



Writer says coyote 'shining example of Christianity'

Belk Mt. News, 3 Dec 1981

Editor:

We have lived in the desert area for four years and have had some time to observe coyotes. Our feeding station is visited nightly by a group or several different groups of coyotes. They appear to be intelligent and beautiful, but most of all, they are afraid of man. In these years of daily observation we have never been able to approach any coyote. The sound of a human voice or even the voices on television will send them scurrying away in terror. An attack on any human seems totally impossible to me, unless the animal was cornered or very ill.

The death of one child in California, supposedly by coyotes, is indeed both sad and tragic. It does not indicate to me that all coyotes will attack children. We should try to remember that children die every day from other causes. They are beaten to death by their parents, raped and assaulted by strangers or friends and may die as a result of no parental supervision. During the extensive use of a deadly compound 1080 there were 18 child deaths reported as a result of contact with that poison. The Department of Interior now wishes to make that poison legal again. Last year 13 children died as a result of playing with handguns in their own homes. One child dies every day in the United States in a gun-related accident. We do not ban guns and we rarely punish the owner of the gun that killed the child. If one 18-year-old boy kills one child do we automatically destroy all 18-year-old boys? I think not!

The vicious war against coyotes is the direct result of great pressures on Washington by sheep owners. These are large ranches, as the small owners rarely benefit. Only 4,000 individuals in the United States are the sole beneficiaries of the monetary generosity of the government (the taxpayers). These are primarily absentee owners who never see the sheep and care little about their welfare. They refuse to erect sheds for new-born, refuse to hire shepherds, fail to use guard dogs and will not install proper fences. This would cost them money. Their own! It is

far easier to blame every death of a naturally fragile lamb on coyotes, and receive its full value for everyone, aside from those who are poisoned, all of whom die horrible and painfully slow deaths.

After all, the coyote cannot defend itself! Since 1972, the government has killed 750,000 coyotes. Since nature has found a way to compensate for this slaughter, coyotes have simply doubled their production. Result: There are the same number of coyotes alive today as there were before the senseless killing. However, the taxpayers have spent \$117 million to carry out this project which protects only the 4,000 sheep owners. This money has been totally wasted in an effort to exterminate yet another species.

Ranchers who live close to Yosemite National Park where coyotes are presently protected have stated that in nine years with coyotes crossing their property daily, they have not suffered a single loss of calves or lambs. Yet the killing goes on!

Aside from its major role in keeping the environment in ecological balance by feeding on rodents, the coyote is a shining example of Christianity at work. Since the human animal frequently forgets that he pretends to be religious, we should look to the coyote. There are no unfaithful coyotes! Mating is for life and only top quality animals are permitted by their own rules, to reproduce young. Coyotes do not have babies they cannot support. In lean years, the number of young is very small, sometimes there are no young produced. They practice birth control on the highest level and there are no dependent young who must look for government hand-outs because their parents cannot feed them.

There are no unwanted coyote babies. All are loved and protected by every member of the group. There are no battered coyote babies. All young are carefully and tenderly raised until they are old enough to be totally independent. No coyote babies are killed by their parents. There are no abused coyote mothers. The female with young is tended and aided by her mate as well as other members of the family group. No male coyote has ever, so far as is known, abused his mate. The coyote family is loyal and devoted for many years or until it is destroyed by the human animal who attempts to play god.

It is time for humans to remember that we were not placed on earth to systematically destroy every other living thing. There is no need to "control" the coyote population since they do that very efficiently on their own. Perhaps we should emulate the coyote and begin to control our own population by not producing young when we are unable to feed or care for them, but must rely on the taxpayers to do it for us. We might also take a lesson from the coyote in loyalty to family and compassion for each other. In that learning, possibly we will find it reasonable to show compassion for one of nature's true gifts — God's dogs — the coyotes.

never more sincerely,
Ellerie Wolfer