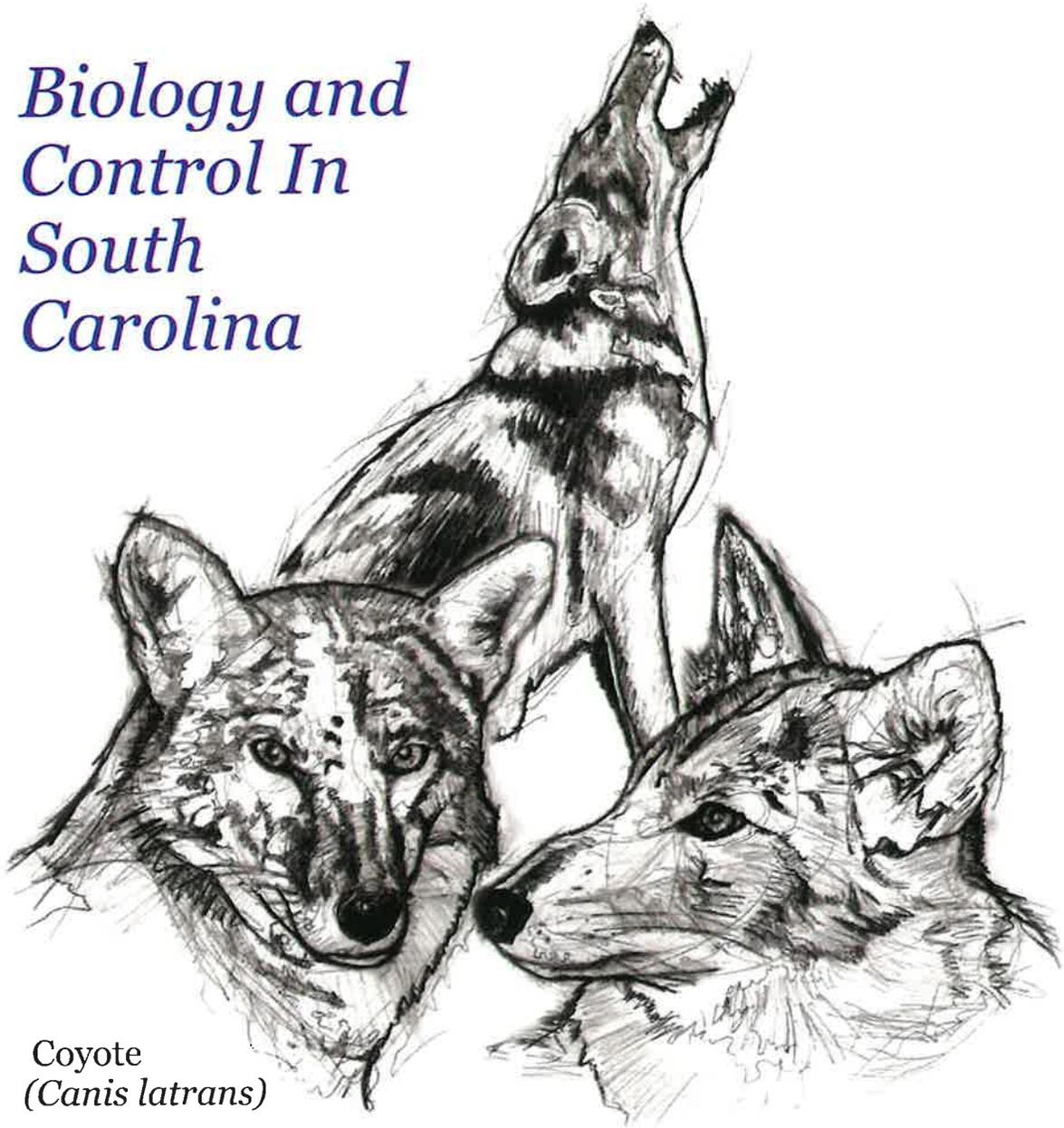


COYOTE

*Biology and
Control In
South
Carolina*



Coyote
(*Canis latrans*)

South Carolina Department of Natural Resources
Division of Wildlife and Freshwater Fisheries



Furbearer Project
P.O. Box 167
Columbia, SC 29202

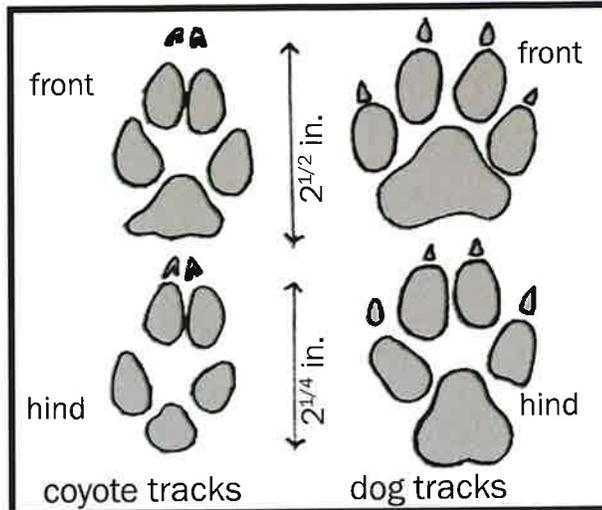
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BIOLOGY

Appearance

The coyote has the general appearance of a small shepherd-type dog; standing 23 to 26 inches at the shoulder with a slim muzzle, erect pointed ears and a bushy tail. The fur is generally a grizzled, grayish-brown but varies greatly from light tan or reddish-tan to almost black. The typical coyote weighs 30 to 45 lbs., though coyotes more than 60 lbs. have been recorded.



