University of Nebraska - Lincoln
DigitalCommons@University of Nebraska - Lincoln

Third Eastern Wildlife Damage Control Conference, 1987 | Eastern Wildlife Damage Control Conferences

10-18-1987

COYOTE CONTROL TECHNIQUES AND THEIR APPLICATIONS IN THE EASTERN UNITED STATES

Rick D. Owens
U.S. Department of Agriculture, Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, Animal Damage Control

Follow this and additional works at: http://digitalcommons.unl.edu/ewdcc3

Part of the Environmental Health and Protection Commons

Owens, Rick D., "COYOTE CONTROL TECHNIQUES AND THEIR APPLICATIONS IN THE EASTERN UNITED STATES" (1987). *Third Eastern Wildlife Damage Control Conference, 1987*. Paper 45.
http://digitalcommons.unl.edu/ewdcc3/45

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the Eastern Wildlife Damage Control Conferences at DigitalCommons@University of Nebraska - Lincoln. It has been accepted for inclusion in Third Eastern Wildlife Damage Control Conference, 1987 by an authorized administrator of DigitalCommons@University of Nebraska - Lincoln.

COYOTE CONTROL TECHNIQUES AND THEIR APPLICATIONS IN THE EASTERN UNITED STATES

by Rick D. Owens1/

Conflicts between coyotes and man's activities are varied and include such problems as predation on livestock, agricultural crops, and other wildlife, as well as threats to human health or safety. Formerly restricted to the Great Plains, the coyote's adaptability has enabled expansion of its population throughout most of the United States, Canada and Mexico. This expansion has occurred in spite of large-scale control and/or eradication efforts.

In the West, coyote management includes non-lethal as well as lethal techniques. Non-lethal approaches, which have resulted in varying degrees of success, include the use of guarding dogs, fencing, and shedding. In many instances, chronic coyote conflicts have forced farmers and ranchers to convert to alternate types of crop production. Preliminary results of audio-visual scare device research show promise for use in reducing livestock losses in some situations. Considerable research has also been conducted with reproductive inhibitors and chemical repellents but these approaches have not proven to be feasible.

In most coyote control programs, emphasis is placed on removal of the problem animal or animals. Leg-hold traps and snares are used most commonly. Calling and shooting has become very popular recently and can be an effective control tool. Aerial hunting utilizing either fixed-wing or rotary-wing aircraft is widely utilized in open rangeland with sparse ground cover. Two predacides are currently registered with the Environmental Protection Agency: the M-44 sodium cyanide ejector and the Livestock Protection Collar (LPC). The M-44 is registered and widely used in the West. The LPC, or 1080 collar, has recently received state registrations in Wyoming and Montana.

The use and effectiveness of these techniques vary; any of them might be applicable in certain situations in the East, dependent upon one or more of several factors: habitat type, land status, human population density, local laws and regulations, and socio-political climate. Generally speaking, the East has a wetter climate and denser, taller vegetation which adversely affect control efforts. In most instances, limited visibility restricts aerial hunting and, coupled with limited acoustics, results in less productive coyote calling--to the gun as well as in locating coyotes via the use of sirens and howling devices. Dense ground cover makes tracking and locating other field sign more difficult.

The majority of land in the East is privately owned and, compared to the West, a much smaller percentage is in types of agricultural production which are impacted by coyote depredations. When control is necessary, it generally is on smaller tracts of land, oftentimes edged by non-agricultural production. Control activities are frequently restricted to the small tracts of land where damage is occurring when neighboring landowners are reluctant to allow coyote control on their property. Coyote population management in the East, therefore, is more difficult and labor-intensive.

State laws and regulations relative to coyotes and control methodologies are much more restrictive in the eastern United States. States rights are much more pronounced, thereby limiting federal control programs. In most states, the coyote is considered a protected species, and harvest seasons and methods are strictly regulated. Existing laws, coupled with socio-political pressures from numerous special interest groups, severely limit

1/Assistant Regional Director, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, Animal Damage Control, Brentwood, TN 37027.

coyote control strategies.

Large tracts of unoccupied lands are much less common in the East, and physical contacts between the public and control operations are much more likely. Humane organizations, and in many areas the local public, are opposed to lethal techniques regardless of need, extent of use, selectivity or effectiveness. Bear, raccoon, fox and deer houndsmen strongly object to most coyote control techniques as these activities may pose a hazard to their dogs. These groups may restrict individual control efforts and significantly influence the political process.

Any of the numerous control methods commonly utilized in the West might be effective in certain situations in the East; however, social, political and other factors strongly influence control strategies and application of tools and techniques. Legal restrictions and habitat characteristics result in control efforts which are more difficult to apply and therefore more labor-intensive.