

2003 Annual Report – Eastern coyote project in Massachusetts

To: Dr. Rob Deblinger and the Permit Section, Massachusetts Division of Fisheries and Wildlife

From: Jonathan Way - Boston data prepared by David Eatough and Steve Cifuni

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Wild coyote ecology study in eastern Massachusetts - Letter Permit #046LP01 now called **#003.04LP** (as of 12/16/2003)

Five Tomahawk box traps were in the field on Cape Cod during 2003. We only baited during the fall and only set traps in late November - December. We plan on resuming trapping much more intensively during 2004 on Cape Cod as a former Boston College student (Robert Proietto) is assisting us with the Cape Cod research. In Boston, we also used five box traps and baited (but did not set) one large cage trap (called a hog trap). We plan on setting that trap for capture during 2004. In addition to Cape Cod and north Boston, we are planning on starting a third study in the Newton (Boston College) area early during 2004. This study will focus our educational and science efforts at capturing coyotes as close to the Boston College campus as possible. Land use permits are being worked out for this study.

Table 1. A list of our captures, both on Cape Cod and in North Boston (centered around Revere and Saugus) during 2003. Note: these values include 2 starlings and 2 finches captured in the same trap, 1 starling, 3 finches, and 1 chickadee in the same trap, 2 double hawk captures three separate times, 1 capture of 6 crows in the same trap, and 3 captures of 3 crows in the same trap; all these multiple captures occurred in north Boston.

	Cape Cod	North Boston	Totals
Raccoon	0	65	65
Opossum	0	15	15
Skunk	0	10	10
Coyote	1	1	2
Dog	1	0	1
Crow	0	15	15
Domestic/feral cat	0	5	5
Red-tailed hawk	0	22	22
Red Fox	1	0	1
Fisher (both in Saugus)	0	2	2
Norway rat	0	1	1
Turkey vulture	0	2	2
Starling	0	3	3
Finch (sp.)	0	5	5

Black capped chickadee	0	1	1
Eastern gray squirrel	0	3	3
Nothing in Trap (but shut)	1	11	12

The coyote captured in north Boston was captured 2/6/03 at the Breakhart preserve in Saugus (named “**Bart**” – #BN0301). It was a 32 lb adult male with a severe case of mange. Because it had survived most of the winter we decided to release it (vs. rehabbing it) that day, after giving it an injection of ivermectin. However, on 3/9/03 he died of starvation, weighing an emaciated 24 lbs. Although his fur was growing back he did not appear to know how to hunt as he used a very small (<1 sq. km), restricted area. We did observe him with 3 healthy coyotes during the period when he was collared.

On 11/23/03, we captured a healthy, robust 40.6 lb 2 yr old adult male coyote at the beginning of Sandy Neck Beach (named “**Snour**” – #0301). This coyote turned out to be a nomadic coyote that has used most of the mid-Cape area; we regularly can not find him for a week or two despite intensive searches then he randomly shows up in the NE Sandwich/NW Barnstable area. We suspect that he is a coyote from the Sandy Neck or adjacent groups, explaining why he returns to this area periodically.

Table 2. Dead coyotes recovered during 2003.

Date	Sex	Cause of death	Comments
3/9	Male	Starvation	Collared coyote “Bart” from Saugus, MA
10/13	Female	Vehicle	About 40 lbs in Sandwich, MA – yellowish in color

In addition to these 2 coyotes recovered during 2003 we also picked up 2 road-killed gray foxes along route 93, 1 in Plymouth and the other in the Pembroke area.

Captive coyotes - Permit # 052.02LP

No new coyotes were obtained from the wild. We plan on just using the 5 coyotes that we took from the wild in Falmouth, MA during April 2002. However, the coyotes have been separated permanently because of intra-pack aggression. Lupe (male), Cane (female), and Caon (female) will remain on exhibit at the Stone Zoo while Trans (male) and Late (female) have been moved to the Franklin Park Zoo. Zoo New England has placed them available for an accredited zoo if they want them – future correspondence on those 2 coyotes should be with Zoo NE, not Jonathan Way, if information is needed on them.

Manuscripts (peer-refereed or peer-reviewed)

Numerous manuscripts have been accepted (i.e., in press) despite only 2 currently in journals. Below is a list of all manuscripts (in journal, in press, and under review) currently associated with our coyote project. As usual we will forward copies of our

manuscripts as they become available.

Way, J. G., I. M. Ortega, P. J. Auger, and E. G. Strauss. 2002. Box-trapping eastern coyotes in southeastern Massachusetts. *Wildlife Society Bulletin* 50(3): 695-702.

Way, J. G. 2003. Description and possible reasons for an abnormally large group size of adult eastern coyotes observed during summer. *Northeastern Naturalist* 10(3):335-342.

Way, J. G., P. J. Auger, I. M. Ortega, and E. G. Strauss. In Press. Eastern coyote denning behavior in an anthropogenic environment. *Northeast Wildlife*.

Way, J. G., I. M. Ortega, and E. G. Strauss. In Press. Movement and activity patterns of eastern coyotes in a coastal, suburban environment. *Northeastern Naturalist*.

Way, J. G., I. M. Ortega, and P. J. Auger. In Press. Eastern coyote home range, territoriality and sociality on urbanized Cape Cod. *Northeast Wildlife*.

Way, J. G., and J. Horton. In Press. A single coyote kills an adult or yearling harp seal. *Canid News*.

Way, J. G. A synthesis of eastern coyote (*Canis latrans* var.) taxonomy: what is known and what needs to be done? *Northeast Wildlife*. Under Review.

Way, J. G. Survival of Orphaned 8-week old wild eastern coyote pups. *American Midland Naturalist*. Under Review.

Way, J. G. Radio-collared coyote crosses Cape Cod Canal. *Northeast Wildlife*. Under Review.

Way, J. G., and E. G. Strauss. Old-aged wild coyote in an urbanized landscape. *Canid News*. Under Review.

Way, J. G. Hand-rearing a litter of eastern coyotes. *Canid News*. Under Review

Way, J. G. Socialization of a wild caught litter of 3.5-week-old eastern coyote pups. *Wildlife Society Bulletin*. Under Review

Way, J. G., D-L M. Szumylo , E. G. Strauss. An ethogram developed on captive eastern coyotes. *Animal Behaviour*. In Preparation, to be submitted early February 2004.

Miscellaneous

We have tried to capture coyotes using the netlauncher device on ~12 different occasions. On 3 of those attempts we fired the netlauncher but the coyote escaped. We

are pretty sure that no research group has attempted to catch coyotes using a ground-based netlaunch device (as opposed to aerially using a net-gun). Preliminary evidence indicates that this device may be inefficient but we will make continued attempts to catch coyotes using this device.

Finally, I have regularly updated the website (<http://www2.bc.edu/~wayjo>) that describes our captive and wild coyote research. It is intended to be used by the general public, personnel associated with our research, scientists, and other interested people. Please feel free to visit or make a link from your MassWildlife website, if desired.