

Urban coyotes' adaptations, effects on landscapes, and interactions with other wildlife

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Downer's Heritage Alliance
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THE OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY

COLLEGE OF FOOD, AGRICULTURAL,
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Ashley Wurth

- 4th year Ph.D. fellow at The Ohio State University
- Work with the Cook County Coyote Project and Max McGraw Wildlife Foundation
- B.S. in Wildlife Science from Colorado State University
- Focus on behavior and genetics of coyotes



Our Background

- **Research**, education, and outreach with our various partners
- Coy project started in 2000
- Need for understanding how coyotes work and how to live with them
- Scientific research- not agenda oriented



The Crew

- Dr. Stan Gehrt- Lead Principle Investigator
- Shane McKenzie- Associate Research Scientist
- Hance Ellington- Post doc
- Andy Burmesch
- Justin Fowler
- Abby-Gayle Prieur
- Lauren Ross
- Katie Robertson (grad)
- Many more techs....



What animals have we researched?



Agenda

- Background
- What we have learned
- Species Interactions
- Current projects
- Human Safety



Research topics

- Basic ecology
 - diet, social structure, etc
- Habitat/use of landscape
- Urban Living
- Disease
- Species Interactions
- Behavior and genetics



Capturing coyotes and raccons



Coyotes are individuals

- Generalist species
- Varying preferences
 - diets
 - habitats
 - behaviors



When do you see coyotes?

- Elusive
- Move at night-become more nocturnal in urban areas



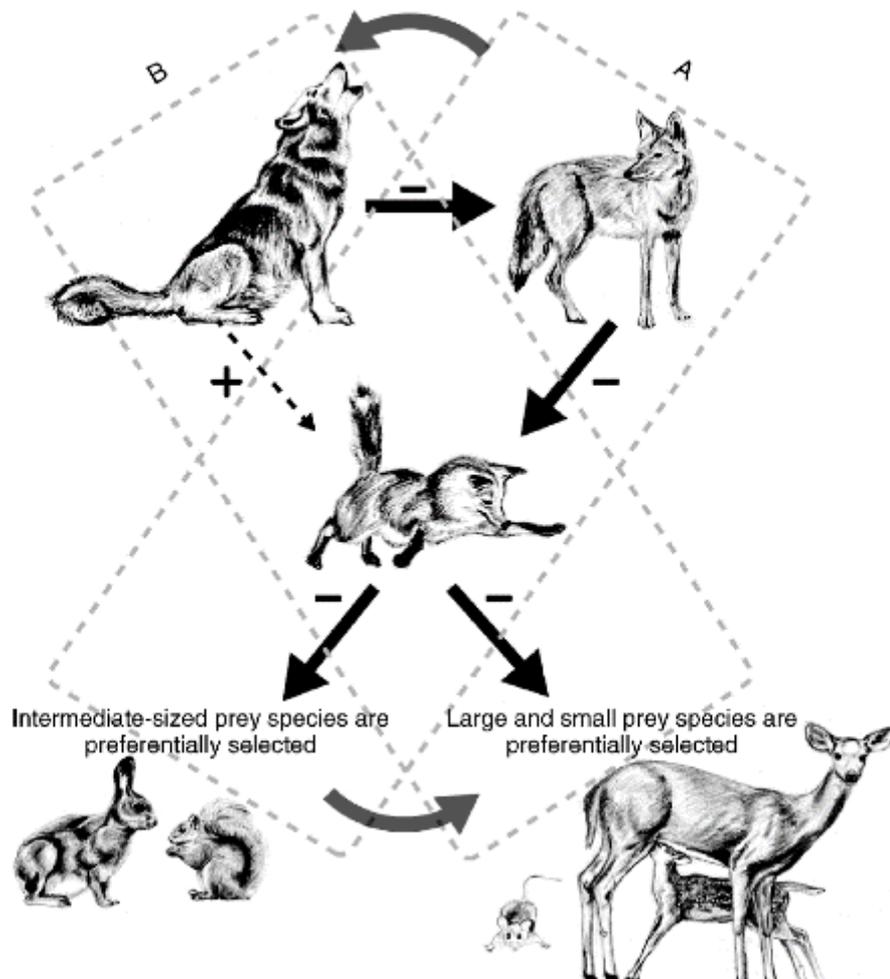
Social Structure

- Coyotes are very territorial
 - Will not let other packs or coyotes in the area
- Highly structured pack system
 - Impose “rules”
- Food determines where coyotes live and where they explore

