

Integrating Human Dimensions Studies and Human-Wildlife Conflict Data to Develop a Targeted Awareness Campaign about Coyotes in Florida

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ABSTRACT: The Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC) uses qualitative and quantitative data on people's values, beliefs, attitudes, and understanding of wildlife species to optimize outreach efforts to reduce human-wildlife conflict. These data also help the agency develop and implement effective and acceptable programs on fish and wildlife management by reducing adverse impacts of fish and wildlife on Florida's environment, economy, and human health and safety. Combining human dimensions information with human wildlife conflict incident data can serve as a powerful tool to help prioritize outreach efforts.

In last few years, FWC has supported several research projects to gain a better understanding of human- coyote (*Canis latrans*) conflict across the state and public opinions across various demographics and geographic regions. The agency maintains a Wildlife Incident Management System (WIMS) database that records species-specific data related to human wildlife conflicts (including location, date, nature of incident, etc.). Human dimensions studies were conducted using focus groups, citizen surveys, and message testing. The research results in combination with the data collected in WIMS has helped FWC prioritize and target audiences for messaging related to coyote management. As a result, FWC has developed brochures, infographics, and hosted workshops in targeted areas in Florida as part of an on-going urban coyote and pet safety campaign.

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