

Interviewer:

So, the first question I have is, could you please tell me about an experience or a story that you've had with coyotes in Vermont?

Interviewee:

Oh, yeah! But, in like, what kind of content?

Interviewer:

Any kind of context--

Interviewee:

...because I have many.

Interviewer:

Oh! Many...Is there any one that stands out as being particularly interesting?

Interviewee:

I mean, I've run the gamut of...I have shot coyotes, I've watched coyotes I have had to kind of deal with coyotes, which were giving people on a walking trail issues. Um, yeah, I guess I don't have any particularly good or bad encounters...I just have had a few with them.

Interviewer:

Do you remember by any chance your first coyote interaction?

Interviewee:

Uhh, nope (laughs) yeah....oooph...I guess, visually...well, I guess, my first interaction was probably as a kid, you know, you would hear them at night. I'd say, you know, when you're young you go outside in the dark and you hear them yip and yell and that would be the first impression of them. I guess the first visual would be while hunting, you know, they come in and out.

Interviewer:

And in these experiences that you've had, could you talk a little bit about whether or not they were meaningful to you--if they had any kind of meaning, other than just being interesting things to see? And could you talk a little bit about why or why not they were meaningful to you?

Interviewee:

Sure, um, let's see...I guess...I guess what I was really young, you know, you walk out behind the house to go hunting, and when it gets dark, you start walking back and you know, one night, I can remember that, you know, the whole forest just kind of lit up with talking coyotes. And that,

you know, that that kind of sense and a little bit as a kid, it makes you a little nervous, so that was like you only my first impression with coyotes. It's kind of like, woah, there are little things that run around the night and you can't really see them. Yeah, so I guess that was a lasting impression on me. It's definitely something I've grown out of, but as a child, it kind of, it's like, almost the equivalent in my mind like a wolf would be in terms of how people would think about them back in the day. But nope, I mean, we've had some house animals, picked off by coyotes....saw our dog get attacked by a coyote one year. You know, that kind of makes...that...seeing that happen from the house was....you're not mad, because you understand what's going on, but it's like, it's, it makes you uncomfortable they're present when they do that, as opposed to them keeping their distance. But, um...but I don't know, I guess it's a very...it's a tough question to really answer.

Interviewer:

That was a great answer. Thank you. And that...that being a tough question to answer is also a good answer. I'm hoping to talk a little bit more generally about your experience with with coyotes, and I'm wondering if you could rank your experience, your entire experience of coyotes in Vermont, on a scale of one to nine, with one being negative and nine being positive.

Interviewee:

Um...generally, I would say...four.

Interviewer:

Can you explain why you ranked to experience that way?

Interviewee:

Sure! I mean, I guess when I...just see a coyote, I mean, to have a positive interaction with a coyote...I don't really know what that entails - you see them in the field, running around, I guess that's interesting, but....moreover when you see a coyote or when it's a lasting impression, it's because, like I said, it's...it kills your chickens, it attacks your dog, it becomes a nuisance on a trail that, you know, starts stalking people and attacking people walking with dogs. What I normally associate with coyotes is more negative than positive, that's how I kind of feel about it. Not that my overall encounters have been negative, just ones that stick out are. I mean, I guess, you know, when I'm in the woods hunting and a coyote just runs by me, there are actually some that I never think about. It's just uneventful in the woods.

Interviewer:

And I mentioned earlier that I am particularly interested in how people who have experienced farming or who are farmers themselves or grew up in a family that farms think about land and livestock and wildlife, and I'm wondering if you have an experience that sticks out as kind of a representation of how you view land, livestock, and coyotes all interacting.

Interviewee:

Hmm...boy, um...well, I mean, I guess in terms of livestock, I mean, probably...usually, when we pasture cows, they're...they're dry cows, you know, so they're adults or older heifers, so we don't usually have small animals running around in the pastures. I can remember like 20 years ago, it must be now, we did have a cow birth in the pasture, and when we would find the calf, it was eaten already, which we were pretty positive was a coyote. And you know, in terms of livestock interaction, that might be the only one, I mean, I've never had issues with coyotes and cows, other than that one calf, I mean I can't speak for other farms, which definitely have smaller animals running around, it might be an actual issue, but for us when we only have cows in the field, it's never really an issue they don't seem to bother. I mean, I could say I've seen them. You know, I've seen coyotes in pastures with cows. Everybody knows everybody's there, but [it] doesn't seem to bother anybody.