What do coyotes eat?



Mesopredator Release Hypothesis

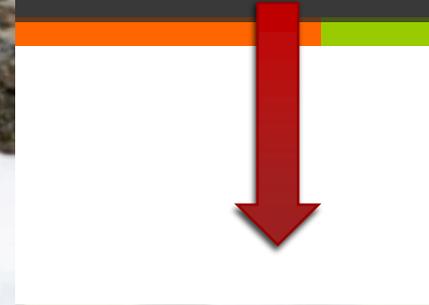


Indirect Landscape Effects

- Ecosystem balance
- Apex predator in some systems
- “Top down” vs “bottom up” control



Predator Chain



Will they eat my pets?

➤ Main diet is natural – generalist

➤ prey

➤ berries

➤ roadkill

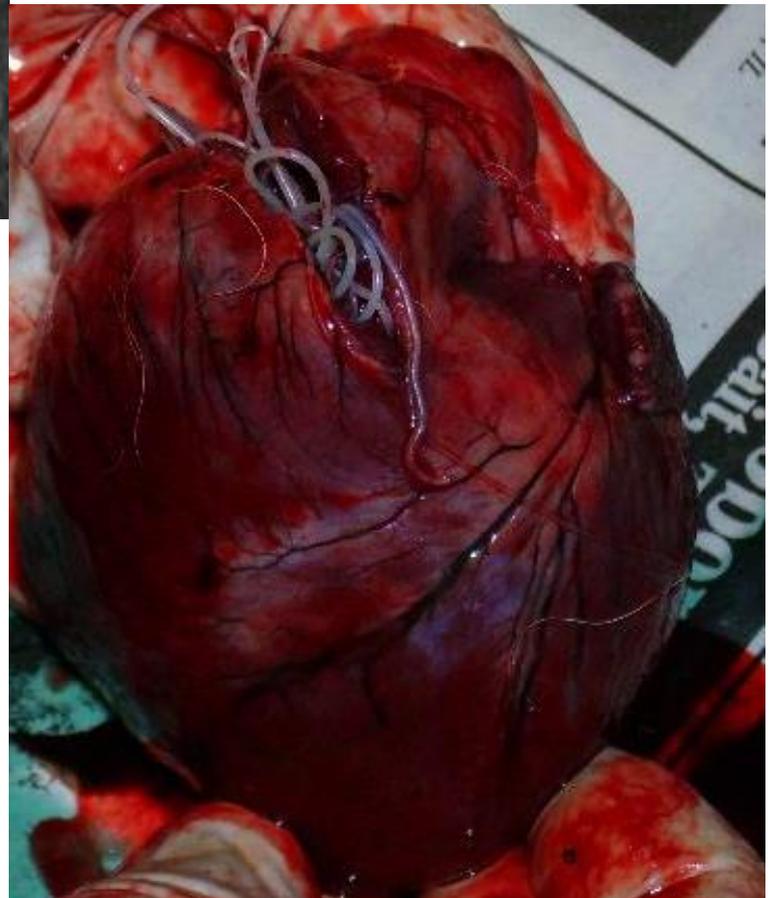


➤ Some eat anthropogenic food resources

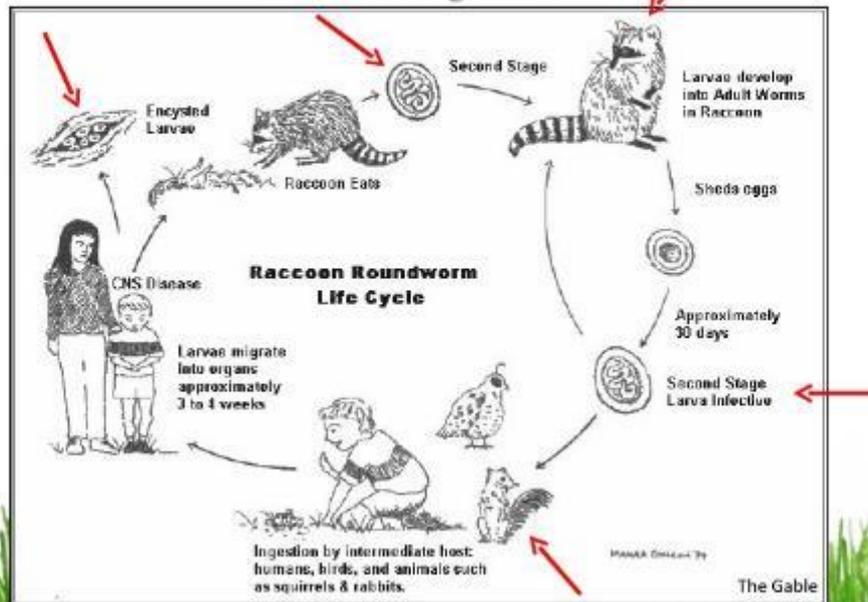
➤ Small dogs or cats could be harmed but are generally avoided due to fear of humans- even when unattended

➤ If near a forest preserve, should be more wary

Disease



Life Cycle



Top mortality factors

- Being hit by cars is #1
- Mange or mange-related exposure



Behavior: Why do we care?

- Human-wildlife interactions
- How do people affect coyotes?
- What causes problems?
 - Situation?
 - Environment?
 - Genetics?
- How can we mitigate conflict?



What can cause conflict?

- Food (intentionally or unintentionally) from humans
- Losing fear of humans
- Pets approaching coyotes
- Disease
- Unattended or loose running pets
- Presence of pups



How do I prevent an attack?

- Coyotes do not usually attack or approach humans
 - Most are fearful or avoid people
- Haze- make loud noises, get big, throw objects near animal
