

My name is Karen Simpson and I am a Maine Master Naturalist writing to support LD 1239, a bill to end Coyote Killing Contests, an activity which speaks poorly of some Maine hunters while reducing the population of one of our keystone species. These horrible contests are based on the outdated notion that coyotes are dangerous to humans, pets and livestock and should be eliminated. Actually the opposite is true.

Coyotes have been native in Maine since the last ice age, but they have inherited a wolf's reputation and been hunted mercilessly for years. The unfounded myth is that they are dangerous to people and killers of domestic farm animals and deer. This has been proven untrue. A study from 2000 recorded 20 to 30 coyote attacks on humans while 4.7 million people had been bitten by dogs.

In addition:

- Coyotes benefit farmers by keeping the deer population moving at night, thus reducing loss of produce and protecting their livestock from diseases carried by deer. Let's lend our help to the farmers who feed us all!!
- Coyotes benefit Mainers by keeping the deer population in check and reducing the cycle that leads to more ticks and Lyme disease.
- Coyotes protect the forest understory for birds and pollinators by keeping saplings from being eaten by large herbivores. They are a keystone species for a healthy forest ecosystem.

I urge you to vote to take this one step to end the Coyote Killing Contests that speak poorly of Maine and its good people and to preserve this vital keystone species.

Thank you.