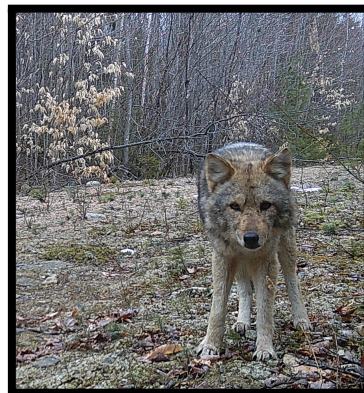




Newsletter

Fall 2024

From the MWC President

I recently returned from the Timber Wolf Alliance's 2024 Great Lakes Wolf Symposium in Ashland, Wisconsin.

<https://www.northland.edu/news/twawolfsymposium2024/>

I gave a twenty-minute PowerPoint presentation on northeast wolf recovery. The northeast is well within the dispersal range of wolves in and around the Great Lakes. Wolf management there can certainly impact wolf recovery here. The Great Lakes region serves as a source population for dispersal to other areas. The greater the population and need for room, the greater the number of dispersers.

For decades, the northeast has not been on the wolf recovery map and has received essentially no attention from the national wolf advocacy movement. I believe our presentation surprised many attendees with our photos of wolves killed south of the St. Lawrence River since 1993 and of living wolf-like canids here in Maine. Few wolf "experts" are/were aware that wolf range in Canada is only sixty miles from New York and less than seventy-five miles from Maine. Those who have never been to the forests of the northeast are likely unaware of the tremendous potential for wolf recovery in the northeast with our hundreds of thousands of potential prey

and our tens of thousands of square miles of habitat suitable for wolves. I stressed these points in our presentation.

I have learned during my travels throughout Minnesota, Michigan and Wisconsin that the northeast contains some of the best wolf habitat east of the Mississippi River. Unlike these three states, Maine has millions of acres of virtually uninhabited forest. Much of wolf range in the Great Lakes states is bisected by miles and miles of paved roads and highways, is populated with towns and cities, and has numerous livestock operations. It is obvious that if wolves can thrive under those conditions, they can and will flourish in the northeast.

Hopefully, our presentation will begin a national recognition and discussion of the northeast as the next best location for wolf recovery in the United States. I want to personally thank Jennifer Rosado and Dr. Jon Way for the great work they are doing including the fabulous photos and videos we presented at the symposium.

Keep howling.

John



A Maine coywolf travels along an old logging road in northern Maine.

From the Biologist

Hallmarks of the Eastern Coyote/Coywolf: Adaptability, Ubiquity, and Resourcefulness

By Jonathan G. Way

You may have been fortunate to have glimpsed one trotting through a suburban park or fast-footing across a busy road. Maybe you witnessed a pack in winter chasing white-tailed deer in the snowy North Woods of Maine or on the frozen lakeshores of Nova Scotia, stalking groundhogs in the agricultural regions outside of Burlington, Vermont and Manchester, New Hampshire, or snagging seals on the coastline of Cape Cod.

Possibly you have seen a mated pair gliding among the mansions of southern Connecticut or have heard pups howling in the woods of towns in Boston Metrowest, or in the mowed fields of the Berkshires in rural western Massachusetts. Perhaps you have spied their tracks while hiking the mountains of the Adirondacks of New York or the Whites of New Hampshire. Maybe you even saw one foraging in one of the urban parks within the Bronx. Or you might have had the misfortune of possibly losing a pet to one in the suburbs of any northeastern state or province.

One thing is sure, if you live in the Northeast, it is unlikely that eastern coyotes live very far from you. It is found throughout the region, from New Jersey and Pennsylvania up to Maine and New York, and ranges north into Canada including southern Quebec and Ontario, Nova Scotia, and New Brunswick. They live just about everywhere and fill in available habitats quickly once they colonize a region. While it can feel like they are everywhere, they actually live at relatively low densities.

