

Lynne Manning  
Rockport, ME  
LD 814

As I was planning on writing another letter to the Inland Fisheries and Wildlife Association, I saw grizzly photos on Facebook of four dead, frozen coyotes in the snow with three other skeletons of coyotes. These beautiful animals' bodies were just dumped intact, in a heap, with no regard for their lives. The photo portrayed a total lack of reverence for life and what the complete absence of coyote regulations looks like — merciless waste. This violence is no longer hidden. Mainers want the regulations regarding the treatment of our Maine coyotes to be in keeping with the science we know and the ethics and compassion we as humans are moving toward.

A few interesting facts about coyotes (from [coyotelivesinmaine.org](http://coyotelivesinmaine.org)): "Coyotes have lived nowhere else on the planet, except North and Central America, and they have survived and thrived here for over a million years! Archeological digs have found the ancient remains of Coyote from New Brunswick to California. So it appears that Coyote has possibly been trotting about all over our American continent, adapting to the myriads of changes that have taken place on the earth all this time...long before our species found its way to the American continent."

Did you know that coyotes mate for life? They parent together. Coyotes have a rich and complex social structure that is always alert to environmental restraints. This allows them to be flexible — by living as a lone transient, living on a territory alone, or living in a tight-knit family. The coyote was once found only in the southwestern and plains areas of North America. But as Europeans moved west — all the while killing, poisoning, trapping large predators such as wolves, cougars, and bears that kept coyotes in check and cutting down forests into prairie-like farmland — the coyote moved into new territory.

And here is the science about coyotes. Coyotes help to bring down the mice population, which in turn helps to bring down Lyme disease. Coyotes naturally control the tick population while humans are spraying chemicals to kill ticks outside, which are killing insects, birds and other animals.

Coyotes [also] cull the deer population. This is all part of nature's plan to balance the ecosystem. Deer are a part of coyotes' nature-given food, and sadly, some deer hunters take it upon themselves to shoot coyotes whenever/wherever they want, because it's a competition for them, killing the deer with their guns.

Killing for food is ethical and justifiable but killing for the "thrill" is pathologically demented. In northern Maine there are coyote killing contests. [At one contest], 70 dead coyotes had been hung up as trophies across tall wooden poles. These coyote killing contests should be made illegal, like dog fighting and cock fighting.

[A column in the Bridgton News reported that] a Maine guide [advertised on online] that for 19 years they had been trapping, calling, chasing, and baiting the coyote: "Every time we get one, that same thrill of excitement returns. One of the most effective ways we have found to repeatedly kill the coyote is over bait at night."

[This is] exactly why we need to put stronger protections for coyotes to keep them more protected from heartless people who have no scruples and want to kill something because they are bored and in need of sadistic entertainment.

We are not doing a very good job, homo sapiens. We are supposed to be the smartest species, but do we have the emotional intelligence, maturity and compassion to take care of animals when we know they truly need our help, and when we must go against our [own] species who are mostly, in this case, thinking of humans' dysfunctional need for violence and not of animals' basic needs and rights — to survive and live on this planet peacefully? Look at what we are doing to our planet, look at how many species are disappearing.

Let's end violence wherever and whenever we can, bringing sanity and compassion to our lives, as well as to vulnerable animals who are relying on us to do the right thing

for the longevity of their species, as well as ours. Without the diversity in wildlife, there is no future for humans.

We are going to the Inland Fisheries soon to read our letters, so anyone who is interested in joining in with this campaign, we need all the help we can get!

Lynne Manning, Rockport