
January 1991

Unusual Cause of Mortality for a North Florida Coyote (*Canis latrans*)

Patricia A. MacLaren

Douglas E. Runde

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalcommons.usf.edu/ffn>

Recommended Citation

MacLaren, Patricia A. and Runde, Douglas E. (1991) "Unusual Cause of Mortality for a North Florida Coyote (*Canis latrans*)," *Florida Field Naturalist*. Vol. 19 : Iss. 2 , Article 4.
Available at: <https://digitalcommons.usf.edu/ffn/vol19/iss2/4>

This Note is brought to you for free and open access by Digital Commons @ University of South Florida. It has been accepted for inclusion in Florida Field Naturalist by an authorized editor of Digital Commons @ University of South Florida. For more information, please contact digitalcommons@usf.edu.

Fla. Field Nat. 19(2): 54, 1991.

**UNUSUAL CAUSE OF MORTALITY FOR A NORTH FLORIDA COYOTE
(*CANIS LATRANS*)**

PATRICIA A. MACLAREN¹ AND DOUGLAS E. RUNDE²

¹Florida Department of Natural Resources, 3900 Commonwealth Boulevard,
Tallahassee, Florida 32399, and

²Florida Game and Fresh Water Fish Commission, Route 7, Box 3055
Quincy, Florida 32351

The expansion of coyotes (*Canis latrans*) into the southeastern United States has been well documented (Paradiso 1966, Cunningham and Dunford 1970, Hill et al. 1987), and the role of humans has been described as a factor in this expansion (Wooding and Hardisky 1990). The distribution of coyotes in Florida was recently surveyed by Wooding and Hardisky (1990). They concluded coyotes are well established across the panhandle and into north-central Florida. Open habitats, such as highway right-of-ways and airports, are likely used for foraging (Wooding, pers. comm.). Automobiles are recognized as a source of mortality for this species (Case 1978); however, this is the first reported case of aircraft as a source of mortality.

On 6 June 1990 a juvenile male coyote was struck by a commercial jet landing at the Tallahassee Regional Airport. The incident occurred at about 2200 hrs and was reported by the pilot. Mr. William Fox of the general aviation ground crew went on to the runway to retrieve the animal. Mr. Fox found the coyote pup was still alive but unable to walk after the accident and contacted a local volunteer wildlife rescue and rehabilitation group. A veterinarian's examination revealed the coyote suffered from multiple fractures, including the pelvis. The coyote was euthanized due to these extensive orthopedic injuries. The specimen (UF24833) was deposited at the Florida Museum of Natural History in Gainesville and is the first specimen from Leon County in that collection.

The Tallahassee Regional Airport is bordered by a swampy chain of lakes complex to the north and east. Apalachicola National Forest abuts the south and west boundaries of the airport. Mr. Fox reported that a family group of coyotes were observed on the airport grounds in the spring of 1990. Coyotes were seen within the perimeter fence of the airport before, but this is the first year a family group was observed.

We thank M. Blackburn, W. Fox, and T. Mountain for sharing information on the fate of this coyote. J. Wooding and D. Hirth provided additional information on coyote ecology. J. Rodgers and an anonymous reviewer provided comments which improved the manuscript.

LITERATURE CITED

- CASE, R. M. 1978. Interstate highway road-killed animals: a data source for biologists. Wildl. Soc. Bull. 6: 8-13.
- CUNNINGHAM, V. C., AND R. D. DUNFORD. 1970. Recent coyote record from Florida. Quart. Jour. Fla. Acad. Sci. 33: 279-280.
- HILL, E. P., P. W. SUMMNER, AND J. B. WOODING. 1987. Human influences on range expansion of coyotes in the southeast. Wildl. Soc. Bull. 15: 521-524.
- PARADISO, J. L. 1966. Recent records of coyotes, *Canis latrans*, from the southeastern United States. Southwest Nat. 11: 500-501.
- WOODING, J. B., AND T. S. HARDISKY. 1990. Coyote distribution in Florida. Fla. Field Nat. 18: 12-14.