The habitat of the coywolf is tremendously variable and includes all available land ranging from wilderness to rural to urban. However, they survive best, and are often found at higher densities, in places with lots of edge habitat such as agricultural and suburban regions. These areas provide cover and an abundant food supply due to increased browse available to their usual prey of voles, rabbits, and deer, and often have less human hunting due to posted private property and restrictions on the use of guns in developed areas. While many people may wonder why coyotes and other animals live near us, it is really pretty simple:

we provide perfect habitat for them and the animals themselves often experience less persecution in those areas.



A striking male eastern coyote/coywolf in Northern Maine.

In my hometown of Cape Cod, Massachusetts, eastern coyotes range throughout the peninsula and do very well with the diversity of habitats to choose from, including the area's impenetrable thick brush surrounding the many salt marshes that help to conceal them during the day. The marshy wetlands and dark cedar swamps wet their course pads, the suburban and urban matrix provides areas for their nightly foraging opportunities, and the puckerbrush in conservation areas and formerly old-field habitats hide their prey of rabbit, rodents, and deer, and afford them security to spend the day resting. Old fields in rural settings provide mousing (actually meadow vole) opportunities, mixed oak-pine forests in some of our larger natural areas provide denning areas, beachfront along some of the richer sections of the Cape provide some of their many travel corridors, and the region's famous cranberry bogs become their puppy-training centers during mid-to-late summer.

By studying the content, fur and bones, found in coywolf scat (droppings), one can determine what these animals eat [in different regions of the Northeast](#). The eastern coyote, like the western coyote, is an omnivore, an opportunistic predator who eats anything from meat to melons. Small mammals like mice, voles, rabbits, and woodchucks are their predominant food items in many regions. Farmers love them for this, as woodchucks multiply quickly and are serious crop and garden gobblers. Wild canines help keep their populations under control and happily dispose of the bodies as well, unlike the well-fed family dog who might occasionally kill one but then leaves it in the front yard to rot.



A lanky coywolf traveling through a forest in north central Maine.

Eastern coyotes have a knack for finding food. In the winter of 2001, I returned to my Cape Cod study site after working at the Bronx Zoo in New York for seven months. I hurriedly went about placing my baited box traps back into the field. To my surprise, one of the locations on a golf course quickly had two collared animals (out of a pack of four) sleeping in the same patch of woods where I had planned ahead of time to deploy the trap. It was almost like they knew I was going to be going there on that day. Needless to say, it didn't take them long to find that site.

Possibly the strangest food item that eastern coyotes have been documented to eat in this area are seals. I [published a paper with a colleague in 2004](#) documenting a successful predation attempt of a single coywolf killing a young harp seal. I assumed this was an aberrant case of a sick seal. However, within a few years the Marine Mammal Stranding Network (MMSN) documented multiple instances throughout Cape Cod of dead seals that appeared to be the result of canid

predation. The necks of the seals were torn out and the carcasses were eaten until the MMSN found them and brought them to their lab for a necropsy. I continue to receive reports of coyotes feasting on phocids.

Coyotes will eat larger mammals where available, but these are potentially dangerous food choices. White-tailed deer, for instance, have been [documented killing wolves in Minnesota](#) with their hooves and antlers, so it is no small task to secure one as a food item. Acting as scavengers or opportunistic predators, coywolves may make highway department road-kill patrols less necessary by providing the service of disposing of dead deer (usually under the cover of darkness), or killing sick or road-injured deer in the woods. However, during winter, when snow impedes the movement of deer, researchers like [Brent Patterson in Nova Scotia](#), and [Gerry Lavigne and Dan Harrison in Maine](#), have documented eastern coyote packs routinely killing and subsisting largely on a diet of deer, with snowshoe hares secondary on their menu.

Certainly, though, newborn white-tailed deer fawns are actively sought throughout the Northeast when the fawns are most vulnerable during June and July. However, research shows that other predators, especially black bears, kill at least as many of these neonates as canines do during this time. Thus, it is largely during severe winters when coywolves may kill seven to ten-month-old juveniles or older deer, that they would have the most impact on deer populations. Where deer are overabundant, like throughout most of New Jersey and Connecticut, this culling can only be beneficial to deer herds. Additional research needs to test the effect that coyotes have on deer in highly urban areas, but [Javier Monzón's team](#) has discovered that eastern coyotes have become more wolf-like – up to 30% - where preying on high density deer populations.

