

Record Size Female Coyote, *Canis latrans*

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On 11 March 2004 we recaptured and re-radio-collared an 8-yr old, 25.1 kg (55.3 lb), 157 cm long (tip of nose to tail tip) female Eastern Coyote (*Canis latrans*) in the town of Barnstable on Cape Cod, Massachusetts, that was originally captured in November 1998. This is believed to be the largest female Coyote ever recorded

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Coyote (*Canis latrans*) body weights are variable. They typically weigh 8.2 - 13.6 kg in the western part of their range, about 13.6 kg in the Midwest United States, and 15.9 - 18.2 kg in the northeastern part of its range (see Parker 1995 [and sources within] and Young and Jackson 1951). Parker (1995) reported record weights of Coyotes in the northeastern United States as 25.9 kg from Nova Scotia and 25 kg (Prince Edward Island) for two males and 23.4 kg (Nova Scotia) for a female, but this animal was suspected (based on breeding season) of being a Coyote-Dog (Coy-dog) hybrid. Dobie (1947) reported large specimens from California (30.9 kg) and Wyoming (32.3 kg). Young and Jackson (1951) described a 24.3 kg Coyote from Michigan and one weighing 34.0 kg from Wyoming, which was 160 cm long. All Coyotes were reported as fat males (except for the female Coy-dog that Parker reported); however, reported values could be suspect because all data came to those authors secondhand. For example, it is not known if Dobie and Young and Jackson were referring to the same Coyote (with a different weight given from each source) from Wyoming. Finally, JGW (Unpublished data) hand-raised a wild-born male Coyote from Cape Cod, Massachusetts, that fluctuated between 22.7 - 25 kg between the Coyote's first and second year of life. The literature rarely reports Coyote weights exceeding 22.7 kg (50 lb) and apparently never has for a female.

The Coyote dubbed "Casper" (Way 2000 - ID# 9804) was originally captured in a box trap (Way et al. 2002a) in November of 1998 within the town of Barnstable on Cape Cod, Massachusetts. She was a robust 2.5 or 3.5 yr old female that weighed 23.2 kg and was 148 cm long (tip of nose to tailtip) at the time. She was recaptured on 6 March 1999 and released without being handled. On 26 July 1999 she was recaptured and recollared and weighed 19.6 kg and was 140 cm long. She was visibly skinny having raised ≥ 4 pups that summer (Way et al. 2001). She tested negative for heartworm (L. Venezia, Hyannis Animal Hospital, unpublished data). On 11 March 2004 we recaptured

9804 ca. 0.5 km from her original capture location (and in the core part of her territory: Way et al. 2002b) and replaced her old radio-collar (the battery had been dead for two years). She weighed (on a digitally calibrated scale) 25.1 kg (55.3 lb) and was 157 cm long (body length [nosetip to tailbone] = 108 cm). She was robust with plenty of fat (i.e., her hip bones were difficult to palpate), her stomach had ~ 2.3 kg of meat scraps (i.e., bait used to capture her), and she was 4 - 5 weeks pregnant, based on a physical exam and her prior denning habits (Way et al. 2001). Her canine teeth (0.8 - 1.2 cm) were worn to about half their original length. Despite her noted vigor, she tested positive for Lyme's disease and heartworm (L. Venezia, unpublished data). Nevertheless she had been the breeding female of a pack of $\geq 3 - 4$ Coyotes (not including pups) for ≥ 6 years (Way et al. 2002b).

Coyotes from the New England region are large (Silver and Silver 1969; Wayne and Lehman 1992) and various theories for this have been postulated (Thurber and Peterson 1992) with hybridization from a small species of Wolf (*Canis lycaon*) a very plausible reason (Gompper 2002; Wilson et al. 2003). Coyote #9804 could not be a Coy-dog because she consistently gave birth in early April which is when wild canids normally whelp (Parker 1995; Way et al. 2001); Coy-dogs have a phase shifted reproductive cycle and typically whelp 2 - 3 months prior to wild coyotes (in mid-winter: Mengel 1971). Coyote #9804's blood is currently being analyzed (B. White, Trent University, unpublished data) to determine the genetic makeup of this unusually large sized Eastern Coyote.

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