

Seasonal Diets of Coyotes in West Virginia: Preliminary Findings

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Abstract: In recent decades, coyote have greatly expanded their range and numbers in the eastern United States. Increasing populations of coyotes can affect ecological communities directly by predation or through competition with other carnivores, making their impact a potentially significant one that must be understood for effective management. Identifying and quantifying items in coyote diets is an important part of understanding the role of coyotes in newly inhabited ecosystems. Our objective was to determine the seasonal diets of coyotes in West Virginia. We examined stomach ($n = 120$) and scat ($n = 40$) samples from three ecological regions in West Virginia during January through May 2010. Summary statistics of food item occurrence were included, including the prevalence of livestock, among regions and between male and female coyotes. Findings provide a better understanding of the ecology of coyotes in West Virginia and will aid in future management decisions.

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