Coyote tracks are similar to other dog tracks; however a coyote's tracks are usually longer than they are wide. Their tracks are usually more compact than dogs', and their stride is longer, about 16 to 18 inches while trotting. Typical coyote tracks are 2 to 3 inches long and 1 1/2 to 2 inches wide with the front heel pad being larger than the rear and with the rear heel pad track usually small and circular in shape. Often, only the middle two claws will be present in the tracks.

Coyote scat varies depending on their diet. Often it is cigar-shaped and may contain bone, hair, berries and seeds. Coyote scat may also be nearly formless and dark red to black in color after feeding on larger animals. The most likely places to find coyote scat is along dirt roads, on ridges, trails, near large rocks or prominent clumps of vegetation. It is believed that coyote scat is often deposited to mark territories.



National Park Service / Jacob W. Frank

Distribution

Though historically found in the western half of the United States, the coyote is now found throughout North America due to range expansion and illegal translocation by houndsmen groups. Populations in South Carolina were established in Pickens and Oconee counties in the late 1970s by both houndsmen and natural immigration. Coyotes have since expanded to include all counties in the State. However, even if no illegal importation had taken place, coyotes would still have become established in South Carolina.

Contrary to popular belief, the South Carolina Department of Natural Resources (SCDNR) did not import coyotes into South Carolina to control the white-tailed deer population, or for any other reason. This rumor also exists in other states as well, but considering the general belief among biologists during that period of time (that coyotes did not impact deer populations), it would have made little sense to import coyotes. In addition, coyotes first appeared in the upstate, where deer reintroductions were still taking place at the time, as opposed to the Lowcountry where deer were plentiful.

Habitat

Though traditionally believed to be adapted to life in open areas, coyotes have expanded into most types of habitats. While they do well in agricultural communities, their relatively high tolerance for human populations allows coyotes to exist in most areas of South Carolina. This includes mountainous regions, swamps, dense forests as well as suburban and even some urban areas.

Feeding Habits

Coyotes are opportunistic feeders. While rabbits probably comprise the majority of their food/prey items, they also eat rodents and other small mammals, and supplement their diet with fruits, berries, and insects when available. They will eat carrion and will also prey upon deer fawns, and occasionally on adult deer especially those with underlying health issues. Deer predation was not originally believed to be a significant factor for deer populations in South Carolina. However, studies at the Savannah River Site, located in Aiken and Barnwell Counties, have shown that coyote predation on fawns can impact recruitment, and fawns can be particularly vulnerable to predation for the first 6 to 8 weeks after birth. When coupled with human harvest of deer by hunting, coyote predation on fawns appear to be an additive source of mortality. While this study's findings may not be uniform across the entire state, it points to evidence that coyote predation can impact deer fawn survival, and thus deer populations, at least in localized areas.

Coyotes can also prey on domestic poultry and livestock, particularly sheep, goats and calves. Calf predation usually subsides after weaning. Cows giving birth, especially animals having difficult births, can be susceptible to predation as they usually separate from the herd while birthing. On occasion, coyotes will prey on domestic pets, especially cats. Pet predation is usually due to the territorial nature of the coyote and lack of an alternative prey base in suburban areas.

Behavior

Coyotes are typically most active beginning at twilight and continuing throughout the night. In some areas they may be seen during the day, especially when left undisturbed. Coyotes have a keen sense of smell and good eyesight. They can reach speeds of 40 mph for short durations, though they can sustain relatively high rates of travel over several miles.

Resident, or territorial coyotes, typically have a home range from 2 to 20 square miles, with resident females occupying smaller ranges than males. Transient or solitary animals usually have much larger home ranges than resident

animals, again with the males being larger than the females. Coyotes may move several miles within their home range daily, and their movement activity usually peaks during the late winter breeding season. Resident animals will defend their territory against transient coyotes.

Coyotes usually hunt alone or in pairs and may travel over fairly large areas in search of food. Transient coyotes do not form packs, but residents form pack-like groups that may be seen occasionally. These packs are typically (but not always) related family members and may consist of a mated pair, non-breeding offspring from the previous year, and the current year's pups.

Coyotes have various calls, in addition to howling, that include yips and barks. Typically, their vocalizations are used to communicate location or to gather individuals together. Coyote vocalizations usually peak during the breeding season, and vocalizations are generally more frequent during clear nights with moderate temperatures. Often, loud noises from trains, airplanes or sirens will trigger coyote vocalizations.

