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## Coyotes in the Southwest: Foreword

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## Foreword

*"A conference is just an admission that you want someone to join you in your troubles."*

-- Will Rogers

Long before the recent clamor over endangered species, predators and their management were controversial. The coyote (*Canis latrans*) is often at the center of such debates. Cursed by some, revered by others, respected by all, the coyote is an icon of the Southwest.

With the possible exception of its larger cousin, the grey wolf (*C. lupus*), no other carnivore has been studied so extensively in North America as the coyote. Yet, despite the research (or perhaps as a result of it) many ambiguities and contradictions abound regarding coyote biology and management. Opponents/proponents of coyotes represent a classical rural versus urban struggle, and the coyote offers a masterful performance of both Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde.

As an educator, I am obliged to maintain an unbiased stance in such debates. Neutrality comes easily for me relative to coyote controversies. I have hunted, called, trapped, photographed, videotaped and enjoyed coyotes on many occasions over the last 25 years. I savor the many evenings in a sleeping bag near a campfire when awakened by a coyote chorus in the witching hour. The rolling hills of western Oklahoma would reveal the locations of all coyotes within a mile radius, each answering his nearest neighbor as if responding to some symbolic roll call. I feel a kinship with J. Frank Dobie and Ernest Thompson Seton as they penned prose and rhyme about such encounters. Yet, as much as I enjoy seeing and hearing the coyote, I respect and appreciate why it is so unwelcome in sheep and goat regions.

I once saw the following epigram scribbled on a men's room wall: *"where you stand on an issue, usually depends upon where you sit."* Speakers and attendees at this symposium bring with them various perspectives, from the far right to the far left and all points in between. Hopefully the biology involved in these arguments (and reported herein) is unbiased, and can and should be used as the basis to debate the absolute and relative merits of coyotes in this region. Such is our challenge.

These proceedings assemble under one title the current state of knowledge about coyotes in the southwestern United States. Hopefully the information presented herein, coupled with the latent potential to network among the various stakeholders present, will further our understanding of coyotes and take us closer to resolving coyote-related conflicts.

-- Dale Rollins  
Conference Coordinator