

# Coyote, the survivor

BY VIRGINIA L. DAKINIEWICH

## Is it possible to live with coyotes in our province?

The coyote is one of the most controversial members of the animal kingdom. Despised by farmers and ranchers as a livestock predator, the coyote is an unfair target of persecution to wildlife advocates. Conservationists and biologists view the coyote as a key part of the ecosystem. Despite wide-ranging persecution by people, the coyote is one of the few mammals whose range is actually increasing. Unlike the wolf, the coyote's range has expanded in the wake of human civilization, and coyotes readily reproduce in metropolitan areas.

Foremost among the coyote's numerous enemies are humans. In response to complaints by Saskatchewan producers about coyote predations, a bounty was placed on coyotes in November, 2009. A five month pilot project which ended in March 2010, the Coyote Control program was intended to help farmers and ranchers who were having trouble with coyotes killing livestock. Under the program, the provincial government pays hunters and producers \$20 per coyote killed. The final numbers from the Saskatchewan Coyote Control Program indicate hunters, farmers and ranchers removed more than 71,000 coyotes between November 2009 and March 31, 2010. (*Government of Saskatchewan, News Release May 26, 2010*)

Nature Saskatchewan, one of the province's most respected conservation organizations, questioned the efficacy of the program. The organization's membership passed a resolution acknowledging the coyote's key



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role in prairie eco-systems and soundly condemned bounties or mass killing programs. While acknowledging that some coyotes can cause problems for livestock producers, organization representatives emphasized the solution should be a focused and environmentally friendly control program rather

than a general bounty. According to Lorne Scott, President of Nature Saskatchewan, what producers need "is an adequately-funded, aggressive control program in areas where depredation is a problem. The focus should be on eliminating problem animals – not a province-wide bounty."

The coyote helps to control the rodent population, particularly gophers. Coyotes also clean up carrion, remove sick animals from the gene pool and eat insects, all beneficial to the environment. Research has also shown that coyote bounties only weed out the weaker members of the population, leaving the survivors to increase the size of their litters. When one area is cleared of the coyote population, others simply move in to fill the void. (*Nature Saskatchewan, Press Releases, November 19th, 2009*)

Conservationists say a bounty program can lead to mass killings such as the incident reported in April 2010. The bodies of 37 coyotes were found in southeastern Alberta near Cypress Hills Provincial Park. The animals had all been shot and had their paws amputated. Alberta wildlife officials say the paws were likely taken to Saskatchewan, which had been offering a \$20 bounty for every coyote killed to control the population and its livestock prey. (*CBC News Saskatchewan, April 27, 2010*)

After hearing from Nature Saskatchewan and other groups, the provincial government introduced a new initiative to compensate

farmers for damage caused by predators. Administered by the Saskatchewan Crop Insurance Corporation (SCIC), producers will now be compensated for 100% of the market value of their livestock killed by predators, and up to 80% of the market value for injured livestock.

But coyotes are still under attack elsewhere. In an effort to reduce the number of coyotes in the province, a coyote pelt incentive was introduced by the Nova Scotia government. As of October 2010, coyotes will be trapped using non-lethal snares in populated areas and licensed trappers would then kill the coyotes. The government will pay \$20 per coyote pelt with the purpose of thinning the population in the wild, and forcing coyotes that are now living close to communities back to their natural habitat. (*CBC News, April 22, 2010*)

Whether victim or predator, the coyote presents a formidable challenge to man's efforts for dominance and control over wildlife and the natural environment. Unfortunately livestock predation, whether caused by coyotes or other wildlife, has a negative impact on producers' incomes so the struggle will continue. Despite continued attempts to control its numbers, the coyote continues to populate and extend its range, even venturing into densely populated urban areas. Their uncanny ability to survive and reflection of many aspects of human nature may explain our continuing fascination with the coyote.

## Warranties & other things

BY MICHAEL GILGANNON

While remodelling the bathroom one fine day I noticed that the silicone sealant I was squirting into every nook and cranny has a 35-year warranty. So if it fails between now and close to mid-century, I can write to the manufacturer, General Electric, and demand a new tube of goo. Except that, well before then (probably around next month) I will have forgotten what the brand of goo was.