Breeding

Coyotes are generally monogamous, with breeding among the dominant resident pair beginning in January and continuing into March. Subordinate animals in a group with a dominant breeding pair typically do not breed.

The gestation period is 63 days, and the average litter size is 5 to 7. Pups begin to leave the den at 3 to 4 weeks, are weaned at 8 to 9 weeks, and the family breaks up permanently at 9 to 10 months as juveniles disperse. In areas where food is abundant, female young of the year may breed the following winter. Both adults, and on occasion other adults linked with the breeding pair, will hunt and bring food to their young. While raising young, coyotes will den in brush piles, banks, gullies, and old abandoned barns. Sometimes coyotes will den in burrows of other animals after enlarging their holes. Coyotes generally do not use dens except when rearing young, preferring to bed in tall grass and brush at other times of the year.

Coyotes are capable of interbreeding with domestic dogs, but survival of the offspring is low. Typically, coydogs' breeding cycles do not correspond to coyotes', thus further breeding with coyotes is unlikely even though coydogs may be able to reproduce.

Controlling Factors

Coyotes are subject to canine distemper, parvo, hepatitis, mange, and rabies. Coyotes also harbor a variety of parasites such as fleas, ticks, worms, and flukes. The incidence of rabies in South Carolina coyotes is unknown, as few animals are submitted for testing. There is no routine rabies testing surveillance in the state, as animals are only tested when a potential exposure occurs.

Incidental take from hunting activities, most notably deer hunting, comprises most of the yearly coyote harvest in South Carolina. Based on deer hunter surveys, hunters kill approximately 25,000 coyotes annually.

Although western pelts may bring relatively high values from time to time, a strong market has not developed for the eastern coyote. However, it is legal for a licensed trapper to sell live coyotes to fox and coyote running enclosures during the open trapping season.* Therefore, there is an incentive for sport trappers to target coyotes. Some landowners have been able to coordinate with the South Carolina Trappers Association to locate a local trapper that might be willing to trap on their property during the open trapping season. However, as nuisance coyote problems increase and become more widespread, the demand for contract coyote control work should increase and the number of coyotes taken from trapping by Wildlife Control Operators (WCOs) will rise.

* Check current SCDNR Trapping and Commercial Fur Harvest laws and regulations.

Status

Coyotes are considered furbearing animals in South Carolina; however, coyotes may be hunted throughout the year with a valid hunting license on private lands. The use of electronic calls is legal statewide, and coyotes can be hunted at night on registered properties. Go to the SCDNR website's Night Hunting page at dnr.sc.gov/nighthunt to register a property to hunt coyotes at night. Laws and regulations may change, so check the current SCDNR Hunting Rules and Regulations before hunting coyotes in your area.

Individuals may trap coyotes during the trapping season (December 1 through March 1) with a valid Commercial Fur Harvest license in addition to the required hunting license. Check the current SCDNR Trapping and Commercial Fur Harvest brochure for more information about trapping regulations.

Depredation permits are available for controlling destructive coyotes year-round. No hunting or trapping license is required with a depredation permit. For more information about depredation permits, see the **Depredation Permits** section in the back of this publication or contact the SCDNR Permitting Office at (803) 734-3887.

Coyotes and their associated damage are unpopular with livestock producers and sportsmen. Nevertheless, attempts in other states to eliminate or drastically reduce the coyote population on a large scale have proven unsuccessful. Various coyote incentive programs have been tried over the years throughout the United States, with the stated goal being to reduce or eliminate coyotes; however, there has been very little to show for these efforts in terms of positive results. In fact, even under the presence of paid bounties, the coyote spread from its historical range in the west to occupy the entire continental U.S.

Bounties for coyotes, while usually very popular, generally do not produce any appreciable effects, or at best are only temporary, leading most states to abandon paying coyote bounties. Since nearly 30,000 coyotes are taken annually in South Carolina by hunters and trappers, a bounty would likely only pay for a portion of the coyotes currently being harvested at no cost. Nevertheless, for a bounty system to be successful, a significant number of *additional animals over the current harvest levels* must be removed on an annual basis. Given current liberal hunting and trapping regulations, the number of coyotes being removed under these regulations, and the notion that people who want to control coyotes

are already attempting to do so, it is highly unlikely that a paid bounty would add appreciably to the number of coyotes in the annual harvest. Lastly, as with any monetary incentive, there is no guarantee that coyotes submitted would actually originate from South Carolina, as historically many bounty programs have been plagued with fraudulent bounty submissions.

When necessary, it is possible to control coyote-related damage at the local level by targeting and removing the specific offending animals. If coyotes in the area are not causing specific depredation problems, it is suggested they not be removed merely because of their presence. Coyotes are territorial, and the removal of non-depredating coyotes may result in replacement with coyotes that are more prone to cause problems.

