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### Coyotes – **“From the Canyons to the Cul-De-Sacs”** by Carrie Allan

- Prolific and adaptable, coyotes' expansion into territories they didn't occupy in the past is due at least in part to 19<sup>th</sup> century humans' overzealous culling of wolves, who once dominated the food chain in areas where coyotes now have free rein.
- Feared by sheep ranchers and farmers convinced coyotes will attack their herds, coyotes are the target of killing contests organized by towns all over the West.
- In Rawlins, Wyoming, an annual coyote “calling” contest – in which participants howl and yip to draw the animals near – brings hunters from all over the country. An average of 200 animals are killed during the event; these contests are now spreading to Eastern states. But in terms of sheer numbers, these shoots have nothing on the culls organized by the wildlife services division of the U.S. Department of Agriculture, which estimates that its agents poison, trap, shoot, or otherwise kill more than 80,000 coyotes every year (our tax dollars at work).
- These hunts continue in spite of studies that seem to show that coyotes – much like skunks, feral cats, and other wild populations – instinctually compensate for higher mortality rates. In the 2005 booklet, “Coyotes in Our Midst”, authors from the Animal Protection Institute wrote that while “lethal control can create a short-term reduction of coyotes in an area, the vacuum will eventually be filled by coyotes emigrating from surrounding areas...by shifts in the territories of neighboring packs, and by the increased reproduction of surviving coyotes.”
- Today there isn't a state in the union - except Hawaii – where coyotes don't live. Coyotes adapt to whatever environment they need; in California, many have turned beach bum, attracted to the surf near Santa Barbara to check out the swimmers and see what snacks they've brought.
- Members of the public may find it easier to practice tolerance and caution around coyotes if animal control officers educate them about the benefits of having the plains canine around.....according to the study, the bulk of coyotes' diets tended to be made up of rodents.....the appearance of coyotes in new areas may help restore the balance to ecosystems where other predators have all but disappeared.
- Given how adaptable coyotes are, the best advice for homeowners disturbed by their presence is to make sure the animals don't get too comfortable, says Dave Pauli, regional director of the Northern Rockies Regional Office of the Humane Society of the United States.
- When coyotes get too close to human environs, it's best for all concerned to discourage their encroachment. Field service officers who get complaints about suburban coyotes should recommend that people keep their smaller pets – such as cats and small dogs – indoors, says Pauli.

They should not feed their pets outside (or if they do, they should supervise the feeding and not leave food on the porch). They should pick up any fallen fruits that a coyote might find tasty; make sure garbage cans are securely closed; and make sure their female dogs are spayed, since a female dog in heat can attract other canines.