



Night Hunting of Coyotes

Key Takeaways

- Livestock predation by coyotes poses a significant threat to producers across Tennessee.
- There are currently no limits on the number of coyotes a farmer can take on their property to protect their livestock, and coyotes can be hunted and trapped year-round in Tennessee.
- In 2020, the Tennessee Fish and Wildlife Commission (TFWC) proposed allowing night sport hunting of coyotes, and TFBF voiced many concerns with this effort.
- Conversations around this issue have picked up again in recent months.

Questions

1. **Should Farm Bureau work to include coyotes in the list of species that may be hunted both day and night?**
2. **If it were to be allowed for coyotes to be hunted at night, should hunters be allowed to use calls and night sight devices while hunting coyotes?**
3. **Effectively hunting coyotes involves the use of rifles. How should the issue of firing a rifle at night without a line of sight be addressed?**

Background

Coyotes have been prevalent in Tennessee as early as the 1960s. With a lack of a natural predator other than humans, coyote numbers continue to increase across the state due to ample food sources and ideal habitat such as forests, farmland, shrubland, and even urban areas.

Livestock predation by coyotes poses a significant threat to producers across Tennessee. Reports of damage by coyotes have increased across the state, costing livestock producers upwards of thousands of dollars in losses. There are currently no limits on the number of coyotes a farmer can take on their property to protect their livestock, and coyotes can be hunted and trapped year-round in Tennessee. Farmers can also allow designees to hunt coyotes on their property with their permission.

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concerns with this effort. Ultimately, it did not pass, and it is currently prohibited by the TFWC to use any predator calls, night vision scopes, or thermal imaging devices while hunting at night. However, conversations around this issue have picked up again in recent months.

Proponents believe the benefits of night sport hunting of coyotes include increased opportunity to control coyote populations across the state and for farmers to protect their livestock. Concerns include safety, particularly during times of heavy farm activity. Stray bullets and the unknowns surrounding line of sight in the dark pose significant threats to safety of farmers and rural residents. Another concern is the potential harm to livestock. As is seen in whitetail deer hunting seasons, cattle and other livestock commonly get stricken by bullets intended for wildlife. Finally, allowing night hunting of coyotes increases the potential for trespassing and other crimes committed on private lands which continue to be difficult to police.

Policy

Tennessee Farm Bureau

Wildlife Pests and Wildlife Management Programs (partial)

TWRA and federal authorities should expand current acceptable procedures available to individual property owners to control or eliminate wildlife that is causing damage to crops or property and injury or death to livestock. Under current TWRA regulations landowners and their designees have authorization to control coyotes threatening their livestock on their own property. These regulations allow the use of artificial light at night. We support affording the landowner the right to protect his or her property but oppose night sport hunting of coyotes for fear of hunters not knowing what lies beyond their intended target.