Attempting to control overall coyote numbers can be frustrating as new immigrant animals often quickly fill the voids left from the removal of resident animals. In addition, reproduction may actually increase from the removal of these resident coyotes with animals beginning to breed at younger ages, although reproduction still only occurs once annually and the overall fecundity of coyote populations with younger coyotes tends to be lower.

Damage Identification

In case of suspected coyote depredation, the area should be searched for tracks, droppings or any other sign that might indicate a coyote's presence. However, coyotes will scavenge dead animal carcasses; therefore, the presence of a dead animal with coyote sign in the vicinity does not necessarily indicate coyote depredation. Accurately determining coyote depredation involves carefully examining the carcass. Hemorrhaging just under the skin at the bite marks indicates the animal was alive when bitten; however, tooth marks under the skin without accompanying hemorrhage indicate the animal was fed upon while dead. The surrounding area should also be investigated for signs of a struggle. Attacks on larger animals usually involve a longer duration of attack, and the adjacent area may have broken vegetation, drag marks or scuffs, as well as blood and/or hair at the site of the kill.

Typical coyote predation involves attacking the throat of the prey, though some attacks on calves may be to the flanks or hindquarters. The presence or absence of this predation pattern, however, does not necessarily indicate coyote predation. Domestic dogs, which typically attack the flanks, hindquarters and heads of animals, will exhibit coyote predation patterns, while some coyotes may resemble that of domestic dogs. Often, domestic dogs will not feed on the killed animal, though true feral dogs and coydogs may kill for food and be efficient predators. Only a thorough investigation of the kill and surrounding area may help determine the actual predator involved.

Determination of predation can be a difficult task. The amount of evidence at the site of the kill along with the amount of prey and the age of the carcass are factors in assessing the source of predation. Usually, accurate determination of predation involves experience and a keen knowledge of the species of predators in the area. Even this acquired skill may not confirm the cause of death in many cases.

CONTROL TECHNIQUES

Non-lethal Control

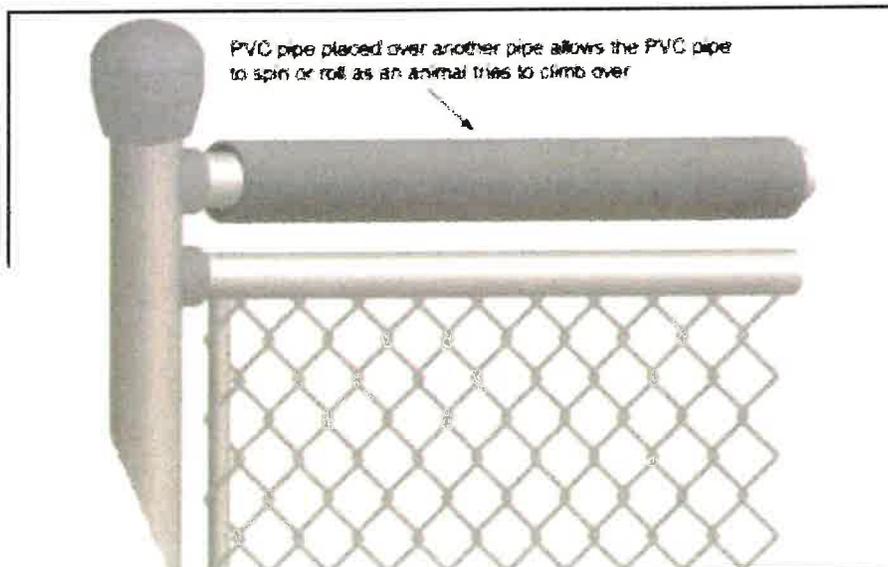
Exclusion

Fencing, where practical, can deter livestock predation. Traditional barbed wire fences are not a deterrent to coyotes. However, certain woven wire fences can keep out coyotes if installed properly. Because coyotes can dig under most woven-type fences, it is recommended that an apron of fence be buried perpendicular to the fence for a width of two feet around the outside of the fence. Because of the expense, this type of fencing may only be feasible for pens and corrals. If a buried apron fence is too expensive or impractical, electrified wire near ground level may deter coyotes from digging under the fence. An electric wire at the top or a barbed wire overhang angled towards the outside of the fence may deter climbing over the fence.

Another way to deter coyotes climbing over a fence is to install a length of PVC pipe using a larger diameter pipe over a smaller diameter pipe or conduit, or with a wooden end piece mounted inside the pipe that can be mounted on top of a fence to allow the outer pipe to spin (Figure 1.). As the animal reaches the top of the fence, the outer pipe rolls and prevents climbing over the top of the fence. This can also serve to keep pets inside the fence. Rollers are likely better suited to smaller yards or enclosures.

Electric fences can also deter coyotes if the spacing between the wires is 8 inches or less at the top and at least four strands at the bottom spaced 4 inches or less. These fences should be at least 5 to 6 feet high. The addition of an outside wire 8 to 10 inches out from the bottom of the fence and 6 to 8 inches high may greatly improve the effectiveness of an electrical fence.

