

TESTIMONY OF CHARLES STORROW REGARDING H.411  
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On Behalf of the Vermont Wildlife Coalition  
House Committee on Natural Resources, Fish & Wildlife  
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1. The Vermont Wildlife Coalition is a citizen group that is interested in wildlife management policy issues. The VWC supports most forms of hunting but does not support the hunting of coyotes just for the sake of killing them.
2. As the Vermont Department of Fish & Wildlife acknowledges, there is no scientific basis for killing coyotes in order to protect Vermont's deer herd. In its document entitled *Eastern Coyotes Issues-A Closer Look* (January 2017) the Department states:

“Deer and other prey species evolved with predators and as such, we neither regard predators as undesirable, nor do we view them as a significant threat to game populations. In fact, predators can help to maintain prey populations at levels that are in balance with their habitat.”
3. Additionally, in the above referenced document the Department also acknowledges that hunting coyotes does not reduce their population:

“Coyotes can increase their reproductive rates in response to hunting, so populations rebound quickly from efforts to control their numbers directly by hunting or trapping.”
4. Nor is hunting coyotes necessary in order to make them wary of humans. As is alluded to in the above referenced document from the Department, the main reason why coyotes become habituated to humans is the practice of feeding coyotes. Additionally, H.411 allows the taking of wild animals, even if they are not going to be used, in order to defend one's person or property.
5. In sum, hunting coyotes is not needed to protect the state's deer population, it is not effective in reducing the number of coyotes, and hunting them is not necessary to make coyotes wary of humans.
6. Accordingly, there is no legitimate, ethical reason to hunt and kill coyotes just for the sake of doing so. Instead, hunting coyotes constitutes wanton waste unless one eats them, uses their pelts, or uses them as an object of taxidermy. People do not hunt coyotes to eat them and if they want their pelts the best way to get their pelts is to trap them, as shooting them damages if not ruins their pelts.
7. A bill that prohibits wanton waste of wildlife but excepts hunted coyotes from the prohibition against wanton waste effectively enshrines the wanton waste of hunting

coyotes.

8. With respect to the notion that making the prohibition against wanton waste applicable to coyotes creates a *de facto* hunting season and that it is therefore better to simply have a close season on coyotes:
  - a. What would be the purpose of such a season if people are not hunting coyotes for food or for their pelts?
  - b. If people want to hunt coyotes in order to use them as an object of taxidermy or, for that matter, to obtain their pelts, H.411 would allow them to do so.
9. In sum, a hunting season for coyotes would basically be a hunting season to commit wanton waste.
10. In the final analysis even if H.411 does not apply to coyotes and/or if it provides for a closed season on coyotes, the bill still has value and should move forward, but it would be seriously flawed.
11. Therefore, in order to fix that flaw and uphold ethical standards regarding the killing of wildlife the VWC respectfully requests that the committee include hunted coyotes within H.411.