

Investigating Canine Relative Abundance in Central Wisconsin Using Scent Post Station and Camera Trap Surveys

Coyotes (*Canis latrans*) are one of the most common meso-carnivores in central Wisconsin, but are not closely monitored by the state despite being a major game species. Call surveys, camera trap surveys, telemetry, and scent post station surveys are the most commonly used methods to collect data on their movements, abundance, and population dynamics. This project set out to investigate the temporal dynamics and relative abundance of the coyote population in the Buena Vista Wildlife Area in Wisconsin Rapids, WI and the effectiveness of the scent post station survey method. Relative abundance of non-targeted species such as the red fox (*Vulpes vulpes*), the gray wolf (*Canis lupus*), and the striped skunk (*Mephitis mephitis*) was also analyzed. The techniques and methods used in the survey were quickly refined and improved based on expert opinion to deal with environmental issues and the natural history of canine species to increase the likelihood of detecting presence. Fine-grained sand replaced bleached flour as a substrate, and measures were taken to reduce residual, human-associated scents while setting up the stations. These alterations in techniques coincided with an increase in visitations of the previously listed species. Preliminary camera trap surveys were originally employed in Schmeekle Reserve, Stevens Point to detect coyote presence, but failed to produce any detections. After bait was added to camera sites, gray (Urocyon cinereoargenteus) and red fox presence was detected. Investigation into possible further improvements to this survey method are being discussed and implemented.



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