Existing fences can be modified to deter coyotes by attaching 3 to 4 strands of electric fencing 8 to 10 inches to the outside of an existing fence.



rollers at top of fence to prevent climbing

It is important that all fencing be adequately maintained and in working order to ensure its effectiveness.

Cultural Methods - Livestock & Rural Areas

Some cultural methods can help minimize livestock loss to coyotes and other predators. Because of the high nutritional demands of bearing and raising pups, coyote predation may be highest from late spring to early fall. Changing calving or lambing season outside of this time frame, or shortening or synchronizing the birthing seasons may result in some reduction in livestock predation. Confinement of smaller herds of livestock at night can also reduce coyote predation, especially in lighted predator-resistant fences.

Some modifications to the surrounding habitat may also be beneficial to reducing coyote depredation. Coyotes often use cover to stalk their prey, and reducing the amount of cover near pastures may lessen predation. Furthermore, brush piles and heavy grass cover increase habitat for rabbits and other small prey, thus attracting coyotes to the area. Cleanup or removal of this type of cover in some areas may also promote a reduction in predation.

The dumping of livestock remains can attract coyotes and increase the chances of livestock predation as coyotes could become accustomed to feeding on livestock. Proper disposal of livestock remains may reduce coyote predation.

Cultural Methods - Suburban Areas

Coyotes that consume a significant proportion of human-related food items are more likely to become habituated toward people and cause negative interactions. These food items include pet food, garbage, and discarded food scraps. Neighborhoods should encourage feeding pets indoors as well as proper disposal of all trash. Food items used for composting should be placed in sealed or closed bins.

Coyotes are most active beginning near dusk and continuing into the early morning hours after dawn, so it is advisable to keep smaller pets inside at night if possible. Cats should also remain indoors not only for their safety, but to reduce the negative impacts cats can have on native wildlife. All pets should be fed during the day, and any food and food containers should be removed before dark. A coyote's sense of smell is excellent, and they can be attracted to the smell of pet food or even residual smells left by an empty bowl. People should walk their pets in more open areas that prevent a coyote from ambushing the pet. All pets being walked should be kept on a short leash. If a coyote is seen, act aggressively towards the animal, but do not run.

Feral cat colonies can be problematic on many levels. However, the deliberate feeding of a feral cat colony can attract coyotes, as well as other wildlife, to the colony. This concentration of cats represents relatively easy prey to a coyote. Discourage the feeding of any stray cats or, at a minimum, require any remaining food to be collected before dark.

Suburban and urban coyotes tend to utilize parks and natural areas more than places with less green space. Developed communities with significant amounts of green space can modify the habitat to make the area less attractive for coyotes. Undeveloped lots and common areas should be managed to keep underbrush and overgrown areas to a minimum. Not only do these areas provide travel corridors, but also provide denning, hiding and ambush sites for coyotes. In addition, brushy and overgrown areas provide habitat for small mammals which are a primary food source for coyotes. Opening up overgrown areas can help discourage coyotes from remaining in these places, especially during daylight hours.

Parks and recreational areas should prohibit the feeding of wildlife. Visitors to these areas must not be allowed to feed wildlife, and the proper disposal of all refuse must be enforced. Leash laws should also be enforced to help prevent pet attacks or any other coyote and dog confrontations.

Coyotes should never be allowed to become habituated to people. When coyotes are sighted, especially in daylight hours, every effort should be made to harass and run the animal off. It is necessary to keep coyotes fearful of people to prevent negative coyote behavior.

If coyote sightings become more frequent and confrontations with people and pets begin to occur, such as chasing joggers, bicyclists, or people walking pets, it is a sign that coyotes are beginning to lose their fear of humans. When this occurs, the potential for some type of negative coyote encounter increases. Coyotes that exhibit aggressive behavior should be removed by a professional trapper. The SCDNR maintains an online list of Wildlife Control Operators that perform wildlife removal services, usually for a fee. See the **Wildlife Control Operators** Section on page 23.

Guard Animals

Certain animals such as donkeys, mules, llamas, emus, ostriches, and certain breeds of dogs have some promise in reducing coyote predation for livestock producers. Research has shown guard dogs to be particularly effective at reducing livestock damage, especially when the dogs are reared with the livestock from a very early age. Great Pyrenees dogs are probably the most commonly used livestock protection breed in South Carolina. Donkeys and mules may also have value as guard animals for sheep and goats.

For more information about guard animals, contact the United States Department of Agriculture's Wildlife Services office listed in the back of this booklet.



Great Pyrenees dog with goats at a farm in Princeton, SC.

Frightening Devices

The use of frightening devices may temporarily reduce coyote predation. Lights over corrals have been shown to be effective. Parked cars, strobe lights, and noise-making devices may have some value in deterring coyotes for very short periods of time. Varying locations and/or intensity is important as coyotes can quickly become habituated to such techniques. The effectiveness of frightening techniques may be very limited.