Let's face it: what we have here is a meaningless guarantee. It looks impressive on the package. The stuff probably will last a reasonable length of time (35 months would be good) and nobody's going to remember where it came from anyway, so what's the rumpus?

We have a drawer in the dining room jam-packed with guarantees, warranties, instruction manuals and the kids' old report cards. Reading the report cards is always good for a chuckle. The other stuff just sits there looking important. There's a warranty for a busted hair dryer or three, instructions on how to work the VCR (whatever that is) and guarantees for stuff I didn't even know we had.

The 36-page instruction manual for the refrigerator is a valiant effort, but really, what's to know? Plug it in,

turn it on, fill it with stuff, throw out stuff when it turns green—or brown if it was green to start with.

The champion of all manuals has to be the one for a certain wristwatch. The manual itself has a part number (CTZ-A8038) and runs on for 152 pages. Sample: "If the crown is pulled out to Position 2 when the date is changing, the date wheel and function hand stop at that time, and are then advanced by the remaining amount after the second hand is rapidly advanced to the 0 seconds position."

I know people who keep receipts for just about every purchase ever made—chewing gum, dental floss, their first soother. These are the same people who clog up the grocery checkout line while they haul out 18 coupons to cover each of the 18 items to be purchased.

One more thing. What is it with manufacturers and their long-winded serial numbers? The battery in my cordless phone needs to be replaced again. So with bifocals removed, I peer inside the little battery compartment trying to come up with a helpful hint. There, deep in the gloaming, the raised lettering (and me with no Braille background): Part No. PQP28F303A will do the job.

Assigning a battery a part number of, let's say, 8, probably never occurred to Panasonic. Similarly, lawyers never say "now" when they can say "at this point in time." I think this has something to do with the second law of thermodynamics, which states that the entropy of a closed system always increases. Entropy is a scientific term for "the end is nigh."

*Michael Gilgannon spent 12 years as news editor of The Western Producer and 10 years as managing editor of Western People. He has written many funny, quirky pieces for various publications.*

## 2011 Saskatoon Blues Festival February 24-27

Think you know the Blues? The Blues Festival is over a decade old in Saskatoon. This year the festival is scheduled for February 24-27 and features two different and distinct venues: The Odeon Electric Blues Cabaret and the Hilton Garden Acoustic Blues Concert Room. The line-up includes Savoy Brown, Rod Piazza and the Mighty Flyers, Debbie Davies, MonkeyJunk, Pura Fé, Brother Yusuf, Big Hank, A Fist Full of Blues and more. Other events include Bluesday on Broadway (Feb. 26), free community outreach concerts, Blues in the Schools, free shows downtown and more. Tickets are for sale at Cherry Insurance or ticketweb.ca.

The Blues Festival has rocking parties at the Odeon Electric Blues Cabaret. The dance floor will be packed and the atmosphere will be, as the name suggests, electric. Be part of the excitement with award-winning and legendary artists like Savoy Brown with Kim Simmonds. If you prefer an up-close and personal experience get tickets for the Hilton Garden Acoustic Blues Concert Room. The Concert Room ambiance is more reserved with a focus is on appreciation of the music. Enjoy the Saskatoon debut of Pura Fé with lap slide guitar and compelling voice. Choose the venue that satisfies your desire for live music and the Society has scheduled the internationally-acclaimed talent to satisfy.

The Blues Festival presents Bluesday on Broadway on Saturday, February 26. Free public workshops, concerts and the infamous musicians Garage Sale. The Garage Sale starts at 10am at the Cosmo Seniors Centre on 11th Street. Bud's on Broadway Jam Session is at the regular Saturday time of 3pm.

For detailed information about the festival and the complete line-up, info about Bluesday on Broadway, Blues in the Schools, Happy Hour Concert Series & the Community Outreach Program visit the Blues Society website: [www.saskatoonbluessociety.ca](http://www.saskatoonbluessociety.ca)

*The Saskatoon Blues Society promotes, fosters and celebrates blues music in Saskatoon. Membership is open to anyone with an interest in the blues. Information about the society is found on the website: [www.saskatoonbluessociety.ca](http://www.saskatoonbluessociety.ca). Twitter: [stonbluesfest](https://twitter.com/stonbluesfest) and the facebook group: [Saskatoon Blues Society](https://www.facebook.com/SaskatoonBluesSociety).*