

Tyler Brown
Vassalboro
LD 814

Dear Senator Lafountain, Representative Landry and esteemed members of the Inland Fisheries and Wildlife committee.

My name is Tyler Brown, I am submitting testimony in opposition to LD 814, "An Act to Restrict the Daytime and Nighttime Killing of Coyotes"

The Eastern Coyote (*Canis Latrans*) is not native to Maine, their ancestors began expanding their range eastward from the great plains of the west a century ago, interbreeding with the last remnants of the gray wolf and feral dogs leading to this new subspecies of coyote becoming larger and highly adaptable to an environment not of their own. With the expatriation of the gray wolf in the late 19th century, the Eastern Coyote began appearing in Maine in the late 1930's and within forty years became permanently established as an apex predator. Not long afterwards the Eastern Coyote began having a significant impact on wildlife prey populations including whitetail deer.

From 1978 to 1989 a study of 863 deer killed by coyotes led by IFW deer biologist Gerry Lavigne found that coyotes preyed upon deer of all age classes, sexes and health status. This predation coupled with heavy winters and habitat loss from Spruce Budworm and lumber harvesting practices had significant impacts on fawn and doe mortality, especially in the north woods of Maine. Fawn mortality in particular was most impacted during the summer months as deer fawns are highly vulnerable to predation during their first few months as evidenced by the Eastern Coyote Assessment of 1999 provided by Walter J Jakubas which found that whitetail deer are the main food source for denning coyote pups from June to August.

The health and population of Maine's wildlife herds depends on sound scientific management of all wildlife species. Maine's current populations are roughly estimated to range from 10,000-12,000 coyotes. According to pages 83 and 84 on Coyote Harvests of the 2020-2030 Furbearer Management Plan created by Maine's Department for Inland Fisheries and Wildlife "Since 1998, the annual registered harvest (trapping and hunting combined) has been between 1,000 and 2,700 coyotes. Registered harvests have remained relatively stable over the last decade (2010-2019), averaging 1,500 coyotes each year. The number of coyotes taken per trapper has also been stable, ranging from four to seven coyotes per trapper" These figures remained stable despite two expansions of the coyote night hunting season, one by two weeks in 2009 and another by two months in 2011.

This scientific evidence shows that reduction of coyote hunting seasons is unwarranted and unnecessary as the harvest numbers clearly show a sustainable and stable coyote population here in Maine despite increases in both season lengths and coyote hunting opportunities. This legislation would seek to hinder the effective management of an apex predator population and would have significant detrimental impacts on whitetail deer and other wildlife species. I encourage this committee to vote "ought not to pass" on LD 814 in order for Maine's Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife to continue their effective, science based management of our wildlife.

I thank all of you for your time in considering my testimony and for your service to our state.

Tyler Brown