

Karen Simpson  
Hallowell  
LD 716

My name is Karen Simpson and I am a Maine Master Naturalist writing to support LD 716, a bill to make illegal the killing coyotes from April to September, their breeding season. 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. The truth is that a coyote's diet is primarily rodents and carrion from ungulates - deer, moose and elk - that have died from other causes. Coyotes keep deer moving, thus protecting the forest understory for birds and pollinators. They are a keystone species for a healthy forest ecosystem. I urge you to vote to preserve this vital keystone species. Thank you.