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NWRC Spotlight - Improving Fladry for Use with Coyotes

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NWRC researchers tested the effectiveness of the topknot (left) and shower-curtain (right) fladry designs for use with coyotes.

Fladry is a nonlethal tool designed to protect livestock from predation by creating a visual barrier to wolves. Fladry may also be effective with coyotes, but large gaps between flags may reduce its efficacy.

To address this issue, NWRC researchers at the Utah field station performed a series of tests on captive coyotes using fladry with shorter gaps between flags.

Researchers first tested two styles of flags (top-knot and shower-curtain) that reduce gaps by preventing coiling of individual flags. [Findings](#) showed no differences between the two flag styles in the amount of time it took for coyotes to cross the flag barrier.

In a second experiment, researchers tested the efficacy of gap spacing (27.9 cm vs. 45.7 cm) between top-knot flags for preventing coyote crossings. Fladry with smaller gaps between top-knot flags did a better job of preventing coyote crossings than did fladry with larger gaps. Results also indicated that for each additional minute coyotes spent interacting with the fladry (i.e., increased persistent behavior), the barrier's effectiveness decreased.

These results suggest that persistent coyotes may overcome their fear of the flags more rapidly than coyotes that do not exhibit persistent behaviors. The use of top-knot flags and coyote-width spacing is recommended to increase the effectiveness of fladry for coyote damage management.

For more information, please contact NWRC@usda.gov.

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