



Article

Coyote Killing Contests: Persistence of Differences among Oregonians

Debra Merskin

School of Journalism & Communication, University of Oregon, Eugene, OR 97403, USA; dmerskin@uoregon.edu

Abstract: Management practices of nonhuman animals in nature (“wildlife”) are globally controversial. In some places, individuals believe it should be up to individual landowners to “manage” wildlife. In others, wildlife is seen as belonging to everyone and should be respected, or least hunted ethically. Wildlife killing contests are legal in most U.S. states. Coyote killing contests take place in many of them and several states have enacted legislation to ban them. In Oregon, efforts have failed three times. This paper is a critical discourse analysis of testimonies in the 2021 Oregon hearings. Opposition to the bill is analyzed according to five psychological rationalizations to unpack the pro-contest arguments as an example of rural resistance. The findings suggest unpacking these as more productive for activist groups when creating strategies to counter pro-killing beliefs.

Keywords: coyotes; discourse; neutralization techniques; killing contests; wildlife management



Citation: Merskin, Debra. 2022.

Coyote Killing Contests: Persistence of Differences among Oregonians.

Journalism and Media 3: 292–308.

<https://doi.org/10.3390/journalmedia3020022>

Academic Editors: Carrie P. Freeman and Núria Almiron

Received: 30 January 2022

Accepted: 11 April 2022

Published: 15 April 2022

Publisher’s Note: MDPI stays neutral with regard to jurisdictional claims in published maps and institutional affiliations.



Copyright: © 2022 by the author. Licensee MDPI, Basel, Switzerland. This article is an open access article distributed under the terms and conditions of the Creative Commons Attribution (CC BY) license (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>).

1. Introduction

Whether it is killing individual animals or weekend mass killing contests, belief in the right to be left alone to manage one’s own interests without government interference is part of rural pride and identity and is carefully woven into the narrative of what it means to be self-sufficient. Sometimes, however, historical ways of “managing” wildlife¹ are found to conflict with contemporary scientific knowledge of animal behavior, biology, and ecological sustainability.

For three consecutive years (2019, 2020, 2021) those interested in ending coyote killing contests have worked to pass a bill in the Oregon legislature and senate. Each year the bill has failed at the senate level, largely due to powerful politicians and interests from Eastern Oregon representing constituents from an area with few residents (Harney County) but powerful voices. This paper is an analysis of arguments for and against 2021 House Bill 2728 to ascertain whether resistance to contest bans is a wildlife biology issue or a psychosociological one. Written testimonies/letters delivered on 9 February 2021, to the (Oregon) House Committee on Agriculture and Natural Resources are analyzed according to critical discourse analysis. Nearly 300 documents were reviewed for common themes amongst supporters and opponents of the bill. The findings discuss the oppositional arguments, look to what they might have in common, and situate pro-contest arguments within Sykes and Matza’s (1957, p. 667) five “techniques of normalization” as discussed by Pohja-Mykrä (2016a). The following sections describe the animal coyote, the concept of Coyote² in media and popular culture, contemporary attitudes and beliefs about the animal, followed by an analysis of testimony/letters, and a discussion of what might underlie defenses of the killing contests.

2. Literature Review

In Oregon, coyotes live in high desert sage to shrub-steppe to forests and even in urban areas. Classified as a furbearer (along with 16 others), they “may be trapped and hunted” (“Furbearer Management” n.d.), and are “a moderately social species”, who possess a “highly developed communication system that facilitates development and

maintenance of long-term social relationships” (“Coyote” n.d.). They are also classified as an Unprotected Mammal and as Predatory Animals (which also includes feral swine, rabbits, rodents) “which are or may be destructive to agricultural products and activities” (Oregon Furbearer n.d., p. 7). There is no season as coyotes can be hunted 12 months of the year and there is no bag limit³—all that is required is a valid Oregon hunting license.

The number of coyotes killed in the United States each year is substantial. Government agencies, such as Wildlife Services and various departments of fish and wildlife, kill many deemed to be problem animals and as a preventative measure to keep them from killing “livestock” and “game animals” such as deer and antelope. “Many [are] shot to death from small planes and helicopters” (Worrall 2016). Despite nearly two centuries of eradication efforts, coyotes have survived and, in some places, thrived, much to the dismay of many farmers and ranchers. According to the Yale Environment newsletter “The sponsors of killing contests wrongly argue that these events help prevent coyotes from taking livestock and deer” (Williams 2018).

Much misunderstanding has fueled the hatred of this dog-like creature who is denied the admiration at times bestowed on their larger relative, the wolf. “Since the early 19th century, when Lewis and Clark first encountered them, coyotes have been subject to a pitiless war of extermination by ranchers and government agencies alike” (Worrall 2016). This is despite research that demonstrates killing coyotes isn’t actually the best way to control them (Edwards 2019; see also Shivik 2014), and in fact mass killing stresses the pack and results in more pups (Blejwas et al. 2002). “If you wipe out a pack of coyotes, it leaves a hole in the habitat, and nature dislikes a vacuum” (Monteith, qtd. in Edwards 2019). Yet, those who live most intimately with coyotes in places such as Eastern Oregon, firmly believe the opposite. “Predator hatred is hard-wired even in people who should know that predators make prey strong and fleet”, i.e., fast (Medwid 2018, qtd. in Williams 2018). What might explain this difference, a disregard for science, and insistence on killing as the best method of management?

From major metropolitan areas such as Los Angeles, Chicago, and San Francisco to remote open range areas in Utah, Colorado, and Oregon, coyotes are present. Coyotes are not new to many of these areas, in fact they were there long before modern human habitation. “Close encounters with coyotes have now become the country’s most common large-wildlife experience” (Flores 2016, p. 2). With colonization, however, just as many other species of wildlife were forced out of areas humans valued, so was the coyote. They have occupied the Americas for thousands of years and their ancient bones have been widely found in archeological sites of the Americas (O’Connor 2008).

Indigenous people from Central America in the south to Eastern Alaska in the north, have variations on Coyote tales (Lopez 1977):

Coyote stories were told all over North America—in Cheyenne tipis, Mandan earth lodges, Inupiak igloos, Navajo hogans and Sia pueblos—with much laughter and guffawing and with exclamations of surprise and awe. . . . [They] detailed tribal origins, they emphasized a world view thought to be a correct one; and they dramatized the value of proper behavior.

(pp. xvi–xvii)

As I am not indigenous and not a member of these nations, it is not for me to say what any of these stories might mean. What is significant, however, is that there exists a view of Coyote amongst indigenous peoples that varies considerably from that held by non-natives whose Coyote stories are most often told through media and popular culture. Therefore, the first step toward excavating the meaning of coyotes is to examine who Coyote is in the mainstream imagination.

2.1. Coyote in Cultures

What is it about Coyote that so unnerves and yet appeals to us? Is it their intelligence, the “prairie wolf’s” “unique mannerisms, bark, and skills? Or Coyote’s ability to flourish when many other species cannot? Is the reason more symbolic, more psychological, as

Carl Jung found studying the Coyote-as-deity, being “a faithful copy of an absolutely undifferentiated human consciousness . . . a forerunner of the savior, and like him, God, man, and animal at once? He is both subhuman and superhuman, a bestial and divine being”. Or, as long recognized amongst indigenous people, is the Coyote a type of human, “he preserves a tail, sharp muzzle, and erect ears, but he stands and walks upright, has a wife and family, and displays normal human fixations on status, food, fun, and lust” (Flores 2016, p. 36)? Coyote shares with humans the ability to be both solitary and social, known as “fissure-fusion”, which is not all that common among beings (p. 36). This flexibility has given them the ability to survive just about everything humans throw at them in terms of extermination efforts. Coyote is a shape shifter, joker, trickster, and is truly wild, not domesticated as are dogs.

