

STATUS OF THE COYOTE AND RELATED FORMS IN TENNESSEE

VINCENT SCHULTZ

*Virginia Polytechnic Institute, Blacksburg, Virginia**

This paper is intended to place on record our current knowledge of a wild, dog-like animal present in Tennessee. A literature review resulted in information which was helpful in attempting to establish identity of this animal. Kellogg (1939), in a comprehensive report on the mammals of Tennessee, discussed the occurrence of three different wolves in the state: the gray wolf (*Canis lupus lycaon* Schreber), Florida red wolf (*Canis rufus floridanus* Miller), and Mississippi Valley wolf (*Canis rufus gregoryi* Goldman). He listed the gray wolf as previously being numerous but as being extirpated in many areas of the state years ago. Of this species he wrote, "It was reported to W. M. Perrygo that a female and her pups had been killed about 1917 near Waynesboro, Wayne County. Another wolf was killed in 1919 on North Fork River, Cumberland County." He stated, "It is quite likely that the Florida red wolf ranged over southeastern Tennessee at least until the time of arrival of the first white traders . . ." In regard to the Mississippi Valley wolf he made no definite statement concerning its occurrence. Kellogg also remarked that the coyote (*Canis latrans* Say) was reported to have been introduced into the state in recent years, a female being killed in Maury County and this specimen being secured by the Tennessee State Museum in 1930. It was reported that its source was believed to have been from releases by a fox trainer at Grand Junction, Hardeman County. Kellogg reported that the Bureau of Biological Survey (U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service) has in its possession the skin and skull of a female coyote killed on May 31, 1931, at McCain, Maury County. Caldwell *et al.* (1947), apparently obtaining their information from Kellogg, listed the "wolf" as being last known in: West Tennessee, Haywood County (1895), Middle Tennessee, Wayne County (1917), East Tennessee, Cumberland County (1919), and its status today as being "extinct." Young and Goldman (1944) in their monograph, *The Wolves of North America*, remarked that in the United States, with the exception of northern Wisconsin and Michigan, all wolves have been extirpated east of the Mississippi River. Young and Jackson (1951) in their monograph on the coyote mentioned that the coyote ". . . has been taken or recorded within the past two decades in . . . West Virginia, Virginia, Tennessee, North and South Carolina, Georgia, Mississippi, Alabama, and others." They reported that in Tennessee, coyotes were reported depredating on lambs and ewes in Hickman and Maury counties in the early 1930's, which resulted

*Current address: Dept. of Biostatistics, Johns Hopkins Univ., Baltimore 5, Md.

in a cooperative project between the Biological Survey and farmers of the areas to remove them. Ganier (1928) stated that the wolf no longer exists in Tennessee with perhaps exceptions in a few "wilder mountainous sections." He referred to a "big grey timber wolf" being trapped near Allardt (Fentress County) in 1921, the scalp of which, he reported by later correspondence (1954), is now in the possession of Mr. A. R. Hoque of Jamestown, Tennessee. Apparently this animal has not been positively identified by competent mammalogists. Reports often appear in local newspapers concerning the capture or presence of "wolves" in various sections of Tennessee. They will not be presented in this paper. Mr. Ganier has informed the writer that in the attic of the War Memorial Building in Nashville, Tennessee, can be found records of "wolf scalp" bounties paid by the state. They are located in The Department of Archives index record Box 0; in two tin boxes are reports of scalps for 1875, 1876 and the period 1879 to 1882; in Box 15 are scalp records for various counties for 1875 and similarly for 1876 in Meigs County.

In addition to the above, current reports concerning this dog-like animal were collected by Tennessee Game and Fish Commission personnel engaged on a statewide wildlife survey. Primary field work for this project was begun in September, 1950, and was completed approximately 13 months later. The survey procedure, which has been described by Schultz (1952, 1954), was primarily a personal interview survey based on acceptable sampling methods. A total of 3,560 farmers (a relative sampling error of 1.47 per cent) were sampled and personally interviewed concerning their knowledge of the "wolf" and other animals in the state. Project personnel made special attempts to obtain information from "wilderness areas" in the Cumberland Plateau, Unaka Range and western Highland Rim.

Of the 3,560 persons interviewed, 14 reported a "wolf" utilizing their farm. Interviewers were instructed to use the expression "wolf, coyote, and wild dog-like animal" when requesting information. The county reports received were as follows, with identifications being those of the respondent rather than that of the interviewer: *Benton*, vicinity of Zach, two dog-like wild animals; *Claiborne*, vicinity of Cupps Mill, coyote reported to have been released in 1947 by Dr. Greer at Old Tazewell; *Haywood*, vicinity of Dancyville, wolf resembling a collie dog but hair longer and animal extremely wild; *Hickman*, vicinity of Jones Valley, one animal vicinity of Hornertown, one animal Sulfur Fork Creek in vicinity of Beaverdam Springs, two coyotes, one being shot on the respondent's farm and the other, observed recently, was reported to have thick hair under the throat. Coyotes were reported as being introduced into this area about 20 years ago; *Marion*, vicinity of Whitwell, vicinity of Raccoon Mountain, wild dog; *Morgan*, Little Rock Creek in vicinity of Deer Lodge, new in area; *Sequatchie*, Sequatchie River in vicinity

of Cartwright (two reports), wolf or coyote; *Shelby*, vicinity of Shelby Forest Wildlife Management Area; *Williamson*, Flat Creek in vicinity of Riggs Crossroads. Interviewers were informed that the animals present in the Sequatchie Valley were coyotes released by fox hunters.

In addition to the above reports, miscellaneous interviews were made in "wilderness areas" with the following county reports being received: *Hardin*, wolves in Hickman County; *Scott*, wolf being present in 1946 or 1947 and one trapped at Stockton in 1925, wolf, coyote, or bobcat killed dogs on Buffalo Creek in 1951; *Stewart*, wolves three years ago in vicinity of Indian Mound; *Unicoi*, present on Martin Creek in 1915; *Wayne*, wolf, coyote, or dog-like animal killed west of Topsy on Green River over one year ago, one killed on Green River about two and one-half years ago, one killed five or six years ago on Green River, one grey wolf killed on Green River 38 years ago, and one killed on Hardin Creek (?) during summer of 1950. Survey personnel observed a mounted specimen in a store north of Whitewell near the Marion-Sequatchie County line. On January 4, 1951, an adult male coyote was captured at Bennett's Creek Waterfowl Banding Station, Tennessee National Wildlife Refuge, Henry County. The skull and skin are in the possession of the U. S. National Museum.

In summary it appears that the coyote is present in several localities in Tennessee and that the populations are currently stable. It is difficult to speculate correctly on the current status of wolves in the state as there exists a possibility that a limited number may still exist in some sections.

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