Lethal Control

Toxicants

No toxicants are registered for use on coyotes in South Carolina. The use of any poison to control predators in South Carolina is a violation of State and Federal law. Nevertheless, coyotes can become accustomed to avoid poisoned baits and the use of illegal poisoning is more likely to affect nontarget wildlife and pets.

Shooting

Shooting coyotes to control predation can be effective in certain situations, and may be the only viable alternative for individuals inexperienced or uncomfortable with trapping.

Coyotes have a keen sense of smell; therefore, shooting locations should be selected so as to remain downwind from the area where coyotes are likely to approach. Smaller caliber centerfire rifles, where safe and legal to use, are capable of killing coyotes at relatively long ranges. A shotgun may be desirable when attempting to shoot coyotes at close range or in heavier cover types. Usually the smaller sizes of buckshot, such as #4, are preferred over the larger sizes.

Coyotes can be attracted through the use of predator calls, though the exclusive use of calling to control coyote depredation may not be successful, as they may become wary of repeated attempts to call and shoot. Usually the first few hours after sunrise and before sunset are the most effective times to call in coyotes. Even the imitated sound of a howl may attract a coyote, though the animal may approach without responding. Electronic calls with a wireless remote control may be more effective as the calls originate away from the hunter's location. Remote motion decoys may also increase the effectiveness of using predator calls. Night hunting is allowed on registered properties with the owner's permission. See dnr.sc.gov/nighthunt to register a property for night hunting.*

Locating den sites may aid in removing coyotes, especially during the pup-rearing season, as the pups may trample vegetation just outside of the dens when beginning to venture out. This may make locating den sites easier.

In certain areas, the use of dogs to pursue coyotes and bring them into the range of shooters may be somewhat effective.

*Check the current SCDNR Rules and Regulations brochure in regards to hunting or shooting coyotes as well as the current night hunting regulations.

Trapping

Trapping is probably the most effective tool for removing problem coyotes. However, the coyote's wary nature and keen sense of smell can also make them one of the more difficult furbearing animals to trap. Inexperienced trappers or poor trapping techniques may help educate coyotes to avoid traps and become "trap shy."

The normal trapping season is December 1 to March 1. A Commercial Furharvest License, commonly called a trapping license, is required along with a hunting license to trap during the season. However, property owners experiencing coyote-related damage may trap or shoot (in areas where firearms may be lawfully discharged) coyotes within 100 yards of their residence (so long as they are still on their own property or an adjacent property with landowner permission) without any kind of license or permit. Outside of this 100 yard residential area, a permit or trapping license (during the trapping season) would be required (see **Depredation Permit** section on page 22).

It is suggested to wear rubber boots and clean gloves while preparing the trap site to minimize human odor to the best extent possible. Remove gloves when applying any scent or lure so as not to get any on the traps or equipment, which might prompt a coyote to dig up the trap.

Selecting a proper trap site is key to determining whether or not trapping will be successful in controlling problem coyotes. It's important that traps are placed in areas where coyotes are traveling or frequenting. Preferably, place traps where scent will travel in the direction coyotes are likely to approach. Dirt road, trail, dam, stream, and fence crossings as well as field corners and borders, hedgerows, brush piles, isolated hay bales, or other prominent property features are all good areas to look for coyote sign, such as tracks or droppings. Coyotes, just like domestic dogs, will urinate on objects that stand out, such as fence posts, large rocks and other distinctive land features. Trappers can use this behavior to their advantage by trapping at these "scent posts."