Interviewer:

That's really...that's a pretty scary story, but that's an interesting story about how all these things interact and your experience of them. And then the next couple of questions kind of just break apart the components of that story, and I'm hoping to start with livestock. And I'm wondering if you could just talk about how livestock in that story or any of these experiences that you've spoken about, or in any of your experience, experiences, how does livestock impact what's meaningful to you, or what's important to you in these interactions?

Interviewee:

Um, well, like how...so you're asking how livestock...like how that interaction is important?

Interviewer:

Yes! That's an even better way of thinking about it.

Interviewee:

Um, so, well...I mean someone...someone that makes their livelihood off of livestock, it's like, obviously, important, but the same time, you know, as I said, in 20 years, in 20 years I can recall, I've seen one calf get killed by a coyote. And I mean, it's certainly...it's, it's unfortunate, you know, it's not, it's not good, it costs money, you can go economic route, it just, you know, that that happens. But everything's got to eat, I get that, you know, there was a young animal in the field, coyotes got it. You know, it happens so rarely that it's not...I don't see it as any kind of issue. It was just unfortunate that it happens. If this was something that, you know, every year we lost a couple of cows, that would be a different story. But I don't value, I guess, the connection between livestock and coyotes because I don't see it, in my life, as being important.

But then again, someone that might have sheep, or goats or chickens...that could be a completely different story. [Inaudible]

Interviewer:

And then the other component that I've been asking about, which is a little bit more of an ambiguous question, so feel free to think about it, and take all the time you need, because it's kind of an abstract question, but does land and your relationship with land or how you think about land, impact how these stories are meaningful to you? And you can separate your experiences from coyotes to answer this question, because it can be a bit of a leap, but what role does land, in all of your experiences of farming and being surrounded by wildlife, what role do you see land playing?

Interviewee:

Well, I mean, it's pretty easy, I, I feel very connected. And needing to connect with land. I mean, I, I went to school for wildlife ecology. So, you know, I was already interested in wildlife. You know, I far, so right there, it's like, my livelihood comes off of the land, my interests are on the land, I love to hunt, love to fish, I love to hike, camp. I mean, I just prefer to the outside than in, so I look at my relationship with the land and the environment as a very strong one. And I mean, if you were to factor in coyotes into that relationship, I don't, it doesn't affect it. Whether they were there or not, it wouldn't change the importance of that connection. I mean, it is, I guess, in some aspects it could be negative in some aspects like yeah, we hear them at night. But overall, the [inaudible] being important in how I connect with the land.

Interviewer:

Awesome. So I just have a few, like background questions to finish up, but that...those were the bulk of my questions, so those were great answers, thank you so much. And the first background question is, where in Vermont, have the stories mainly taken place?

Interviewee:

Weybridge.

Interviewer:

And do you know about what year, it sounds like it spans years, but what timeframe these stories have taken place in?

Interviewee:

Um, like do you want specifically or just like when what happened or just in general?

Interviewer:

In general is totally fine.

Interviewee:

Yeah, I mean, I'd say the 90s to today.

Interviewer:

And you mentioned this a little earlier, but what kind of things do you do outside, whether it's for work or for recreation?

Interviewee:

Ah, well, I hunt, fish, hike, camp, paddle, run on the trails and stuff. And then I just work out in the fields a lot.

Interviewer:

And how long have you lived in Vermont?

Interviewee:

Well, always, I suppose, I'm 32 so...

Interviewer:

And what town do you live in?

Interviewee:

Weybridge.

Interviewer:

And then the last three questions: what year were you born?

Interviewee:

'88

Interviewer:

What's your gender?

Interviewee:

Male.

Interviewer:

And then finally, what is your race or ethnicity?

Interviewee:

Caucasian.