Coyotes are real and symbolic outliers to the activities and interests of human beings. Lacking the familiarity of dogs and the dangerous glamour of wolves, coyotes figuratively and literally live somewhere in between in terms of size and image. These relatives do the dirty work of cleaning up carrion after other predators have left kills and they hunt the small rodents often reviled by ranchers and farmers. Coyote has a significant place in indigenous belief systems through the animal’s range. They are clever, industrious, intelligent survivors who have lived around and amongst human beings for thousands of years. Opportunistic hunters, they will feed upon what they find, hunt small rodents, fish, frogs, insects, grass, berries, and unfortunately, sometimes pets and small livestock. Coyotes are found throughout North America, as far south as Mexico and Panama and north in New England and Eastern Alaska (Arizona-Sonora Desert Museum 2008). They sometimes hunt in packs and raise their young in dens where they also sleep. They are known for their “songs”, their calls, which are used to keep track of family members and communicate with other coyotes.

If the only way someone knew of Coyote was through re-presentations in media and popular culture, what would they believe? Their intelligence, keenness, adaptability, and their shrewd problem-solving skills have made them subjects of curiosity as well as targets of violence. As are human beings, coyotes are a predator species, animals who hunt (prey on) other animals.⁴ We share a deep history with other predators, one not so long ago that was filled with danger even to humans who were not top of the food chain because we did not control the food chain. We were also prey. Not to coyotes but to others who represented darkness, wilderness, and the unknown. The manifestations of those fears remain part of our collective unconscious. “To confront a predator is to stand before the dual-faced god from our deep past. That is why we look longer, more intently, with more studied fascination at predators than at other kinds of animals” (Flores 2016, p. 13). Additionally, perhaps this is why we target predator species as a threat to our declared supremacy in the order of things, and competition for animals we consider our property, not theirs.

Early attitudes toward coyotes (that infused media portrayals) were informed less by personal experience, at least initially, and more by accounts of explorers and writers who shared their impressions with a curious public. Given that coyotes do not live in Europe, for example, experiences with and descriptions of these animals who lived in the mysterious western United States, were open entirely to interpretations. Records of the “prairie wolf”/coyote were kept by Thomas Say, a scientist, who, in 1819, described the animal in detail, noting that they are unlikely to be successful on their own killing large prey, such as a deer, rather “the exertion of their utmost swiftness and cunning, are so often unavailing, that they are sometimes reduced to the necessity of eating wild plums, and other fruits, to them almost indigestible, in order to distend the stomach, and appease in a degree the cravings of hunger” (Mussulman n.d.).⁵ Josiah Gregg (1844) described coyote sounds “like ventriloquists, a pair of these [coyotes] will represent a dozen distinct voices in such succession—will bark, chatter, yelp, whine, and howl in such variety of note, that one would fancy a score of them at hand” (p. 225).

Mark Twain (1872) gave a negative appraisal of the animal, which no doubt influenced much of the reading public, stating coyote is “spiritless and cowardly” (qtd. in

Flores 2016, p. 77). As more writers and reporters journeyed west, they also wrote accounts that contributed to if not an evil image, certainly one of a less than desirable animal. Horace Greely described the animal as “a sneaking, cowardly little wretch”. In popular magazines such as *Overland Monthly* (1908) and *Popular Science Monthly* (1887), writers called coyotes “contemptable”, “perverse”, said that they were lacking “higher morals”, and were “cowardly to the last degree”. Ingersoll (1887) said:

Such is the coyote—genus loci of the plains; an Ishmaelite of the desert; a consort of rattlesnake and vulture; the tyrant of his inferiors; jackal to the puma; a bushwhacker upon the flanks of the buffalo armies; the pariah of his own race, and despised by mankind.

In a 1920 article in *Scientific American* (von Blon 1920), subtitled “How a Beast That Was Not Worth Powder to Shoot Them Has Become a Valuable Source of Revenue”, the author calls them “that despised howling pariah of the animal kingdom”, “a hungry, skulking roamer”, and “the original Bolshevik” (p. 246), and as such equates killing coyotes as a near patriotic duty. Kellert’s (1984, 1996) ongoing study of American attitudes toward animals have consistently revealed preference for pets/domestic animals such as dogs and horses and “relatively negative views of the coyote” (1984, p. 191) “who were represented in the bottom half of the ranked animals” (1996, p. 101). Factors that contribute to like/dislike include attributes such as size and aesthetics, but also, as relate to coyotes, “danger to humans”, “likelihood of inflicting property damage”, “predatory tendencies”, “relationship to human society” (pet or pest), and “cultural and historical relationships” (p. 191). When wildlife fall into the category of “predators”, attitudes are often mixed particularly when it comes to the public who oppose “indiscriminate population reductions” and lethal means and “livestock” producers who are in favor of lethal control strategies (p. 194). Kellert et al. (1996, p. 978) note that “creatures such as snakes, rats, coyotes, and bats were frequently viewed as intrinsically unworthy” by Euro-American settlers and the killing of predators such as wolves and by extension coyotes, “attested to one’s belief in community and God as much as to practical threats to livestock and person” (p. 978). They were regarded as “hateful creatures” and “tended to be viewed from the perch of this morality play as intrinsically evil” (p. 104). These historical and cultural beliefs form the underlying context for the persistence of many negative beliefs about coyotes still present in ranching and farming communities that persist today.

Modern day re-presentations drew on these accounts. Some versions are comic, such as *Looney Tunes’* Wile E. Coyote, Calamity Coyote, the video game *Fire & Ice* (featuring Cool Coyote), and the Hanna-Barbera feature film *The Adventures of Don Coyote and Sancho Panda* (Alvarez 1947). A more mysterious Coyote was featured in the book version of *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* titled “Coyote Moon” (Vornholt 1998), wherein Buffy believes a sudden influx of coyotes to Sunnydale might be the source of evil. The term “coyote ugly” (the title of a 2000 film by the same name) refers to an unattractive one-night stand partner. “Popular etymology suggests that it drew inspiration from actual coyotes, as they tend to be so desperate to escape from traps that they chew their own limbs off” (“Coyote Ugly” 2018).

In *The Predator Paradox*, Shivik (2014) calls the killing of bears, coyotes, cougars, and wolves a “war”. Flores (2016, p. vii) similarly calls it a “war on wild things”. Animal activist groups use the alliteration to frame campaigns such as those by Wild Earth Guardians, Predator Defense, and World Animal Foundation. However, is that the right term when one group is attacked by another? Wars typically have to do with armed conflicts and battles between opposing sides. Animals are not armed and were they ever at war with us? “Coyotes are political”, states Flores (2016, p. 15) in *Coyote America*. Like many who write about killing wolves and other predator species, Flores details what he views as a war on wildlife (see also: Amory 1974; Keefover-Ring 2009). Wars are political; they are motivated by and fought for many reasons but often include economics, identity, and fear. The implication of the term “war”, however, is that there are at least two sides engaging in a fight. Is it a war when only one side inflicts violence on the other? Coyotes have been and remain squarely in the crosshairs of the rural community spotting scope in

terms of in land, animals-as-property, and perhaps most of all, autonomy. The freedom to kill coyotes in whatever manner one wishes, to “manage” the land and wildlife without imposition of urban interests and/or governmental regulation, is part of a rural sense of self-determination.

