



## Becoming Wolf: The Eastern Coyote in New England

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Fun fact: In New England, coyotes are 30% wolf, and wolves are 30% coyote. How did that happen? In a lively Science Pub presentation on November 13, 2024, Wild Canid Ecologist Chris Schadler explained it all to a sold-out crowd. She titled her presentation *Becoming Wolf: The Eastern Coyote in New England*, and with humor and high energy, skillfully led the audience through the history and science of this hybridization. An equally lively Q&A session concluded the evening.

Deforestation in the eastern U.S. impacted communities of animals who depended on the old-growth forest environment. By 1900, there was a vacuum in the ecosystem – no top predators remained in the East. The vacuum pulled coyotes from west to east. Many migrating coyotes took the northern route through Michigan, where they met and mated with Great Lakes Gray Wolves. Their hybrid offspring continued the eastern migration and became the first generation of today's Eastern Coyote.

An Eastern Coyote is defined as much by its Western Coyote ancestry as by its DNA contribution from the Eastern Wolf. The Eastern Coyote varies physically and behaviorally from its smaller relative while still carrying the adaptability and canniness of Wile E. Coyote.

Another ecosystem change is on the horizon. The Eastern Wolf, which fled the Northeast during wolf removal, may be trying to return. A look-alike to the coyote, Eastern wolves have been killed mistakenly because their appearance is so like that of the coyote. Chris discussed how the wolf and coyote might negotiate a truce in the Northeast.

Chris is the New Hampshire Representative to [Project Coyote](#), a national non-profit organization based in Northern California. Its mission is to promote compassionate conservation and coexistence between people and wildlife through education, science, and advocacy.

Read about Chris's work with wild canids [here](#).

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