Eastern coyotes, capable of killing deer, currently live near humans throughout the Northeast. Being smaller carnivores that live in family units much like wolves do, they naturally live at considerably higher densities than wolves or cougars, and could potentially have more of an impact, and may already have, on deer populations than all the other large carnivore species combined if they were to return. This is because of the urbanized landscape of the Northeast in the coyote's ubiquity in those regions, while it is likely that wolves and cougars – if they ever returned – would never be common in those environs.

Research in northern areas has determined [coyotes to be a significant cause of mortality for white-tailed deer](#), especially when other prey (e.g., hares, voles) are less available. In fact, [it has been noted](#) that coyotes in the Northeast may have replaced wolves during winter and spring, in addition to the summer, which

supported the hypothesis that coyotes were as effective as wolves in preying upon fawns (from 0 to 10 months of age) throughout the year. And coyotes are being blamed as a scapegoat to be controlled to boost deer and [caribou](#) (*Rangifer tarandus*) numbers in parts of the northern part of northeastern North America. Furthermore, recent evidence from the southeast U.S. is showing that [deer numbers are likely being impacted by recently established coyote populations](#) and wildlife managers are contemplating ways to protect deer populations such as reducing antlerless hunting.

While the eastern coyote can function as a top-order predator in many ecosystems, it is important to note two things. One, because of their medium-size, they don't have to rely on deer and can subsist on smaller, medium-sized prey. Wolves on the other hand, [normally subsist on ungulates for the majority of their diet](#). Second, they are [not ecological efficient predators of moose](#), and even though they have been [documented preying on them](#), it is unquestioned that they haven't replaced the role of full-bodied wolves in northern New England and New York where moose are common.

Given their ecological importance, we should willingly accept this new predator for its undeniable value to the environment. If we try to avoid unwanted interactions with them, and allow them to provide their predatory and scavenger services free of charge, it will be a win-win situation. Over time, their presence will make a difference and no doubt help restore the myriad landscapes of the Northeast to a more natural state, especially when living at ecologically effective densities. I find it unbelievable and of backwards logic that as wildlife managers allow longer and longer deer hunting seasons, to presumably try and lower deer numbers, they also allow the liberal killing of an animal that can at the very least help keep deer numbers in check.

The East Coast had dynamic predator-prey interactions for millennia until the around the 1800s when humans reduced the populations of many species, including prey animals such as deer. Roughly a century or two later, many prey species have recovered on their own or with human assistance. However, the remarkable colonization of this region by a hybrid canid from 30–80 years ago, depending on where you live, has helped restore nature's balance. The Northeast's many ecosystems are surely glad to have this new canid among its major players. Hopefully one day very soon, it will be interacting with its larger cousin – the wolf – in Maine and the rest of the northeast.

In the next edition, I will discuss the way of the coywolf and will introduce concepts, such as home range and territoriality, in order to describe how the creature operates at the individual and pack level. Stay tuned...

The text is an adaptation of excerpts of Way's book [Coywolf: Eastern Coyote Genetics, Ecology, Management, and Politics](https://www.easterncoyoteresearch.com/coywolfbook/) which can be downloaded here: <https://www.easterncoyoteresearch.com/coywolfbook/>.



In its winter coat, a lone coywolf sniffs around a camera site in northern Maine.

Around the World:

Very Exciting News from Quebec!

For three decades, we have advocated research into the status of wolves in Quebec. It is finally happening! For far too long, the single most important thing known about wolves in Quebec was how many were killed and sold on the fur market. The recent designation of the Eastern wolf as a threatened species in Canada has served as a catalyst for this badly needed research.

Southern Quebec, from its border with Ontario east to the Laurentide Reserve is home to Eastern wolves. How many there are, where they are, where they are coming from and traveling to, and how many are being killed by humans are not currently known. This research is an important first step towards answering these questions. We applaud the Quebec government and all of the collaborators for making this research happen.

Below is a description of this planned research project as written by Professor Angelique Dupuch of the University of Quebec.