2.2. Political Coyotes

Without a doubt, “coyotes are political” (Flores 2016, p. 15). In the early 2020s, it is no surprise that coyotes are a focus of those who see any tightening of hunting rules as an attempt to limit their hunting, as a slippery slope toward gun control, and as interference by urban interests. Redirecting aggression toward wildlife is not new. It was evident in eradication efforts on western wildlife, and indigenous peoples, as part of Manifest Destiny. More recently, in the United States in the 1990s, the wolf was brought back as an emblem of wildness, admired for beauty, vacillating in and out of protected status. Then, with the destruction of the World Trade Center in 2001, sentiment turned once again against the animals. Years of progress to bring them back were undone. Aerial gunning resumed. For some Americans, the enemy was here. “It’s hard to escape a sense that coyotes have joined religion, the Iraq War, Obamacare, and climate change as one more thing the culture warriors in American have to disagree about” (p. 16). Add to this the politicization of science with the onset of COVID-19 and Trump-era politics, arguments grounded in academic research were not likely to win against the lived experiences of rural residents.

Targeting of predator species as expressions of rural autonomy and resistance to outsiders and change is evident outside the U.S. as well. Research in Finland related to “rural identity and way of life” as defenses of current “management” practices as they pertain to wildlife and strategies concerning killing of large carnivores is applicable in the case of Oregon’s coyotes (Pohja-Mykrä 2016a, p. 439). Pohja-Mykrä’s (2016a) was a study of the narratives of hunting violators (p. 231) who stave off shame and stigma from illegal hunting practices by rationalizing them in terms of the rural protest of and resistance to conservation policies and practices. These function psychologically as “neutralization techniques” (p. 441). While it was a study of illegal killing of carnivores and techniques “to increase compliance with conservation regimes” (p. 231), the underlying issues of identity, biosecurity, the value of local knowledge, perceptions of the legitimacy of regulations, and dynamics between locals and authorities are relevant to the current study.

Animal killing contests have a long history in the United States and whether formally organized as public events or transpiring in underground worlds such as with dog and cock fighting, wildlife killing contests are legal in 40 states (Figure 1). In these highly organized events, some taking place on public land some on private land, contestants compete for cash and prizes such as hunting equipment. “Depending on the rules of the contest, competitors target predator species, such as bobcats, coyotes, pumas and foxes” (Somvichian-Clausen 2021).

Hundreds of varmint killing competitions take place across the country with names like Southern Illinois Predator Challenge, Oklahoma’s Cast & Bang State Predator Championship, Park County (Wyoming), Predator Palooza, Iowa Coyote Classic, Idaho Varmint Hunters Blast from the Past, Michigan’s Dog Down Coyote Tournament, Minnesota’s Save the Birds Coyote Hunting Tournament, and the Great Lakes Region Predator Challenge.

(Williams 2018)

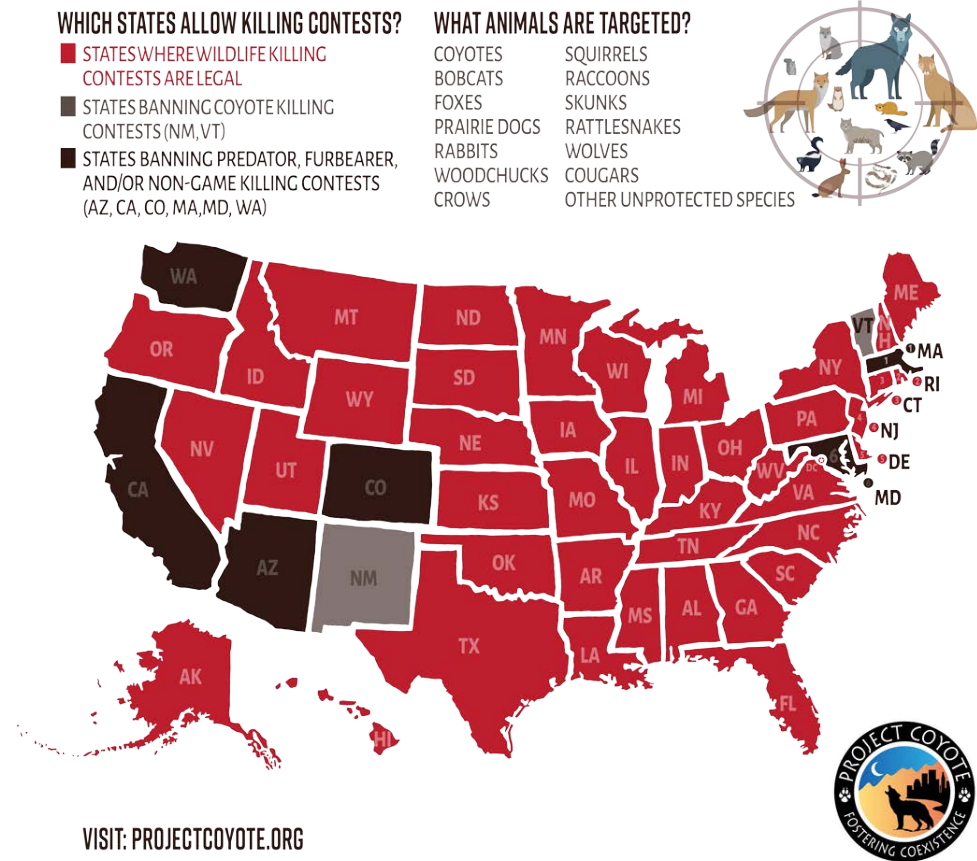


Figure 1. States Allowing Wildlife Killing Contests. Source: Project Coyote. <http://www.projectcoyote.org/endkillingcontests/> (accessed on 31 March 2022).

In Texas alone, there are more than 600 wildlife killing contests. Coyotes are the most targeted.

A single contest can result in more than 1000 animal deaths within the span of a single night, and a lack of fair chase principles mean that the predators being stalked for slaughter can be lured by distress calls and the promise of food. It is estimated that in the U.S. alone, more than half a million coyotes are killed by humans each year—about one per minute. The animals are easy to bring in. All that is needed is the sound of a distressed pup or of a dying animal and as curious beings, they will come right to the hunters. Flores (2016) calls it “the battlefield”, the places where human interests collide with the lifeways of those who were here before us, the animals. With high-powered weapons, state-of-the-art calling devices, and sophisticated camouflage techniques, it is not a contest between willing foes, nor between equally armed enemies, it is a one-directional assault on predators.

How does one kill to exterminate, kill to create piles of bodies, kill period? In *A Human Being Died that Night* Gobodo-Madikizela (2004) writes: “a broad consensus exists in the literature that in order to torture, kill, and maim, perpetrators must first exclude their victims from the moral obligations they feel toward the world in general and, in particular, toward those with whom they are socially and politically connected” (p. 128). Thus, the victim must become Other, not worthy of moral inclusion or consideration. Additionally, “the construction of ‘otherness’ is an essential step on the path toward the destruction of victims” p. 154, n. 1). Amongst human beings, terms such as “terrorists”, “enemies of the state”, and others function to mark entire groups. Social identity theory posits this as the psychological process of labeling with terms such as “pests”, “invasive species”, that similarly mark and treat all members of a species as the same. Language from *Popular*

Science referenced earlier demonstrates the groundwork upon which the enmification of coyotes was built:

The fact that in his hunting he frequently becomes a rival, his incorrigible thieveries, and his unmanly deportment in hanging about like a conscious felon, cause him to be despised by both hunter and ranchman, who take every means to kill him, save by the honorable use of gunpowder. Yet there are times when he makes himself respected and feared.

(Ingersoll 1887)

The same aspects of psychology that apply to objectification and Othering of human beings by human beings also applies to projection on to other species. The psychoanalytic theory of projective identification operation functions similarly when the target is not human.

