

Sandra Scholar
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LD 716

Senator Baldacci, Representative Roberts, and members of the Inland Fisheries and Wildlife Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments to the Maine State Legislature. I am a full time Maine resident and registered voter.

This bill establishes a coyote hunting season to be held from October 1 to March 31. Thus, hunting of coyotes from April 1 to September 30 would be prohibited. This is important because it is the time of year that coyote parents are raising young. Coyotes primarily prey on rodents, including mice and rats. During the late spring, summer, and early fall coyote parents are raising pups, meaning they are hunting nearly non-stop to feed their hungry youngsters.

By controlling the rodent population, coyotes provide an invaluable service to Maine's farmers. Without coyotes, farmers would either lose much of their crop to rodent damage, or would be forced to use lethal chemical deterrents. These are problematic not only for Maine's many organic farmers but also because they can kill many non-target species, including pet dogs and cats, as well as bald eagles and other birds of prey that may eat poisoned rodents. By controlling rodent populations, coyotes also help to limit the spread of rodent-carried diseases to humans, including tick borne diseases such as Lyme disease, and even potentially fatal viruses such as leptospirosis and rat bite fever.

Moreover, the presence of coyotes keeps deer on the move, preventing them feeding on agricultural crops, which means limiting the loss farmers suffer due to deer browsing. In addition, by keeping deer on the move, coyotes limit the possibility that deer will pass on parasites to domestic livestock.

Our wildlife laws and regulations should be based on science, not on out-dated prejudices. Please vote Ought to Pass on LD 716.

Respectfully submitted,
Sandra Scholar, Esq