

**HB 442**, relative to coyote hunting. **MAJORITY: INEXPEDIENT TO LEGISLATE. MINORITY: OUGHT TO PASS.**

Rep. Robert L’Heureux for the **Majority** of Fish and Game and Marine Resources.

This bill would have prevented the hunting of coyotes from April 1 through August 31. Coyotes are predators and hunt and kill in packs. **Fact Check #1**

This is the time of the year when deer, moose, and many other wild and domestic farm animals, such as cows, have their young. Deer fawns, moose calves, as well as many other animals born this time of year, are a major food source for coyotes. It is not uncommon for coyotes to attack and kill a mother deer and her fawn(s) while she is giving birth which has a huge negative impact on the NH deer herd. **Fact Check #2**

During committee testimony we heard from a farmer whose cow, defenseless while giving birth, was killed along with her calf, and both were devoured. **Fact Check #3**

There are also many reports of household cats and small dogs being attacked and killed by coyotes. **Fact Check #4**

The present system we have is working and is helping to keep the coyote population in check. **Fact Check #5**

Another negative aspect of this bill is that it would remove the authority of the Fish and Game Department to regulate and set the hunting season and give that authority to the legislature. Who is more qualified to regulate our wildlife, the Fish and Game Department experts or state politicians? **Fact Check #6**



**Fact Checking the Majority Report**

(1) Coyotes are predators. Predators are needed to keep an eco-system healthy. They control prey animals and cull the sick and weak.

(2) Coyotes depend on rodents for over 60% of their food supply. Fawns average up to 30% of a spring

diet. According to Mark Ellingwood, Director of Wildlife for the NH Fish and Game Department (FG) the NH deer herd is not being impacted by coyotes. The deer harvest was higher in 2018 than it has been for nine years and the second highest since 1922. NH has more than enough deer for both species, human and non-human. In areas with high deer densities coyotes should be welcome to help control the deer population especially with Lyme disease on the rise.

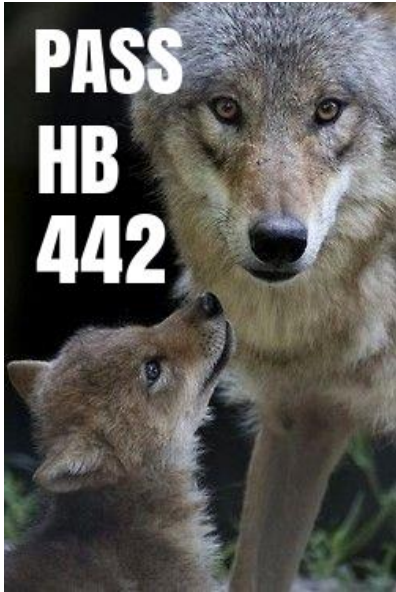
(3) Cows are not prey of coyotes. Coyotes will take calves if those animals are not protected at their most vulnerable time. From FG website - “The great majority of coyotes don't prey upon livestock.” Non-lethal methods to protect livestock can be found on the FG website. HB 442 will not stop a landowner from destroying any wild animal that is bothering livestock. See [RSA 207:26](#) that protects this landowner right.

(4) Statistics do not back this claim up. Only two people testified to two stories they heard about pets being taken. From the FG website - “Keeping your pets and pet food inside at night helps reduce the likelihood that a family pet will become prey. Coyotes are often blamed for events for which domestic dogs, automobiles or other wildlife are responsible.”

(5) If this were true, with unlimited year-round hunting, 3-month night hunting, trapping, baiting, and killing contests, coyote populations would be decreasing. Instead, the more hunting pressure placed on coyotes results in larger and more litters.

(6) Passing HB 442 would not remove FG authority to set seasons. The FG biologists are the experts to set seasons and they will continue with that job. But in this case the Commission did not listen to their biologists, when in January of 2018 the biologists recommended closing the coyote hunting season for pup raising. The Commissioners are not biologists. They are not qualified to set seasons and when they don’t listen to their own biologists the legislature has the authority, and the duty, to intervene.

***Christine Schadler, a respected local canid expert and former sheep-farmer, whose article about coyotes is referenced on the NH Fish and Game website, contributed to these fact checks of the majority report.***



## Endorsements

**Meade Cadot, Ph.D. Naturalist & Conservationist**

**Rick Van de Poll, Ph.D. Natural Resource Scientist**

**Weldon Bosworth, Ph.D. Ecologist**

**Mark Mattson, Ph.D. Population Ecologist**

**Geoffrey Jones, Licensed Professional Forester**

**Christine Schadler, M.S., Canid Conservation Specialist**

**John Harrigan, Outdoor Writer, 51 years of Newspapering in NH**

**R. Scott Semmens, M.S., Keene State College Environmental Studies Dept., Adjunct Professor**

**Barry N. Taylor, DVM**

**NH Conservation Law Foundation**

**NH Sierra Club**

**NH Association of Conservation Commissions**

**NH Wildlife Coalition**

**Voices of Wildlife in NH**

**The NH Animal Rights League**

**The Humane Society of the United States**

**UNH Animal Welfare Alliance**

**Twin States Animal Liberation**

**Brox Environmental Citizens**

**We, the signers, support HB 442, the legislation that will close coyote hunting while coyotes are raising their pups from April 1 to August 31. Coyotes mate for life, with both parents caring for their pups - the father brings home food and the mother nurses and defends the pups against predators.**

**Last year, the expert wildlife biologists at NH Fish and Game proposed a similar closing of the coyote hunting season for pup raising but it was voted down by the Fish & Game Commissioners.**

**Currently, coyotes are killed as a result of year-round hunting, five months of trapping, night hunting using high tech electronic calls that mimic wounded prey, hunting over bait and through killing "contests" that target coyotes. To continue this intense killing pressure on a species without some respite is not only ecologically unsound and ineffective in reducing their population, it is morally repugnant.**

**NH lawmakers, please vote to pass HB 442 and support sound wildlife management practices and our state's coyote families.**

**Andover Conservation Commission**

**Bethlehem Conservation Commission**

**Lempster Conservation Commission**

**Lyndeborough Conservation Commission**

**Members**

**Peterborough Conservation Commission**

**Stoddard Conservation Commission**

**Strafford Conservation Commission**

**Sullivan Conservation Commission**

**Webster Conservation Commission**

**Green Mountain Conservation Group, Ossipee Watershed, NH**

**Chester Conservation Commission**

**Kingston Conservation Commission**