Projection, as used by Jung drawing on Freud, is when “a piece of one’s own personality is transferred to or relocated to an outer object” or being (von Franz 1978, p. 31). When this happens “there is a loss [of] critical moral reflection. There is loss of ability to think rationally. This becomes “heightened in the context of a violent group”, such as those who engage in these mass killing activities” (Gobodo-Madikizela 2004, p. 154). Writing about wolf hatred, Ferris (2013) notes that “hate and intolerance are the underlying themes of the philosophies and motivations anti-wolf folks exhibit”. Studies have repeatedly linked animal abuse to child and partner abuse as well as more psychopathic killing later in life (Arluke et al. 1999). They are part of a syndrome evident in violence and bigotry against humans as well as against other animal species. In Ferris’ (2013) analysis of anti-wolf Facebook posts they note:

We also find that they are mostly high school educated or hold undergraduate degrees in fields little relevant to understanding the complex mechanisms of predator-prey relationships, trophic cascades, gene-flow, experimental design and the subtleties of concepts such as niches, hyper-volumes, biological potential, carrying capacity, and compensatory versus additive predation. In fact, they tend to hold those educated in the field in low regard calling them “eggspurts”.

Thus, conservation plans, scientific data, and other arguments are not considered legitimate. Rural defiance takes form in support for mass hunts but go “underground” with practices by, for example, not advertising the contests widely and going private in social media groups. Studies of rural resistance, human–wildlife conflict, and resistance to change document these tensions not only in the United States (Bonnie et al. 2020) but also in Nordic nations (von Essen and Allen 2017), Sweden (Dalerum 2021), and Finland (Pohja-Mykrä 2016a, 2016b).

This paper builds Pohja-Mykrä’s (2016a) “Community Power Over Conservation” study in Finland and similarly draws on Sykes and Matza’s (1957) conception of “techniques of neutralization” (p. 667) as a framework for unpacking opposition testimony. While Sykes and Matza (1957) write of delinquency and law breaking, some of the fundamental concepts apply in the current study when considering the process of rationalization that accompanies an act that departs not only from norms of many people in general, but in particular to hunting community participants they claim to be part of. “The delinquent represents not a radical opposition to law-abiding society but something like an apologetic failure, often more sinned against than sinning in his own eyes” (p. 667). The urban versus rural divide mentioned by both supporters to and opponents of the bill are examples of this sense. Opponents of the bill report feeling misunderstood, different, and even invisible to more populated, urban parts of the state. Supporters of the content ban write that this bill is not indicative of the divide while opponents argue that it is. They write:

It is our argument that much delinquency is based on what is essentially an unrecognized extension of defenses to crimes, in the form of justifications for deviance that are seen as valid by the delinquent but not by the legal system or society at large.

(p. 665)

3. Method

In the case of these mass killing efforts, wildlife biologists and scientific studies demonstrate “in the case of endemic species predator hunting . . . [this] isn’t an effective way to control predators” (Somvichian-Clausen 2021; Blejwas et al. 2002). Yet, despite or perhaps because of what scientists say, report, present, and otherwise argue before legislators and citizens, the belief that these contests are effective means of predator control persists.

The research was brought before Oregon’s state legislature and senate three times. Each session a ban on the contests succeeded at the legislative level but failed at the Senate. In 2020 it passed the Senate (17–12) but was attached to a larger environmental bill that included cap and trade, and, as it was during the final hours of the session, it failed on the floor vote because many Oregon Republic senators staged a walk-out rather than vote on the bill (Stennes 2019). In 2021 the bill was brought back with the following language:

Prohibits person from conducting or participating in contest, competition, tournament or derby that has objective of taking coyotes for cash or prizes.

(Oregon State Legislature 2021)

To understand the arguments of defenders of the contests and to put them in the context of theory, all testimony available on the Oregon Legislature web page for House Bill 2728, the 2021 version of a bill, was analyzed. The result was 227 letters advocating for passage of the bill and 66 against. The findings are presented below and then interpreted according to Fairclough’s ([1995] 2013) critical discourse analysis (CDA).

4. Analysis

CDA, as conceptualized by Fairclough ([1995] 2013, p. 3), has three “basic properties”: relational, dialectical, and transdisciplinary: (1) It is a relational form of research in the sense that its primary focus is not on entities or individuals . . . but on social relations” which are “layered” including “relations between relations”. Part of the relationality is between communicators and “objects” and others, such, as I argue, with non-human animals and what these animals represent. Discourse thus has “both its ‘internal’ and its ‘external’ relations with other such ‘objects’”. (2) It is also dialectical, not fully apart from nor part of, other speech acts or “objects”. As such, it is intimately connected with power and control. Those who have power in a society or culture determine what is accessible in discourse, what is not, and what remains beyond description through language/image. (3) A CDA cannot and should not be contained within a particular discipline, rather, it crosses boundaries in terms of theories, methods, and objects of analysis. As such, it is “a recognition that the natural and social worlds differ” and that the social world “depend(s) upon human action for its existence and is ‘socially constructed’” (p. 4).

In terms of the actual analysis, Fairclough ([1995] 2013) suggests the methodology (using this term versus method to be inclusive of theory) be equally transdisciplinary, emphasizing themes that present themselves to us. This allows for “various points of entry” (p. 5) never relying solely on the discourse but also on the context within which it occurs. This is consistent with media studies approaches that emphasize the lived circumstances and historical conditions (context) within which the speech act occurs (whether it be verbal or visual).

Multiple themes arose in the discourse of bill proponents and Bill 2728. Table 1 shows the most common arguments made by bill advocates (supporters of the ban) and those against the ban/bill. These are summarized below followed by illustrative comments drawn from the testimonies.

Table 1. Arguments Supporting and Opposing Bill.

Supporting	Opposing
Cruel, inhumane, violent.	Predator control.
Unethical.	Keeps mule deer population alive.
Casts hunters in a bad light.	Attempts to kill hunting heritage.
Animal killing should not be for competition and cash prizes.	Too much government interference already.
Animals should be respected.	Affects livelihood.
Science does not support it as population control.	Brings revenue to rural communities.
Throws off pack dynamics.	Should be able to manage own affairs.
Interferes with balance of nature.	Contests have gone on for decades and population still strong.
Wasteful.	Keeps children and pets safe.
Encourages disrespect for all life.	Provides an event for enthusiasts (such as Portland Marathon).
Teaches children to disrespect animal life and disregard suffering.	Teaches future generations.
Violation of state duty to care for wildlife.	
Not used for food.	

4.1. Advocates of Ban/Pro 2728

In total, 228 letters/testimonies were posted for supporters of 2728. After removing 1 duplicate this left 227 for analysis. Letters in support came from a variety of individuals including self-identified hikers, a fly-fisherman, hunters, several wildlife biologists, and a 4th generation rural Oregonian. Professional association endorsements came from President and CEO of Oregon Humane Society; President, Coalition Advocating for Animals; Co-founder of and advisor to Benton County; Agriculture and Wildlife Protection Program (AWPP), Central Oregon Land Watch, a Clinical Professor of Law, Lewis and Clark Law School, the Humane Society of the U.S. (who co-signed a letter with 20 other groups), and Project Coyote.

Four primary themes arose amongst supporters of the bill: Cruelty, Ethics, Science, and Identity.

1. Cruelty.

Multiple letters used terms such as “blood fests”, “torture”, “heinous”, “barbaric”, “cruel”, “brutal”, and “inhumane”. One writer stated: “making a fun sport out of slaughtering them and then taking macho photos with piles of dead coyotes is sick. It is celebrating the ugliest, basest, most barbaric impulses humans can experience” and another “having contests to kill as many as possible to win prizes and satisfy one’s testosterone is inhumane and abhorrent”.