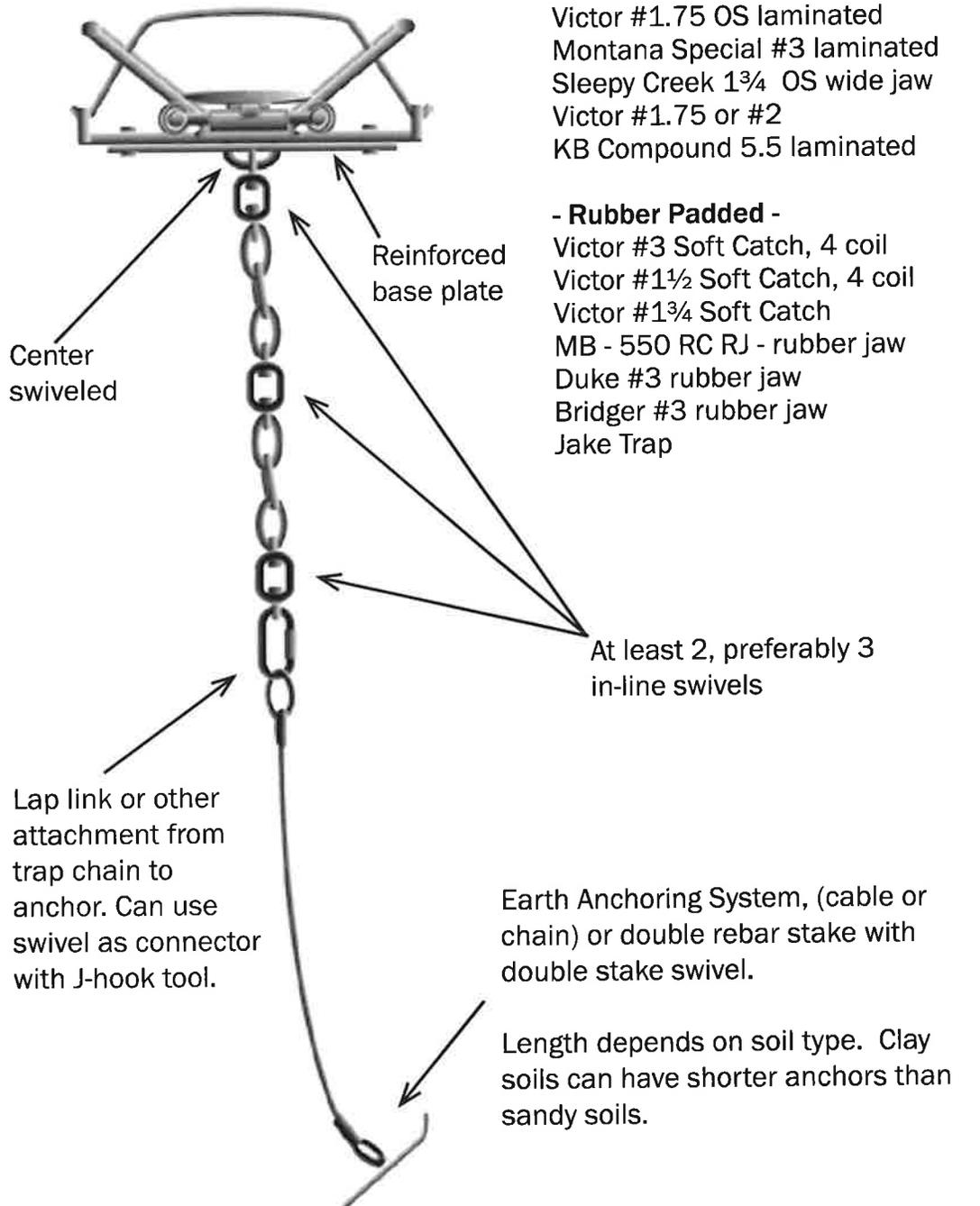
Traps may also be successful if placed on trails near areas where livestock have been killed. Keep traps at least 50 feet away from dead animals or animal parts to avoid catching vultures or other nontarget animals.

Only foothold traps, with an inside jaw spread of 5 $\frac{3}{4}$ inches and smaller are legal for use on coyotes in South Carolina. Live traps are legal for use, though generally not very effective for coyotes. However, certain suburban and urban settings may require their use. Because a trap is defined in South Carolina as "any device, other than a weapon, designed or constructed for taking animals," the use of other devices designed or improvised for catching coyotes may be illegal.

Check the current SCDNR Commercial Fur Harvest brochure for more information about legal traps and trapping, or contact the Furbearer Project at 803-734-3609 or via email at Furbearerprogram@dnr.sc.gov.

COYOTE FOOHOLD TRAP SYSTEM

Examples of approved BMP foothold traps*:



- **Standard Jaw** -
 - MB - 550 RC
 - Bridger #1.65 OS laminated 4 coil
 - Bridger #2 OS laminated
 - Victor #1.75 OS laminated
 - Montana Special #3 laminated
 - Sleepy Creek 1¾ OS wide jaw
 - Victor #1.75 or #2
 - KB Compound 5.5 laminated

- **Rubber Padded** -
 - Victor #3 Soft Catch, 4 coil
 - Victor #1½ Soft Catch, 4 coil
 - Victor #1¾ Soft Catch
 - MB - 550 RC RJ - rubber jaw
 - Duke #3 rubber jaw
 - Bridger #3 rubber jaw
 - Jake Trap

*BMP traps listed may not be a comprehensive list of all current BMP-approved coyote traps. All product names or brands are property of their respective manufacturers or distributors. Brand names used in this publication are for identification purposes only. Use of any of these traps or devices does not imply endorsement by SCDNR.



Coyote Control - What a landowner CAN do in South Carolina

Hunting/Shooting: There is no closed hunting season on coyotes. Coyotes may be hunted year 'round on private lands with a valid hunting license. A free depredation permit can be issued to landowners that do not have a hunting license (see Depredation Permits). On private lands, coyotes may be hunted with any firearm during daylight hours at any time of the year.

Night Hunting Coyotes: Coyotes may only be hunted *at night* under the following conditions:

- By registering* the property with DNR online at: www.dnr.sc.gov/nighthunt
- In accordance to a DNR-issued depredation permit (see Depredation Permits section below)

*The landowner must register with DNR any properties on where night hunting activities for coyotes are going to take place. This registration is required annually as prescribed by DNR for each property. An annual summary of night hunting activities is required before a property can be re-registered the following year. This registration also allows for the night hunting of armadillos, feral hogs, and coyotes for every registered property. For more information see www.dnr.sc.gov/nighthunt. (SC Code of Laws §50-11-700 et seq.)