 - Good for them, good for you
- Never approach animals
- NO FEEDING
 - Fed coyote can = dead coyote
- Keep your dog on a leash
- Is it pupping season? (late April-June)
 - Stay away from possible den sites



Conservation

- Learn to coexist with wildlife
- Fear of humans good
- Haze nuisance animals
- No feeding!
- Remove attractants
- Plant native flowers 😊

HELP INCREASE THE NUMBER OF BEES BY PLANTING ONE OF THESE POLLINATOR FRIENDLY FLOWERS

Here are some plants that can be grown in most areas of the U.S., although it's ideal to plant native plants.

- Lavender (*Lavandula* spp.)
- Rosemary (*Rosemarianus officinalis*)
- Sage (*Salvia* spp.)
- Coneflower (*Echinacea* spp.)
- Sunflower (*Helianthus* spp.)
- Redbud (*Cercis* spp.)
- Catnip (*Nepeta* spp.)
- Penstemon (*Penstemon* spp.)
- Lamb's ears (*Stachys* spp.)
- Verbena (*Verbena* spp.)
- Bells of Phacelia (*Phacelia* spp.)
- Aster (*Aster* spp.)
- Black-eyed Susan (*Rudbeckia* spp.)
- Oregano (*Origanum* spp.)
- Yarrow (*Achillea millefolium*)

Plant list sourced by:

Lynn Hasselberger, Green Diva and
Founder of myEARTH360.com



Partners and Funding

- www.urbancoyotereseach.com for more information
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 - Dr. Jean Dubach
- The Ohio State University
- Max McGraw Wildlife Foundation