A former fur farm worker wrote: “The cruelty that we build industries from, like the fur industry, does not stop with animals, but extends to human beings as well”.

2. Ethics.

Several letter-writers, some of whom are hunters, see the contests as unethical, the ethics being that of ethical hunting practices. For example, the contests are “antithetical to hunting practices and scientifically based wildlife management practices” and are a “Bad light [on] ethical hunters”. Another wrote, “Wanton killing of coyotes tarnish the reputation of people who engage in ethical hunting practices” and compared the contests with dog and cock fighting.

Additionally, another wrote:

“Participants cowardly lure coyotes out in the open for an easy kill using a high-tech electronic device that mimics coyote pups in distress. I cannot rid myself of the image of a man holding a corpse of a nursing coyote mother. Her pups would inevitably starve. This is not sportsmanship”.

Ethics also included the often-mentioned lesson the contests might be teaching to children as “future generation’s loss”, “rewards killing behavior”, and “children learn

to disregard the welfare of wildlife". Another bill proponent saw owned animal deaths as an individual's responsibility: "I have lost my fair share of animals to them (from cats to chickens and geese) but each case was a result of my own failure to keep my animals confined". A retired U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service employee wrote: "A society that condones unlimited killing of any species for fun and prizes is morally bankrupt".

3. Science.

Letters that drew on research came from everyday folks to experienced wildlife biologists, long term hunters, and county officials. Several supporters mentioned an op-ed written by conservationist, hunter, and former Oregon Fish and Wildlife chair Mike Finley (2021), who stated that the contests "are inconsistent with sound, science-based wildlife management and antithetical to the concepts of sportsmanship and fair chase". Others referenced an article from *Small Farm News*:

Killing coyotes is kind of like mowing the lawn, it stimulates vigorous new growth" via increased reproduction and immigration". Additionally, "Well behaved coyotes can actually prevent livestock losses by defending a territory that may include sheep".

Science also includes the importance of coyotes to healthy ecosystems. The culturally constructed stereotype of coyotes along with the vital role they play is contained in the following:

An unfounded stereotype that holds them up as nasty beasts, animals who compete with hunters for game, nuisance animals that kill livestock, and as a result are treated as living clay targets for blood sport thrill seekers, when they are in fact sentient beings with pack families who contribute to a healthy and biodiverse ecosystem.

Additionally, "The science is in ... coyote killing does NOT solve the ranching losses problems".

Finally, mass killings "Increas[e] "rogue" coyote numbers which are significantly more likely to cause issues with livestock and house pets". Many of the letters cited academic research to support the science arguments as did researchers and biologists who wrote to support the bill.

4. Identity.

As noted in other parts of this paper, bill supporters did not see a rural/urban divide around this issue and, furthermore, believe the contests reflect badly on the state as a whole and "Slaughter for fun is an embarrassment to Oregon". Multiple testimonies included statements such as "this is not who Oregon is", and "a red stain on our state. ... a bloody practice". Another wrote that Oregon should "Join other states", that the contests "benefi[t] only a small number of people" and "are grossly out of step with modern, science-based wildlife management, and Oregon's ethical and conservation-centered values".

Classist stereotypes were present in one letter writer who described coyotes as "welcome neighbors who do not deserve Elmer Fudd shooting at them". Additionally, "this is something ignorant pioneers did in the 1800's, not science educated people in 2021". Others also see the contests as a violation of the state's duty and as threats to public safety.

Finally, this testimonial, from a multi-generational rural Oregon family sums up many of the points made by others:

Participants in the killing contests slaughter indiscriminately without credible justification. They're not protecting calves. They're not targeting certain areas with poor deer or elk recruitment. They're just out there killing for the joy of it, and they use every modern device to up the count: electronic calls mimicking distressed pups, silencers, range finders, teams, and at least once a helicopter. These events are about as unsporting as possible.

Coyote-killing contests express deep contempt for wildlife and an even deeper contempt for Oregonians with conservation values, and that means most of us.

4.2. Opponents of Ban/Anti 2278

Sixty-seven letters were posted opposing the bill banning the contests. Removing one duplicate, 66 were included in the analysis. Letters came from ranchers, farmers, hunters, a former government wildlife trapper, and a wildlife biologist. Baker County Commission Chair, Columbia County Board of Commissioners Chair, a Harney County Commissioner, a representative of HammerDownOutdoors and Harney County Coyote Classic, and a head volunteer of the coyote “derby”. Amongst these testimonies, four primary themes arose amongst opponents of the bill: Predator control, Revenue, Identity, and Freedom from Interference.

1. Predator Control.

There were multiple examples of this argument. For example, “Humans are one of the only natural predators to a Coyote. Without hunting them they would decimate the deer and antelope fawn population”.

2. Revenue.

Testimonies in this category ranged from something as simple as “I strongly oppose this bill, for it will effect [sic] my lively hood greathly [sic]”, to “These events further support the struggling rural economies in the communities which host them by promoting recreational hunting opportunities, and the dollars that are brought in associated with them”.

3. Identity.

Pride in rural identity is a hallmark of these letters, which includes a sense of history:

Similar to events such as the Portland Marathon, these derby’s [sic] provide an organized event for hunting enthusiasts to participate in. In an era where generations are becoming less and less involved in natural resources, such events provide a platform and opportunity for hunters to stay connected to their heritage. Coyote derbies are a family affair. Parents take their kids out and teach them how and the importance of predator management.

This bill is framed as a bill against holding contests for wildlife killing. It is not. The bill simply is another effort by people who do not understand hunting or want to stop hunting altogether to “kill” our hunting heritage using any means possible. In this case, using the idea of a “killing contest” to discredit legal hunting methods and tug on the emotional heartstrings of unknowing publics. There is NO wildlife management harm in coyote hunting via a “contest” or not. What’s the difference between a coyote contest and a fishing derby? There is none should be the obvious answer. When will kids’ fishing derbies become the target? Too soon if bills like SB2728 pass in our state.

This bill takes absolutely nothing away from Portland, Eugene, or even the coast, but it very much impacts people on the east side, or those from the west side that value personal freedom. supporting this, as it is just a heavy handed [sic] attempt to nibble away at the freedoms of Oregonians who enjoy hunting and fishing.

Yet one more attack on rural Oregon and ranchers by people in the city who know nothing of such things. This bill is yet another attack on our way of life that is hated by the lefties in the legislature.

4. Freedom from Interference.

Examples here include freedom from state government involvement (other than ODFW) and from those viewed as outsiders without any presumed experience in the eastern part of the state:

This bill is a slap in the face to all the livestock producers in the state. we should have freedom to manage predators as we see fit.

I feel this Bill was established out of somebody’s personal beliefs and has no scientific value to it all.

It is not the role of this legislative body to determine how citizens are able to manage that problem and doing so will likely lead to unintended consequences.

Most people who oppose this bill have never been to eastern Oregon or have never experienced a coyote killing their livelihood. I oppose this bill and you should too.

A related response is many mentions of the bill being emotion driven. The following quote is a representative summary of many of the themes:

As ranchers, it is our duty to protect our livestock and one of the biggest issues we have as far as predators go is coyotes. A lot of people that are supporting HB 2728 are using emotion as the primary reason to pass this bill. As ranchers, we feel the emotion in an opposite way when we go out and find coyotes eating our calves alive or killing a cow that got down and can't get up. Coyotes are a dangerous predator to our cattle, horses, other livestock, and even to our dogs and cats. They do not discriminate in what they choose to eat for dinner, and we have to use lethal force against them to protect our animals that cannot protect themselves. Female coyotes have 4–6 pups a year on average and are procreating at a faster rate than we would take them, even with contests. These contests help us to keep the coyote numbers down to a decent amount. Coyotes do have benefits such as rodent control in our hay fields and as ranchers/conservationists, we can recognize that. We do not wish to abolish the species, just to keep them at a limited number that will help us to protect our animals.