Persons convicted of certain night hunting violations during the previous five years are ineligible to hunt coyotes at night (SC Code of Laws §50-11-715). A permit is required from a local DNR Law Enforcement Officer for anyone to hunt or shoot coyotes at night on any property that is not currently registered for Night Hunting with DNR.

Bait, Electronic Calls: The use of bait and electronic calls is allowed for hunting coyotes during the day or night on private lands statewide. The use of any legal firearm, bow and arrow, or crossbow is allowed on private lands statewide.

Trapping: The normal trapping season for licensed trappers is Dec. 1 - Mar. 1. HOWEVER, a property owner may obtain a free depredation permit to trap outside of the normal trapping season and/or without a trapping license (see *Depredation Permits* section below for more information).

Legal Traps: (A separate [Trapping Regulations](#) brochure is available)

- **Snares:** The use of snares is *illegal* for use in land sets. All coyote sets are considered land sets.
- **Foothold traps:** Trap size must be 5 3/4" or smaller for land sets (see Figure 1 below). All coyote sets are generally considered land sets.
- **Live traps:** In certain situations coyotes have been caught in live traps, but in general these traps are large and generally much less effective.

Except for licensed trappers during the trapping season (Dec. 1 – Mar. 1 and 30 days after), the possession and relocation of live coyotes is illegal!

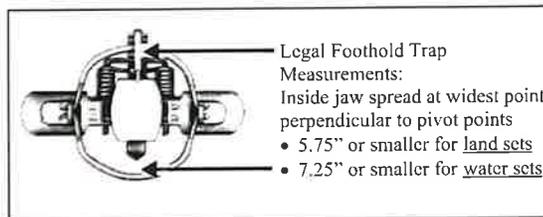


Figure 1. Measuring foothold traps

COYOTE

Biology and Control in South Carolina

DNR publishes a separate Coyote brochure with biological information and additional control tips including trap preparation and trap set examples. This is also available online at:

<http://www.dnr.sc.gov/wildlife/coyote/coyoteinfo.pdf>

Depredation Permits: A depredation permit allows a property owner (or their designee) to trap or shoot damage-causing coyotes without any kind of license or season restrictions. The permit is FREE and available from any of DNR's offices or conservation officers. These permits may also be obtained over the phone. This permit will be good for 30 days for a specific site (such as Mr. Smith's farm).

- **The 100-yard Exemption:** Within 100-yards of the property owner's residence (so long as you are still on your own property), coyotes may be trapped or shot (if it is legal to discharge a firearm at the property's location) *WITHOUT ANY KIND OF LICENSE OR PERMIT*. This exemption applies to the property owner or his/her designee (such as a friend, relative, or any other person designated by the property owner).
- **Depredation Permits to shoot at night:** Except as provided under normal night hunting regulations as stated in the Hunting/Shooting section above, a depredation permit to shoot coyotes at night MUST be obtained from a local DNR conservation officer (check local firearms ordinances first). If you do not know a local DNR officer, contact the DNR at 803-955-4000 or 1-800-922-5431 and ask to have a local DNR officer contact you.
- **Predator Management Permits:** A special depredation permit to trap coyotes for wildlife management purposes and not for traditional depredation issues such as livestock losses and problems around the home. *This permit is specifically for hunt clubs and other large properties primarily used for hunting.* Only valid outside of trapping season (Mar. 1 - Nov. 30). Year end harvest report required. Issued by the Furbearer Project in Columbia Office.

Non-Lethal Options: These options are for reducing coyote damage without removing the coyote.

- **Cultural Techniques:** Confinement of livestock and small pets – especially at night – can lessen predation problems. Cleaning up brushy, grassy and weedy areas that attract small mammals (rabbits and rodents – a coyote's primary food source) can make your property less appealing to coyotes.
- **Guard Animals:** Certain animals have been successfully utilized as guard animals for livestock. Certain dog breeds (such as Great Pyrenees), donkeys, mules, and llamas have been used to protect livestock.
- **Wire Barriers:** Fences and fencing can prevent coyotes from entering an area if properly constructed. Buried aprons can prevent digging under a fence and overhangs or electric wires can prevent climbing over a fence. The DNR Coyote Brochure discusses fences in more detail.

Wildlife Control Operators (WCOs): For those property owners that wish to pay someone to trap coyotes for them (usually for a fee), the list of Wildlife Control Operators is available from any local DNR office or online at <http://www.dnr.sc.gov/wildlife/control.html>. These companies and individuals perform wildlife control services on a contract-fee basis. WCOs are not DNR employees and are not affiliated with the DNR. It is important to ask for references before hiring a WCO. Have all fees and guarantees in writing.

Questions: For more information about coyotes, legal issues, control techniques, trapping advice, or anything else coyote-related, contact the DNR Furbearer Project at 803-734-3609.