

Senator Baldacci, Representative Roberts, and Honorable Members of the IF&W Committee:

My name is D. Gordon Mott. I live in Lakeville in Eastern Penobscot County.

I write in strong support of LD 1293: An Act to Prohibit Coyote-killing Contests in Maine.

1. Because these coyote contests produce excessive cruel killing that repulses people, they harm the general perception that the public has of fair-chase hunters and hunting in general.
 - Fair-chase hunting in season suffers in the regard held for hunting by the public.
 - Because coyote hunting is permitted day and night all year round but Sunday, coyote contests held in Spring and Summer time increase incursions by armed hunters to unposted private property and increase the aggravation experienced by private landowners. More private land will be posted.
2. It has been proven over and over again for more than a hundred years that killing coyotes is completely ineffective. Poisons, snares, traps, and paid agents have all been ineffective. Coyote litters expand to restore any reductions produced by killing. Killing coyotes to try to manage prey populations is as useful as bailing the ocean to try to deal with sea level rise. There is absolutely no value in increasing coyote killing through contests.
3. Vicious savage methods that are accepted to be legal in Maine to kill coyotes are uncivilized.
 - Dog packs locate dens and rip pups and mothers to shreds.
 - It is allowed in Maine for dog packs to chase single coyotes and kill them in the same way as in illegal dog fights. Coyote Killing Contests increase these vicious practices.
4. Coyote contests have the result of maligning the animal in the same way that bounties characterized other wildlife through time. In every case they produced unacceptable cruelty. Treble hooks are known to be baited by some and hung high above their heads where the animal suffers an extended cruel death. Such carcasses are submitted for rewards in Coyote Killing Contests. Some of our children grow up being taught that animal cruelty is acceptable.
5. My wife and I had 17 years direct experience having four coyotes for different periods of time from 4 days of age under USFWS and Maine IF&W permits. We also kept sheep on four different Maine properties in that same period. One of those coyotes lived for 17 years.

I am also schooled and experienced in biological model analysis and have analyzed some relevant population data in past years.

Please understand that coyotes are very fine creatures. They mate for life and spend a year training their pups how to survive and be self-sufficient through all seasons. With coyotes in the kennel, we never lost a sheep or a lamb to our free ranging sheep – kennel animals kept wild coyotes away. Wild coyotes respect one another's territory. I have slept out on our property at night with our pups and howled together at the wild family that explored for our presence.

Efficient mousers, they helped keep tick-bearing mouse populations down. In our rural community where seasonal camp owners sometimes leave cats behind when they leave in the fall which become feral and damage bird populations, coyotes deal with them. Coyotes can help keep browsing deer away from vegetable gardens and farmers' vegetable fields.

Coyotes are less dangerous to humans than domestic dogs. It is reported that multiple dog attacks occur in the state of Maine each year, that are rarely fatal. The last death in Maine related to a dog attack occurred in 2011. There have been no fatal coyote attacks in Maine.

One fatal coyote attack occurred in Nova Scotia in 2009. Although Game Wardens might know of injuries from coyote attacks, I have not heard of any.

An individual in North Amity, Maine, in the early '80's shot and killed a coyote in midsummer that he described had approached and "attacked" him while the rest of the pack stayed at a distance. He was able to get into his nearby vehicle and shoot the animal. We read about it in Bangor Daily and visited him to learn more. He was willing to let us take the animal for an autopsy. It turned out to be a 16-week old pup full of blueberries that was curious about the man and had not yet been taught to fear humans.

A week later the man shot and killed his wife in the same kitchen where we met and talked. He was caught hiding in an abandoned car, arrested, convicted and imprisoned.

That man was more dangerous than the coyote.

Please vote to put an end to these cruel, vicious, ineffective Coyote Killing Contests that do nothing but harm the reputation of fair-chase hunting. Instead they work to establish the unacceptable falsehood that killing wildlife just for the "blood sport" of killing is legitimate, and they harm the reputations of good hunters.

Please take it with great seriousness that your work and your positive decision on this bill will place you among those who have contributed greatness in Maine's legacy of caring for our natural resources and our people. Serious things are in your few hands.

Thank you for your attention,

D. Gordon Mott