of the years.

This bill can be used as an excellent means to educate Vermonter’s about who is the eastern coyote and the important niche coyotes occupy in our ecosystems. I am a believer that education will be a win win for the coyote. Unfortunately that is missing in this discussion. What do I mean? Prior to wolves being reintroduced into Yellowstone, every organization pro wolf had educators in schools, town halls, at livestock meetings, outfitters meeting, sportsmen clubs – in the Great Lakes prior to deer hunting season, volunteers went door to door to hunting camps handing out literature on both species, having coffee and talking face to face and I spent many years in the trenches of VT, NH and ME using similar methods. The end result was people became educated and knowledgeable about both species and there grew an acceptance for both species. My hope is that this bill will

start these conversations around our state, whether pro or con for a regulatory season on coyotes.

I will not go into the scientific reasons I personally believe coyotes should be regulated like other species at this time. I believe the data required by this bill will address the all aspects of ecology, wildlife biology, social science and ethics pertaining to coyote management.

Thus I recommend adding additional language to the bill at this point.

1. An estimated population of coyotes in the State of Vermont, including an analysis of the methods used to calculate the estimated population.
2. No change
3. A summary of how other states regulate the hunting of coyotes, including whether other states implement closed seasons, limit hunting at night, prohibit killing contests, restrict use of dogs, require weighing and tagging or the utilization of bodies or establish bag limits.
4. Addition – Does the current state regulation of an open season, conform to the principles of the North American Wildlife Conservation Model. I.e.: *Wildlife Should Only be Killed for a Legitimate Purpose*
5. A recommendation/s of whether Vermont should adopt by regulation through the Fish and Wildlife Board additional regulations for the hunting of coyotes including whether Vermont should establish a closed season for hunting of coyotes during specific months. The Board shall provide data or a basis supporting the recommendations.

This bill would not be needed if the Fish and Wildlife Board took up this issue and established a management plan for coyotes that had a 'quiet season' for coyotes and outlawed 'killing contests'.

I have attached a summary on coyote social and behavior changes that occur with overhunting by Dr. Robert Crabtree, Progress Report on the Population Status and Foraging Ecology of Eastern Coyotes in New York State by SUNY College of Environmental Science and Forestry and 'Do Coyotes Cause Deer Declines?' by

<https://emammal.si.edu/about/who> and a link to an organization that has compiled research on coyotes <http://www.predatordefense.org/coyotes.htm>

Again thank you for the time.