

## Opposition to LD 814

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FBM Maine Outdoor Journal

Senator LaFountain, Representative Landry and distinguished members of the Joint Standing Committee on Inland Fisheries and Wildlife. I first would like to thank each one of you for your service and dedication to the people and wildlife of Maine. My name is Joe Osgood Jr and I operate the FBM Maine Outdoor Journal YouTube channel. I am here today to express my opposition to LD 814.

If this legislation were to pass into law, it would be in violation of at least 2 of the 7 principals of the North American Model of Conservation. The North American Model is the most successful and equitable wildlife management program in the world. Any law that would take exception to any of the tenants of this model without proper cause ought not to pass. The rules in violation are:

- 1. #1. Wildlife resources are conserved and held in trust for all citizens.**
- 2. #7. Scientific Management is the proper means for Wildlife Conservation**

All wildlife in this country is held in a public trust for all North American citizens. The power over the administration of the wildlife in this trust is given to the states. You, this very committee that I stand before today are the fiduciaries of that trust. It is a fiduciary's responsibility to manage a trust in a way that is in the best interest of the beneficiaries of that trust as a whole. We protect this trust by enacting laws and rules that are based on science.

Science says that coyotes do not need any special protections in order to maintain a successful population in Maine. More than one study indicates that hunting pressure has very little impact on "overall" coyote populations. One may then ask, "Why make such great efforts to control a predator that can't be controlled." The answer is that while coyote mortalities by way of hunting have little effect on the overall coyote population, they do however have an effect at the micro level in the deer wintering areas.

Two of the highest natural mortality causes among White-tailed deer in Northern Maine are spring fawn predation and winter mortality. Coyotes contribute greatly to deer winter mortalities through depredation in deep snowpack and wasted expenditure of caloric reserves spent fleeing predation. The effects of coyotes on spring fawn survivability are also impactful as well. The ability to relieve predatory pressure in precise areas through the entire year is paramount to the Northern Maine deer herd rehabilitation.

As we speak, hundreds of volunteers made up of hunters, anglers, and outdoor persons are spending thousands of unpaid hours and expending thousands of dollars in order to recover the Northern Maine deer herd. The success of this program is based on a threefold approach.

1. Revitalization and protection of deer wintering habitat.
2. Supplemental winter feeding of deer in areas with poor deer wintering habitat until sufficient habitat can be reestablished.

3. Intensive year-round predator control in vicinity to these deer wintering areas in order to minimize predation and stress.

If this bill is allowed to become law, it will cause a large gap in predator control efforts in these areas. This will allow coyotes to repopulate the area in anticipation of the deer returning for the winter season. Deer share the same habitat as many of Maine's other wildlife. This wildlife is greatly enjoyed by all outdoor people and is preyed upon by coyotes as well.

In summary the current population of the Eastern Coyote in Maine does not warrant protections instituted by an open and closed season. This law, if passed, is not based on reputable wildlife science and research. The year-round coyote season as is will have little effect on the overall coyote population in Maine. However, if these seasons are instituted, the consequences on the efforts to restore deer populations to Northern Maine will be greatly devastated if not lost.