Others include:

[The ban is] “an attempt to prohibit legal activity (hunting Coyotes) by emotionally attacking the taking of Coyotes”.

There is no science telling us the hunting of coyotes either for recreation or protection of property has any negative effects on the highly resilient coyote populations.

5. Results

Fairclough's (1989, [1995] 2013) model for CDA calls for three types of analysis: textual (description), processing (interpretation), and social (explanation). This fits well with neutralization techniques as means of contextualizing the arguments. The persistence among contest defenders is consistent with what Pohja-Mykrä (2016a, p. 442) describes as a form of “rural protest”. The contests are not illegal, as in the Finnish farmer study, but they are, according to supporters of the ban, unethical. Neutralization techniques, including appealing to higher loyalties, claims of normality, denial of responsibility, and other justifications are evident in the discourse of those who believe contests should continue and are present in the testimonies and letters in the ways opponents justify this hunting contest. That the contest represents tradition, offers lessons to youth, and fulfills a small community's interests are examples of acceptance learned within this culture and/or sub-culture. The contests, by statements of wildlife officials, biologists, and those who consider themselves ethical hunters, are by their standards unethical (See Katzner et al. 2020).

Sykes and Matza (1957, p. 667) identify five types of denials or rationalizations those behaving or believing in ways contrary to norms use to justify their positions involving denial and condemnation. They typically precede the act and then, following “the deviant behavior” function “to protec[t] the individual from self-blame and the blame of others after the act”.

In this sense, the delinquent both has his cake and eats it too, for he remains committed to the dominant normative system and yet so qualifies its imperatives that violations are “acceptable” if not “right”. Even those who are aware of the so-called delinquent's aberrant behavior will often support and even celebrate them.

1. **The Denial of Responsibility.** This can appear as being in a situation with no other choice but to act, compelled by external forces beyond one's control. "From a psychodynamic viewpoint this orientation toward one's own actions may represent a profound alienation from self" (p. 667). Thus, opponents of the ban on the contest might see themselves as acting because of the perception of a coyote problem, one that outsiders of Eastern Oregon cannot or will not understand, and thus justifies the support and even participation as being "acted upon" by conditions of life in that part of the state. Pohja-Mykrä (2016a, p. 442) refers to this as "a billiard ball conception of themselves", as one is "helplessly propelled into situations". In this case, by outsiders who do not understand life in Eastern Oregon and by the coyotes who are seen as a threat to livelihoods.
2. **The Denial of Injury.** This technique of neutralization is related to injury or harm. If the one engaged in what might be viewed as deviant behavior, the killing contests, sees no harm being done, they might argue, as many do who are opposed to end them, that the act is helpful, as in pest control, there is not likely to be a sense of wrongdoing. Here, the distinction is made between wrongfulness of acts that might be immoral but not illegal by justifying them and by denying harm. This is related to the third justification/rationalization.
3. **The Denial of the Victim.** In this case, the participants remove themselves from responsibility for harm by seeing the victim (the coyotes) as wrong doers. The response is not injuring a living being per se but is "a form of rightful retaliation or punishment", in fact in the contest, the contestants are seen as working for the greater good. "Attacks on [those] who are said to have gotten 'out of place,'" such as the perceived over-population of coyotes, or over predation on deer and other ungulates, is seen as justification for violence against them. In fact, this is viewed as an intentional transgression against humans thus deserving what happens. Furthermore Robin Hood, and his latter-day derivatives such as the tough detective seeking justice outside the law, still capture the popular imagination, and the delinquent may view his acts as part of a similar role.
4. **The condemnation of the condemners.** This is a "rejection of the rejectors" as the focus is moved from the act that deviates from what is considered ethical hunting to "the motives and behavior of those who disapprove of his violations" (p. 668). The focus here shifts from the contest acts to those who they feel are judging them for doing what they must do and in fact see those who criticize as "hypocrites or are driven by personal spite". Rural Oregonians who oppose the hunting contest ban see those from outside the area as being, at the least misinformed and "emotional". Particularly in current political times where any restriction on activities that involve weaponry, organizing, and localized events are seen as an entrance ramp to the slippery slope of government interference and regulation. This redirecting violence is central to the killing contests. Ending them is viewed as oppression of rural Oregonians, and part of misunderstandings of lifeways. As a result, "the wrongfulness of his own behavior is more easily repressed or lost to view" (p. 668). One opponent wrote "This bill is a slap in the face to all the livestock producers in the state. we should have freedom to manage predators as we see fit".
5. **The appeal to higher loyalties.** In this final technique, "internal and external social controls may be neutralized by sacrificing the demands of the larger society for the demands of the smaller social groups to which the delinquent belongs" (669). This protection of the smaller, rural community including its economic interests, is viewed as superseding those of the larger interests outside the geographic area and may in fact serve as "justification for violation of society's norms", by helping the locals. Feeling "picked on" by urbanites and politicians who do not understand the conditions of life in Eastern Oregon is another aspect of this rationalization. The smaller group, in this case, the mostly Harney contest supporters, does not entirely reject larger society and values, or even of hunters in general, but rather is viewed as serving the greater good.

Pohja-Mykrä (2016a, p. 443) identifies five additional types of neutralization that can be added as ways of explaining the positions of contest defenders.

1. Claim of normality. Here, is a “transfer of responsibility from offender to a large, often vaguely defined group to which he/she belongs”.
2. Denial of the necessity of the law. One violates laws and ethics that are deemed unjust, unfair, or I argue, unrepresentative of the rural area and culture in which this contest takes place.
3. Metaphor of the ledger. “Offenders’ good qualities make up for their illegal acts”. This includes father/son bonding and economics of the community.
4. Defense based on necessity. Important goals for survival, such as economics, are used as justification.
5. Claim of entitlement. This is getting one’s fair share, the income, the self-rule, the lifeway.

According to the former president of the California Fish and Game Commission “Awarding prizes for wildlife killing contests is both unethical and inconsistent with our current understanding of natural systems” (qtd. in Williams 2018). Neutralization is used to rationalize the contests as effective predator pest control despite scientific evidence to the contrary, even to the point where some opponents say supporter arguments are not based in science, rather on emotions. Furthermore, evident in the testimonies, “hunting violators defend a particular rural identity and way of life, thus expressing rural protest” (Pohja-Mykrä 2016a, p. 442). This is exemplified by opponents stating a rural/urban divide is at play whereas ban supporters state the opposite.

The results of this study suggest that this core group, including contest officials, hold attitudes and beliefs that are consistent with resistance to change, to perceived government interference, lack of understanding or appreciation coming from state government, and feelings of victimization by urban area citizens. Changes are needed, including economic alternatives, to make the contests financially replaceable while respecting identities and interests of rural Oregonians. A former rural Chamber of Commerce director wrote: “From skeet shooting to chainsaw contests, there are many events that are less cruel, and more appealing to a broader audience, that could effectively bring guests to Harney County in postpandemic [sic]”. In a letter supporting the contest ban, a co-founder and advisor to the Benton County Agriculture and Wildlife Protection Program described “a county program [that] provides grant funds to farmers for the purchase of wildlife deterrents such as livestock guardian animals, electrified fencing, scare devices, and protective housing”. In terms of coyote deterrents, a horse owner wrote: “Use dogs, llamas and donkeys and keep them in the pasture with the sheep. The coyotes shy away from herds with any of these animals included”.

