

SUMMARY OF COYOTE RESEARCH IN
THE HURON MOUNTAINS, 1977

A total of four coyotes, three male and one female, have been radio tagged to determine home range and movements. Home range of the three males varied from 1 mi.² to 3.5 mi.². The female made one 12 mile movement before being shot by a hunter. This movement could represent a dispersal. One male coyote's transmitter failed, another was killed by a car, and the fourth coyote is still being monitored. Coyote weights ranged from 22 to 24 lbs. These weights are smaller than those given in the literature. Monitoring activity patterns of coyotes has shown that they move only short distances during daylight hours. Active hunting and moving usually begins between 8:30 and 10:30 pm.

By the end of this field season over 100 coyote scats will have been collected and analyzed to determine food habits. White-tailed deer is the most important prey species with porcupine, red squirrel, and eastern chipmunk also being a significant part of the coyotes diet. Only in the Huron Mountain Club have such high occurrences of porcupine in coyote scats been recorded. Porcupine killing might represent a behavioral adaptation in hunting found only in the Huron Mountain coyote population.

At least three different litters of coyote pups are known to have been whelped this spring on the eastern portion of the club property. An increase in coyote reproduction this year might be linked to the severe winter of 1976-77 that made conditions difficult for the deer herd.

Greg Smith should have his final paper completed by December 1977, no plans for publication have been made, yet. We continue to be impressed by the complexity of the ecological systems of predator and prey in the Huron Mountains.

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