

## New eastern coyote found in Pennsylvania

LANCASTER — A new type of coyote is living in Pennsylvania and neighboring states — the eastern coyote — more a creature of deep woods than the open plains of the west. Coyotes have been noticed for several years in the northern

tier counties. Now they are seen in the central and southern counties of the Commonwealth.

This eastern coyote is unlike its western counterpart due to interbreeding with dogs and wolves, according to Helen J. McGinnis

and John L. George, graduate assistant and professor of wildlife management at Penn State.

These wildlife scientists have compared skulls of the 18 coyote subspecies living west of the Mississippi with skulls of coyotes from the

Great Lakes area, southern Ontario, New York, and New England.

McGinnis and George have also examined the skulls of 99 coyote-like wild canids from Pennsylvania.

Currently, the coyote

population may be increasing, based on the number of immature animals shot, trapped, or road-killed since 1974. Of 62 coyote-like canids taken between April 1974 and March 1979, 30 animals or 48 per cent were young of the year.

Some Pennsylvania coyote skulls can't be distinguished from skulls of western animals, Ms. McGinnis said. Twelve skulls in the study are possible first generation coyote by dog hybrids (coydogs). Most are somewhere in between, she noted.

A coyote — east or west — looks a little like a German shepherd dog but has a somewhat foxlike face. The bushy, black-tipped tail is carried low or straight, not curled over the back.

A typical coyote in Pennsylvania tends to be darker and more brightly colored than many western counterparts. Ten skins of possible coydogs, examined recently, all had untypical coloration. Four were black.

Average yearling or adult male coyotes in Pennsylvania weigh about 37 pounds while females average 33 pounds. This equals the individual weight of coyotes in Ontario, New England, and New York. This animal is larger than the medium-sized coyotes of the forested sections of Minnesota and Upper Michigan where males average 30 pounds and females 25. Western coyotes are much smaller.

The largest coyotes measured thus far in Pennsylvania were two males each weighing 46 pounds. The smallest was a 22-pound female.

Ten of 70 coyotes and three of eight coydogs from the Commonwealth had dewclaws on the hind feet. Dogs often have them, but McGinnis found none on more than 700 skulls of western coyotes in museum collections.

"The deviations in color, heavier build, and rear dewclaws — as well as features of skulls and teeth — suggest that Pennsylvania's coyote population has interbred with dogs," she stated.

Stomach contents were examined from 34 coyotes and seven coydogs killed in Pennsylvania. Deer remains were in 15, all but one from canids killed in the hunting seasons or immediately after. McGinnis said she believes the deer parts had been left by hunters.

Field mice were in 10 stomachs, rabbits in six, and paper, plastic, and other man-made trash in six.

Remains of domestic animals in coyote stomachs were infrequent — poultry in three, a pig in one, a house cat in another, and hair and hide of a Holstein cow in one other. The latter was believed to be from a decayed carcass.

"Coyotes do take sheep in Pennsylvania, but we do not know of more than six verified instances since 1900," George commented. "Free-ranging poultry are more likely targets of coyotes," he added.

McGinnis and George indicated that perhaps 50 coyotes are killed annually across Pennsylvania. They are much more abundant in New York where an estimated 3,000 were taken in the 1975-1976 hunting and trapping seasons.

## Maryland to start 4-H eye care project

COLLEGE PARK, Md. — An estimated 620 elementary school-age youngsters will be learning about eye care through puppet shows and other educational techniques at a recreational day camp and resident 4-H camping program this summer in Montgomery county, Maryland.

The pilot 4-H project is being coordinated by the University of Maryland's Cooperative Extension Service with a \$650 grant from the National 4-H Council and the American Optometric Association.

It is scheduled to be expanded throughout the state in 1981 and 1982, according to

Edith C. Williams, a state 4-H Extension program leader at the University of Maryland. Funding after this year is expected to be raised from appropriate sources by the Maryland 4-H Club Foundation. A goal of \$1000 has been set for each of the two upcoming years.