Project title: Ecology and Conservation of Wild Large Canid Populations in Eastern Canada.

Summary: The decline of large predators has been identified as a key factor in biodiversity loss. Maintaining populations of large carnivores and their ecological functions is essential for the balance of many ecosystems. Habitat fragmentation, hybridization with coyotes, and mortality due to human activities are among the main threats to wolf populations (*Canis* spp.). Wolves are one of the dominant predators in Canadian forests, particularly in Quebec, where they are the primary predator of ungulates. The coyote, a predator of smaller prey, is also present in southern Quebec, where it hybridizes with wolves, especially in the southwestern region. The consequences of this hybridization on dietary habits and the genetic composition of wolf populations in protected areas, such as parks, remain poorly understood. Moreover, genetic connectivity among large canid populations is crucial for their persistence; however, no studies have evaluated this connectivity in Quebec. This research project aims to investigate the dietary habits of wolves, coyotes, and wolf-coyote hybrids, as well as the connectivity of populations located in southwestern Quebec to address this knowledge gap. Additionally, three non-invasive inventory methods (genetics, camera traps, and audio recorders) will be employed to assess the abundance of individuals and packs in the studied parks and reserves, allowing for a comparison of their respective effectiveness and complementarity. The ultimate goal is to propose a monitoring methodology for these populations that will yield the most accurate demographic indicators at a low cost. This project will provide novel insights into the habitat and health status of wolf packs, which can assist managers in directing conservation and protection measures for large canid populations in Quebec. It will also propose a monitoring methodology of interest to all managers aiming to sustain large canid populations across Canada.

PI: Angelique Dupuch and Yann Surget-Grobis, professors at the Université du Québec en Outaouais

Collaborators :

- Ministère de l'Environnement, de la Lutte contre les changements climatiques, de la Faune et des Parcs du Québec (MELCCFP)
- Société des établissements de plein air du Québec (SÉPAQ)

-
- Agence Parcs Canada (Parc de la Mauricie)
 - Kenauk Institute
 - Canadian Nuclear laboratories
 - Linda Rutledge (Hakai Institute)
 - Martin-Hugues Saint-Laurent (Université du Québec à Rimouski)
 - Arik Kershenbaum (University of Cambridge, UK)
-



A male coywolf in the western mountains of Maine.

Maine Wolf Coalition Political Efforts

Letter to Presidential/Vice Presidential Candidates

September 25, 2024

Vice-President Kamala Harris
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20500

Governor Tim Walz
130 State Capitol
75 Rev Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd.
St Paul, MN 55155

Re: Wolf Recovery

Vice-President Harris and Governor Walz:

Congratulations on your respective nominations.

Since George W. Bush took over the White House in 2001, he and all subsequent administrations have unsuccessfully sought to de-list the gray wolf nationwide. Each attempt has been overturned in court. Just this month, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) filed an appeal in court to once again de-list gray wolves nationwide.

The purpose of this letter is to request that if you are elected in November, you become personally involved in gray wolf recovery and that you instruct the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to cease its attempts to de-list the gray wolf nationwide. It is apparent that the Service is a rogue agency with little or no oversight by the

White House. Pursuing repeated legal appeals instead of working to recover wolves is a waste of public resources. It is also illegal.

As president of The Maine Wolf Coalition, Inc., I have been working towards wolf recovery in the northeast for thirty years. The northeast contains tremendous amounts of potential wolf habitat. Wolf range extends across southern Canada to within sixty miles of New York and seventy-five miles of Maine. Numerous wolves have been killed in the northeast and Canada south of the St. Lawrence River since 1993. In 2019, our organization collected scat of an 85% eastern wolf, making this the first DNA documented live wolf ever found in the northeast U.S. Unfortunately, the Service and state governments want nothing to do with wolves in the northeast and are doing nothing to assess their status or work towards their recovery.

As governor of the only U.S. state south of Alaska to have never lost its wolves, Governor Walz must be quite familiar with the wolf issue. I am sure that he recognizes the importance of wolves in the ecosystem, the legal issues around wolf recovery and protection, and the simple fact that wolves and humans can and do co-exist very well.

