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Saw Mill River Audubon Coyote Statement

Saw Mill River Audubon notes that some property owners in Northern Westchester have been advised that lethal trapping of coyotes is an effective safety measure following negative interactions between coyotes and pets. Trapping has even been advocated after simply observing coyotes in a neighborhood. **However, based on wildlife science, Saw Mill River Audubon affirms that it is scientifically unsound to think that lethal trapping of coyotes will reduce coyote numbers or prevent negative coyote interactions.**

Coyotes have a built-in biological response that causes them to increase breeding when family groups are disrupted by lethal removals. Transient coyotes will also move into a territory no longer held by a disrupted family group. The result of lethal removals—already attempted for more than a century in the western U.S. —is a net increase in coyote presence with an increased potential for negative human-coyote interactions.

Saw Mill River Audubon affirms that stable coyote territories offer the best opportunity for people to haze – or deliberately chase away – the same coyote individuals if they venture too close to humans. Deliberate, ongoing programs of hazing have been shown to cause coyotes to change their behaviors and avoid specific human interactions. **Learned behaviors can be transmitted within the coyote family group increasing the effects of hazing if the same family group maintains a territory.**

Further, some of our neighbors may be unaware of the many risks to outdoor pets in addition to coyotes. As a result, these neighbors may be unaware or even resistant to the ongoing need to modify their pet care in a manner appropriate for the mixed rural/suburban landscapes of northern Westchester, even in their own backyards. **It has long been a reality in our area that cats and small dogs allowed outdoors unattended are at risk for injury or even death from many types of wildlife—**including hawks, owls, raccoons, coyotes and foxes—as well as at risk from cars and any local trapping efforts. Even larger dogs, allowed to run off leash in wooded areas and not under close supervision by their owners, are at risk from these dangers. We strongly urge all dog owners to leash their dogs.

Because Eastern Coyotes have expanded their range over many decades all along the East Coast, Saw Mill River Audubon further notes that this is a multi-state issue. Localized lethal coyote trapping will not reduce the local coyote population for all the reasons noted above and may actually increase human-coyote conflicts for surrounding neighbors, even those at a distance from a trapping location. **We further affirm that wide-spread and consistent hazing and responsible pet care are the best tools available to avoid negative coyote interactions.**

- **More information about coyote biology** with video examples of hazing is available at www.projectcoyote.org.
- **Further information about coyotes in New York** and how to avoid conflicts with coyotes are available at the NYS Department of Environmental Conservation web site [here](#).
- **For a deeper look at how lethal coyote removals result in increased coyote reproduction**, a 2014 research study is linked [here](#).