Williams reported that the Montgomery county 4-H eye care project this summer will be concentrated on underprivileged children participating in the summertime component of the Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program, a 10-year-old activity of the Cooperative

Extension Service.

This fall, the 4-H eye care project will be broadened through the Montgomery county public schools to elementary schools at all income levels in grades one, three and six. Teachers in these grades will be provided with educational packets to help carry out the program.

Williams explained that selection of the target audience is intended to supplement screening for vision problems conducted among Montgomery county public school youngsters in kindergarten, first, third, sixth and ninth grades.

## Erdenheim Farm to sponsor livestock judging contest

DOWNINGTOWN — Erdenheim Farm in cooperation with the Pennsylvania Extension Service is sponsoring a livestock judging clinic to be held at Erdenheim Farm on Wednesday, June 18, 9:30 a.m. - 3:30 p.m.

All 4-H and FFA members, parents and friends with an interest in livestock are invited to attend. Chester Hughes, Northeast Field Manager, of the American Angus Association, will be giving the instructions in judging beef cattle, sheep, and swine.

Ribbons and trophies will be awarded to the top finishers in a mini-judging contest.

The contest will have three divisions: Junior 4-H and FFA, Senior 4-H and FFA, and Adult. The schedule is as follows:

9:30-10:00 Registrations,  
10:00-10:15 Welcome and

Introductions Bill Weber, General Farm Manager, Erdenheim Farm; 10:15-12:00 Tour of Erdenheim Farm; 12:00-1:00 Lunch - Bring your own bag lunch. Soft drinks will be provided; 1:00-1:15 Introduction to Livestock Judging; 1:15-2:00 Judging Beef Cattle; 2:00-

2:45 Judging Sheep; 2:45-3:30 Judging Swine.

For further information contact Cheryl Moran, Chester County Agricultural Agent 215/696-3500; or Mike Fournier, Bucks County Agricultural Agent at 215/343-2800.



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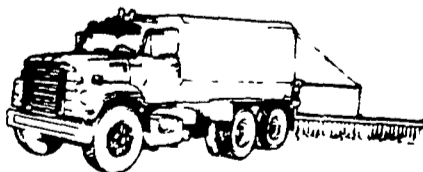
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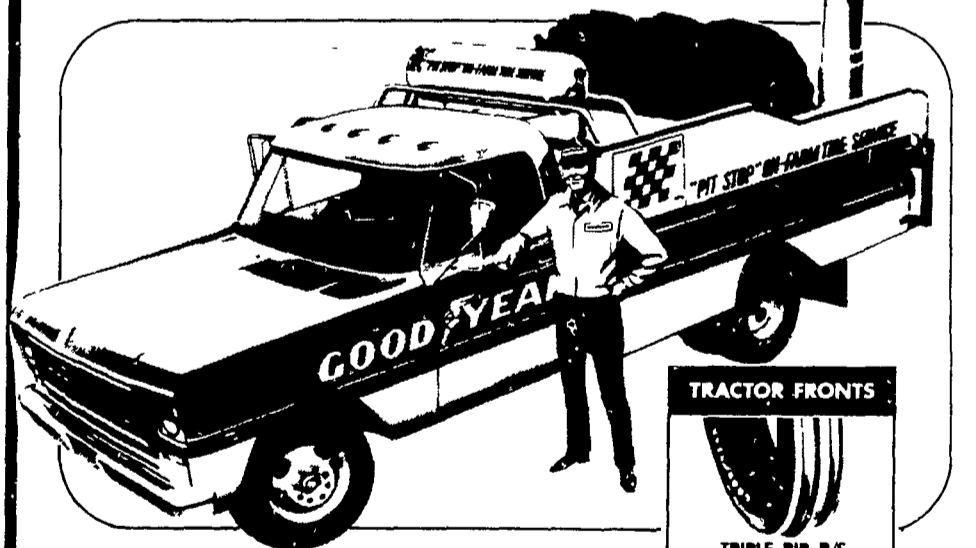
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