A necessary component of wolf recovery in the northeast is providing adequate protection of wolves in Quebec and Ontario so that wolves may disperse south into the U.S. and naturally recolonize the region. We believe that no reintroduction is necessary for wolf recovery in the northeast. They simply need to be allowed to live.

We ask that if you are elected in November, you investigate the anti-wolf actions by the Service, that the Service withdraw its legal appeal, and that the Service fulfill its legal obligations to recover wolves. This includes the northeast.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,

John M. Glowa, Sr., President
The Maine Wolf Coalition, Inc.
30 Meadow Wood Drive
South China, ME 04358

One Step Forward and Two Steps Back

Just as we were hopefully waiting for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) to begin work on a National Gray Wolf Recovery Plan, the Service fired its latest anti-wolf volley. The Service has appealed in court an order to re-list the wolf as an endangered species. In other words, rather than devote time and resources to recovering wolves, the Service is wasting precious time and our money to keep from recovering wolves.

In its recent court filing, the Service's claim that "human caused mortality is highly regulated throughout most of suitable wolf habitat" is a blatant lie. The Service's appeal makes no reference to the northeast, essentially pretending that the northeast and its wolves do not exist.

From a legal standpoint, we are no further ahead than we were thirty years ago. This explains why the Service is doing nothing to assess the status of wolves in the northeast. Why look for wolves that don't exist in an area that doesn't exist?

This is precisely why we are looking for wolves. If the federal government looked for wolves and didn't find any evidence, that would be a whole different story. The problem is that the government simply chooses to claim there are no wolves here without doing anything to support their claim.

You can expect a response to the Service's appeal from wolf advocates. Their claim that "human caused mortality is highly regulated" simply does not pass the straight face test. The Service is doing nothing to assess or monitor wolf mortality, human caused or otherwise, in the northeast. The burden of proof is on the Service to prove their claim. They can simply claim there are no wolves in the northeast, as they have done. Because they have no evidence, they have no case. Absence of evidence is not evidence of absence.

We will continue our very important research of assessing the status of wolves in the northeast. While the state and federal governments have done nothing, we have gathered knowledge of the status of wolves in the

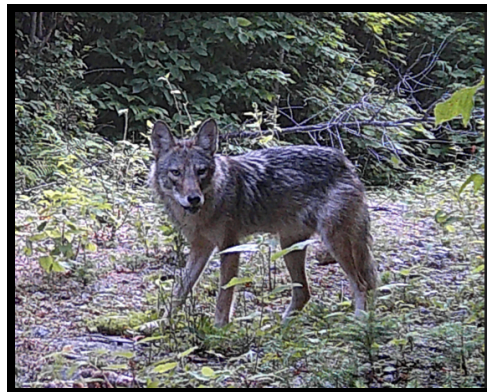
northeast that is light years ahead of what it was just five years ago. This is thanks to our volunteers, collaborators, and financial donors.

The state and federal governments' actions and inactions would be laughable if they weren't such strong evidence of willful neglect and disregard for the laws that the government established. Let's hope that come this November the fresh winds of change blow through the fetid dank hallways and offices of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. This agency's disservice to the people is a disgrace.



A lanky female in summer coat in the northern forests of Maine.

Summer 2024 Photo Gallery



**For more information please visit the
following Maine Wolf Coalition sites.**

[The Maine Wolf Coalition Website](#)

[The MWC Facebook Page](#)

[The MWC Substack Page](#)

[The MWC YouTube Channel](#)

The Maine Wolf Coalition, Inc. is a 501c3 non-profit corporation dedicated to wolf recovery in Maine through research, education, and protection. Tax deductible donations can be made at the [Pay Pal Link](#) below or sent to:

The Maine Wolf Coalition, Inc.,
30 Meadow Wood Drive,
South China, ME 04358

[The MWC PayPal Donation Site](#)

**** We are looking for a volunteer to spearhead the production of this Quarterly Newsletter. Please contact the MWC at themainewolfcoalition@gmail.com.**