Department of Forest and Wildlife Ecology
215 Russell Laboratories, 1630 Linden Drive
Madison WI 53706-1598 USA
ph: (+1) 608-890-0045 fax: (+1) 608-262-9922
ddrake2@wisc.edu

Report to the Madison Parks Commission

December 11, 2019

Thank you very much for your continued support of my urban wildlife research projects on Madison Park's properties.

We are entering the 6th year of our UW Urban Canid Project. The overall objective of our project is to understand how coyotes and red foxes navigate the urban landscape, and interact with each other and humans and their pets. We have completed the first phase of research for our UW urban canid project where we were able to document spatial and temporal use and overlap of coyotes and red foxes in southern and western Madison. The fact that coyotes and red foxes are able to co-exist/interact in the urban environment is very unusual. To understand the mechanism driving co-existence, we are continuing to live trap and radio collar red foxes and coyotes in Madison, including on Madison Park's properties, and adding a diet component to the study to understand the types of food available to these wild canids compared to what they're actually eating. We're also using satellite collars on all coyotes and red foxes to understand which species is initiating the interactions (e.g., are coyotes moving toward red foxes, or are red foxes are moving toward coyotes), where are the interactions occurring most commonly (e.g., inside or outside of territories), and are the interactions consistent throughout the year or do coyotes and red foxes become more territorial during the breeding season? We are still collecting data so have no results to report at this time regarding our diet study or understanding interspecific interactions.

During the winter of 2018-19, we live trapped 3 (2 F and 1M) coyotes in Owen Park during the winter trapping season. One of the females got killed by a car crossing Mineral Point Rd about 2 weeks after we radio collared her. The second female is still alive and has demonstrated wide ranging movements west of the Beltline into Middleton, south of the Beltline into Elver Park, and through Shorewood Hills into the Picnic Point area on the UW campus. The male we radio collared appeared a transient as he moved west into the Barnevald area and then circled back a couple of months later to the Belleville area, where he has settled. We also caught 1 male red fox at Odana Golf Course. He has settled in the Tenney park area and moves between Tenney Park and James Madison Park along the south shore of Lake Mendota, and then traverses the width of the Isthmus, primarily along the canal that connects Lakes Mendota and Monona.

The second project I have involves placing 24 wildlife cameras along bike paths throughout Madison to understand how wildlife patterns change, if they do, with zoning and land use/cover changes along an urban to less urban gradient. Madison is one of 16 cities throughout North

America that is part of the Urban Wildlife Information Network (https://urbanwildlifeinfo.org/). One of these cameras is placed in Reindahl Park. I have moved this camera 10 yards to the west from the original location due to construction this past Fall. This research project is ongoing and we continue to develop results. We have captured images of coyotes, squirrels, opossums, and skunks on the camera at Reindahl Park. Thus far, we're not finding images of wildlife on the camera at Reindahl Park or the other 23 cameras that we wouldn't expect in an urban landscape. However, we're now using a Geographic Information System (GIS) to evaluate a range of landscape factors to determine contributing factors that may explain the types of wildlife we're seeing across all 24 cameras.

David Drake
Extension Wildlife Specialist/Professor