This study reveals that appealing to killing contest defenders based on how inhumane the contests are, or even the science behind their ineffectiveness, is unlikely to change their positions. Rather contest ban advocate needs to address the sociological and psychological issues that underly resistance rather than employ ecological and biological arguments. Further research is needed to study where contests have been banned and what strategies worked including if alternative events or economic opportunities were offered in exchange for ending the contests.

While the focus of this study has been coyote killing contests, the fate of other animals is also at stake. Wolf recovery conservation efforts face similar challenges when it comes to dynamics of farmed and ranched animals, free range implications, and livelihoods. In terms of coyotes, urban coyotes face their own challenges with those who fear the song dog for reasons similar and different from ranchers and farmers: “over the ages, fear and loathing of all predators has become as natural to us as growing food has” (Shivik 2014, p. 8).

6. Conclusions

If you kill one coyote, two will come to its funeral. Trapper saying.

Despite the efforts of animal activist groups and hardworking legislators, it is evident that trying to change attitudes of ranchers, farmers, and many rural folks about the animal

killing contests via scientific arguments about animal cruelty, and data about reproductive behavior of the animals and their importance to the ecosystem does not necessarily work. This is a sociological and a political problem. Those who support the contests often claim to care about animals but clearly are operating from a place of feeling marginalized and misunderstood.

Despite wide distribution of referred studies on the impact of mass hunting on coyote populations and behavior, resisters insist a ban is not science based. Some of this opinion likely reflects a general conservative distrust of science that has been amplified in the last five or more years, despite the use of agricultural science in farming and ranching (Oreskes 2021). The economics of the contests are difficult to assess. That they are an important part of livelihoods seems unlikely as a ban supporter and former rural director of a Chamber of Commerce wrote that the contests do not appear on any community calendars, and it is unfair to paint the whole county as supporting them. That predation on cattle and sheep is a significant loss (despite government compensations) and that the contests are significant cultural sources of bonding and entertainment, was a repeated argument for the contests.

While the work of activist groups is crucial to creating public awareness of these activities, from an analysis of these letters, change among rural communities will not happen based on an appeal to the right thing to do for animals, for the ecosystem, or for the planet. These arguments and defenses are consistent with Sykes and Matza's (1957) theory of neutralization techniques contest proponents use as well as Pohja-Mykrä's (2016a) additional claims and metaphors that function to maintain the status quo. Arguments that address how *not* holding contests are consistent with hunting ethics, rural values, self-determination, and local views are most likely to succeed. As in other cases where animals are killed, and economics is the justification for maintaining the practice, alternatives need to be created. In Harney County Oregon, the site of one of the main contests, there is an annual migratory bird event that brings in hundreds of people (<https://www.migratorybirdfestival.com/>, accessed on 31 March 2022). This type of gathering could serve as a model for, for example, a wildlife appreciation event, rather than killing contests. An area of future inquiry is what worked to get contests legally banned in states that have succeeded? Were the issues different in the seven states or what alternatives or concessions were offered to opponents that might work in Oregon for those wishing to pursue this direction?

This analysis of the testimonies of defenders of coyote killing contests and advocates for a ban of the contests reveals disregard for science, despite declarations of bill proponents not following research. Proponents state the issue is not a rural/urban divide, while opponents claim the opposite to be true. For example:

This is NOT a RURAL vs. URBAN issue. Killing coyotes does not work! The science supports this. Biologically when coyotes lose an alpha male or female, breeding increases. Indiscriminate kills give the opposite unintended result. Stop catering to special interests' group—it's enough already. Oregon state needs to run the state responsibly based on scientific facts from experts and create a plan that makes sense.

Power, it seems, is as usual at the root of this debate: who has it, who does not, who perceives someone else to have it. Weil (2000, p. 413) wrote, drawing on Thucydides, "everyone commands wherever he has power to do so". From this study while (mostly) urban and rural populations differ in perspectives on coyotes, on science, and on government involvement, they all care about these issues. However, "rural residents also have an outsized political voice in national environmental policy thanks to representation of rural states in the U.S. Senate" (Bonnie et al. 2020, p. 7). Thus, future campaigns dedicated to conserving wildlife and science-based arguments for changes in predator management practices need to focus less on the animals and more on the attitudes about rural people's lived experiences if they wish to succeed in enacting changes.

Funding: This research received no external funding.

Institutional Review Board Statement: Not applicable.

Informed Consent Statement: Not applicable.

Data Availability Statement: Testimony and related documents are available at <https://olis.oregonlegislature.gov/liz/2021R1/Measures/Overview/HB2728> (accessed on 31 March 2022).

Conflicts of Interest: The author declares no conflict of interest.

Notes

- ¹ Terminology note: When used by the author, the term “wildlife” means nonhuman animals in nature or those who are free-living (non-domesticated), not meaning ‘wild’ in a derogatory sense.
- ² Coyote with a capital “C” is used to describe the cultural concept whereas lower case “c” refers to the biological animal.
- ³ “**Bag limit**, legal definition, means the maximum number of game animals, game birds, or game fish which may be taken, caught, killed, or possessed by a person, as specified by rule of the commission for a particular period of time, or as to size, sex, or species” (“**Bag limit**” n.d.).
- ⁴ Human beings are omnivorous and not all prey on other species. Ancient humans were foragers who routinely ate nuts, seeds, and plants (Mason [1993] 2021, p. 49), “the hunting component has been exaggerated” (p. 45).
- ⁵ In actuality the coyote diet is varied. They are “versatile and opportunistic predators that eat a variety of items (live animal and carrion, plant, and inanimate objects” (Bekoff and Wells 1986, p. 23).

