

Suburban Howls: Tracking the Eastern Coyote in Urban Massachusetts

By Jonathan Way. 2007. Dog Ear Publishing, 4010 W. 86th Street, Ste. H, Indianapolis, Indiana 46268, USA. US \$23.99 plus shipping and handling via www.easterncoyotereseearch.com.

Here is a fabulous journey into the life of the eastern Coyote in the northeastern United States. If you've ever wanted to know these canine inhabitants of wildlands and rural and suburban zones better, this book is for you.

Author Jonathan Way started studying Coyotes when he was in high school. *Suburban Howls* encompasses his life and studies beginning then, and continuing through his university years to the present. He is a scientist who loves his subject, loves the very beings of his subject.

Way's presentation of his studies, largely through radio collar tracking and observations, is densely packed with different kinds of information. He takes the reader into the field to watch Coyotes leading their lives, then through the trials of trapping, measuring, collaring and tracking. We experience the very frustrating process of trying to get study permits from government agencies, and confront the challenges of loving and studying an animal that others would happily shoot in numbers. We share the author's grief and consternation when a whole group of his wild study animals are poisoned to death by rodenticide. We're invited to wonder how his grandmother felt when he temporarily moved five Coyote pups into his basement apartment in her home.

A large section of the book is devoted to Way's experience creating and studying a group of captive Coyote siblings in a zoo. Here we learn more about observed Coyote behaviour through the author's intense bonding with his subjects. We are given cause for reflection both about the ethics of this project, and on the poignancy of his eventual, permanent separation from the group.

The book is brimming with observations not only about Coyote ecology and behaviour, but also about wildlife management and politics, humans' perception of wildlife, and human behaviour. It includes black-and-white and colour photos showing both the coyotes and the author, often together.

Way treats his study Coyotes as individuals, taking great care to show their distinct personalities. He has

a fierce and obvious commitment to helping people appreciate, rather than fear and revile, Coyotes. I completely respect his determination to include his own emotions as he presents his work, as an intentional means to deliver a message. If I have one, tiny reservation about the book, it is that the author is perhaps too present, making it too emotionally rich for me. I found it difficult to read for that reason.

But that is a trivial complaint, related to a reader's taste rather than the quality of the book. The work is remarkable, thorough and heartfelt. It is a lively read. On the occasional attempts I made to skim through some parts, the author's story telling instead drew me in to read voraciously in spite of myself. I also admire Way's candour. He tells a straightforward story, not making apologies or excuses where other authors might. My favourite example is when he describes watching a Coyote contemplate making a meal of somebody's pet cat. The cat is at large in Coyote-land, taking its chances on the rough edge of town, but still — it's obvious Way doesn't intend to intervene. That is simply stated, with no rationalization offered. (The cat gets away, no doubt to make its own meal of some smaller wildlife.)

Suburban Howls is well designed and organized, complete with a table of contents, tables, maps and several appendices. The author includes a bibliography of his journal publications, and a thorough glossary and index. The book will be of interest to students of wildlife biology, wildlife management, and of human-wildlife interactions and ethics. It is definitely readable for a general audience with an appreciation for adventure and a curiosity for wildlife. If you know someone (cat owner or otherwise) who could benefit from feeling more at home with their neighbouring Coyotes, you might sneak this book onto their coffee table. Follow Way's work into the future via his Internet site: www.easterncoyotereseearch.com.

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BOTANY

Les Orchidées indigènes du Québec/Labrador [in French]

By S. Beausejour. 2009. Les Editions Nature, 645 Boulevard Manseau, Joliette, Québec J6E 3E7 Canada. 176 pages, 49.99 CAD, Cloth.

Also visit <http://www.orchideequbec.com/fra>

You may not initially buy this book as a field guide. It is so beautifully laid out you will buy it for its artistic value. The photographs are simply remarkable. Any one can get a nice photo a Showy Lady Slipper,

but to make a helleborine look as stunning as a commercial cymbidium takes great skill. The same can be said for most of the photos in this book. For example the *Goodyera pubescens* and *Platanthera dilatata*