References

- “Bag limit”. n.d. Law Insider. Available online: <https://www.lawinsider.com/dictionary/bag-limit> (accessed on 31 March 2022).
- “Coyote Ugly”. 2018. Dictionary.com. February 28. Available online: <https://www.dictionary.com/e/slang/coyote-ugly/> (accessed on 31 March 2022).
- “Coyote”. n.d. Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife. Available online: <https://myodfw.com/wildlife-viewing/species/coyote> (accessed on 31 March 2022).
- “Furbearer Management”. n.d. Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife. Available online: https://www.dfw.state.or.us/resources/hunting/small_game/ (accessed on 31 March 2022).
- Robert Alvarez, dir. 1947. *The Adventures of Don Coyote and Sancho Panda*. [film]. Los Angeles: Hanna-Barbera.
- Amory, Cleveland. 1974. *Man Kind? Our Incredible War on Wildlife*. New York: Harper & Row.
- Arizona-Sonora Desert Museum. 2008. Animal Fact Sheet: Coyote. Available online: <https://www.desertmuseum.org/kids/oz/long-fact-sheets/coyote.php> (accessed on 31 March 2022).
- Arluke, Arnold, Clink Luke, and Frank Ascione. 1999. The relationship of animal abuse to violence and other forms of antisocial behavior. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence* 14: 963–75. [CrossRef]
- Bekoff, Mark, and Michael C. Wells. 1986. Social ecology and behavior of coyotes. *Advances in the Study of Behavior* 16: 251–338.
- Blejwas, Karen M., Benjamin N. Sacks, Michael M. Jaeger, and Dale R. Mc-Cullough. 2002. The effectiveness of selective removal of breeding coyotes in reducing sheep predation. *Journal of Wildlife Management* 66: 451–62. [CrossRef]
- Bonnie, Robert, Emily P. Diamond, and Elizabeth Rowe. 2020. *Understanding Rural Attitudes toward the Environment and Conservation in America*. Report. Durham: Duke University.
- Dalerum, Fredrik. 2021. Socioeconomic characteristics of suitable wolf habitat in Sweden. *Ambio* 50: 1259–68. [CrossRef] [PubMed]
- Edwards, Melodie. 2019. Killing Coyotes Is Not as Effective as Once Thought, Researchers Say. National Public Radio. June 14. Available online: <https://www.npr.org/2019/06/14/730056855/killing-coyotes-is-not-as-effective-as-once-thought-researchers-say> (accessed on 31 March 2022).
- Fairclough, Norman. 1989. *Language and Power*. London: Longman.
- Fairclough, Norman. 2013. *Critical Discourse Analysis*, 2nd ed. London: Longman. First published 1995.
- Ferris, Bob. 2013. Wolf hatred is a gateway to bigotry. *Earth Island Journal*. January 17. Available online: https://www.earthisland.org/journal/index.php/articles/entry/wolf_hatred_is_a_gateway_to_bigotry/ (accessed on 31 March 2022).
- Finley, Michael. 2021. Time to end coyote-killing contests. *Mail Tribune*, February 21. Available online: <https://www.mailtribune.com/guest-opinion/2021/02/21/time-to-end-coyote-killing-contests/> (accessed on 31 March 2022).
- Flores, Dan. 2016. *Coyote America: A Natural and Supernatural History*. New York: Basic Books.
- Gobodo-Madikizela, Pumla. 2004. *A Human Being Died That Night: A South African Woman Confronts the Legacy of Apartheid*. Boston: Mariner.
- Gregg, Josiah. 1844. *Commerce of the Prairies*. New York: J. & H. G. Langley.
- Ingersoll, Ernest. 1887. The hound of the plains. *Popular Science Monthly*, Vol. 30. January. Available online: https://en.wikisource.org/wiki/Popular_Science_Monthly/Volume_30/January_1887/The_Hound_of_the_Plains (accessed on 31 March 2022).
- Katzner, Todd E., Sharon A. Poessel, and David S. Pilliod. 2020. Illegal killing of nongame wildlife and recreational shooting in conservation areas. *Conservation Science and Practice* 2: 1–15. [CrossRef]

- Keefover-Ring, Wendy. 2009. *War on Wildlife: The U.S. Department of Agriculture's 'Wildlife Services'*. WildEarth Guardians. Available online: <https://wildearthguardians.org/press-releases/group-calls-for-end-to-the-war-on-wildlife/> (accessed on 31 March 2022).
- Kellert, Stephen R. 1984. American attitudes toward and knowledge of animals: An update. In *Advances in Animal Welfare Science 1984/85*. Edited by M. W. Fox and L. D. Mickley. Washington, DC: The Humane Society of the United States, pp. 177–213.
- Kellert, Stephen R. 1996. *The Value of Life: Biological Diversity and Human Society*. Washington, DC: Shearwater Books.
- Kellert, Stephen R., Matthew Black, Colleen Reid Rush, and Alistair J. Bath. 1996. Human culture and large carnivore conservation in North America. *Conservation Biology* 10: 977–90. [CrossRef]
- Lopez, Barry. 1977. *Giving Birth to Thunder Sleeping with His Daughter: Coyote Builds North America*. New York: Avon.
- Mason, Jim. 2021. *An Unnatural Order: The Roots of Our Destruction of Nature*. New York: Brooklyn. First published 1993.
- Medwid, Walter. 2018. Qtd. in Ted Williams. Coyote Carnage: The Gruesome Truth about Wildlife Killing Contests. *YaleEnvironment360*, May 23. Available online: <https://e360.yale.edu/features/coyote-carnage-the-gruesome-truth-about-wildlife-killing-contests> (accessed on 31 March 2022).
- Mussulman, Joseph A. n.d. 'Prairie Wolf' Encounters. Coyote. Discovering Lewis & Clark. Available online: <http://www.lewis-clark.org/article/2177> (accessed on 31 March 2022).
- O'Connor, Terence. 2008. *The Archaeology of Animal Bones*, 2nd ed. College Station: Texas A&M University Press.
- Oregon Furbearer. n.d. Trapping and Hunting Regulations. 1 July 2020, through 30 June 2022. Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife. Available online: <https://www.dfw.state.or.us> (accessed on 31 March 2022).
- Oregon State Legislature. 2021. Regular Session. HB 2728. Available online: <https://olis.oregonlegislature.gov/liz/2021R1/Measures/Overview/HB272> (accessed on 31 March 2022).
- Oreskes, Naomi. 2021. The Reason Some Republicans Mistrust Science: Their Leaders Tell Them to. *Scientific American*, June 1. Available online: <https://www.scientificamerican.com/article/the-reason-some-republicans-mistrust-science-their-leaders-tell-them-to/> (accessed on 31 March 2022).
- Pohja-Mykrä, Mari. 2016a. Community power over conservation regimes: Techniques for neutralizing the illegal killing of large carnivores in Finland. *Crime, Law and Social Change* 67: 439–60. [CrossRef]
- Pohja-Mykrä, Mari. 2016b. Felony or act of justice? Illegal killing of large carnivores as defiance of authorities. *Journal of Rural Studies* 44: 46–54. [CrossRef]
- Shivik, John A. 2014. *The Predator Paradox—Ending the War with Wolves, Bears, Cougars, and Coyotes*. Boston: Beacon Press.
- Somvichian-Clausen, Austa. 2021. The controversy over wildlife killing contests. *The Hill*, March 23. Available online: <https://thehill.com/changing-america/sustainability/environment/544533-the-controversy-over-wildlife-killing-contests> (accessed on 31 March 2022).
- Stennes, Katie. 2019. Update: Oregon coyote killing contest bill dies in final hours of legislative session. *Project Coyote*, July 8. Available online: <https://www.projectcoyote.org/update-oregon-coyote-killing-contest-bill-dies-in-final-hours-of-legislative-session/> (accessed on 31 March 2022).
- Sykes, Gresham M., and David Matza. 1957. Techniques of neutralization: A theory of delinquency. *American Sociological Review* 22: 664–70. [CrossRef]
- Twain, Mark. 1872. *Roughing It*. Hartford: American Publishing Company.
- von Blon, John L. 1920. Commercializing the coyote. *Scientific American* 122: 246–58. [CrossRef]
- von Essen, Erica, and Michael Allen. 2017. Interspecies violence and crimes of dissent: Communication ethics and legitimacy in message crimes involving wildlife. *Critical Criminology* 25: 261–74. [CrossRef]
- von Franz, Maria. 1978. *Projection and Re-Collection in Jungian Psychology*. Chicago: Open Court.
- Vornholt, John. 1998. *Buffy the Vampire Slayer: Coyote Moon*. New York: Pocket Books.
- Weil, Simone. 2000. *Simone Weil: Portrait of a Self-Exiled Jew*. Edited by Thomas R. Nevin. Durham: University of North Carolina Press.
- Williams, Ted. 2018. Coyote Carnage: The Gruesome Truth about Wildlife Killing Contests. *YaleEnvironment360*, May 22. Available online: <https://e360.yale.edu/features/coyote-carnage-the-gruesome-truth-about-wildlife-killing-contests> (accessed on 31 March 2022).
- Worrall, Simon. 2016. How the Most Hated Animal in America Outwitted Us All. *National Geographic*, August 7. Available online: <https://www.nationalgeographic.com/animals/article/coyote-america-dan-flores-history-scienc> (accessed on 31 March 2022).