2025 FISCAL YEAR ANNUAL REPORT

Utah's Predator Control Program Summary

Mule Deer Protection Act (SB245) and Predator Control Funding (SB87)

Program activities and data from July 1, 2024 through June 30, 2025

Prepared by the Utah Division of Wildlife Resources

UTAH DNR WILDLIFE RESOURCES

Table of contents

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Utah's *Mule Deer Protection Act* (SB245) and *Predator Control Funding* (SB87) were enacted in July of 2012. The enabling legislation is codified in Utah 23A-11-4, giving the Utah Wildlife Board authority to make rules "to establish programs to accomplish… general predator control, including programs that offer incentives or compensation to participants who remove a predatory animal that is detrimental to mule deer production."

To administer the bounty program, the Utah Wildlife Board approved Administrative Rule R657-64, *Predator Control Incentives*. Under R657-64 the Utah Division of Wildlife Resources (Division) implemented the General Predator Control Program, which tracks harvest and participation and provides payment to participants in the program. The Division established locations throughout the state where people could check in a coyote for a $50 payment. Each participant would submit the scalp of the animal with ears attached, the lower jaw, and data on the kill location recorded in the Division-approved app.

In 2025, the Utah Wildlife Board approved rule changes to increase the coyote bounty in mapped mule deer habitat to $100 per coyote. Coyotes taken outside of mule deer habitat remain at the $50 bounty. The check-in requirements were also changed to only require the lower jaw from the coyote (no more scalp with ears) at check-in.

This report summarizes details from the implementation of the Act in Fiscal Year 2025 (FY25), which runs from July 1, 2024 to June 30, 2025. In FY25, $250,000 was allocated to Utah's Predator Control Program. This is a separate pool of money that is specifically designated for the bounty program and leftover funds are added back into the general fund.

Participation, Payments, and Coyotes Submitted for Payment

FY25 was the thirteenth year of Utah's General Predator Control Program. A total of 4,422 coyotes were checked in for $227,250 in compensation, an increase of 45% compared to 3,045 coyotes in FY24 (Figure 1).

In FY25, 462 individuals submitted coyotes through the General Predator Control Program. The number of participants was up 41.7% from the previous year (n=326). The number of coyotes submitted per hunter changed slightly from FY24, with relatively fewer participants submitting

more than five coyotes. In FY25 20% of participants submitted only one coyote and 47% of participants submitted five or more coyotes. Only 3% of participants submitted more than 50 animals.

The new bounty structure, that pays more for coyotes taken in mapped mule deer habitat, was implemented towards the end of FY25 on April 1, 2025. There were 123 coyotes killed within mule deer habitat and turned in for the $100 bounty during the first three months (April – June). During those same three months, 469 coyotes were turned in for the $50 bounty.

26 individuals collected $100 bounties for coyotes killed within mule deer habitat in FY25. 27% of those who submitted coyotes that were killed in mule deer habitat area were new to the program. There was a total of 125 new participants that submitted coyotes for bounty in FY25 compared to 70 new participants in FY24.

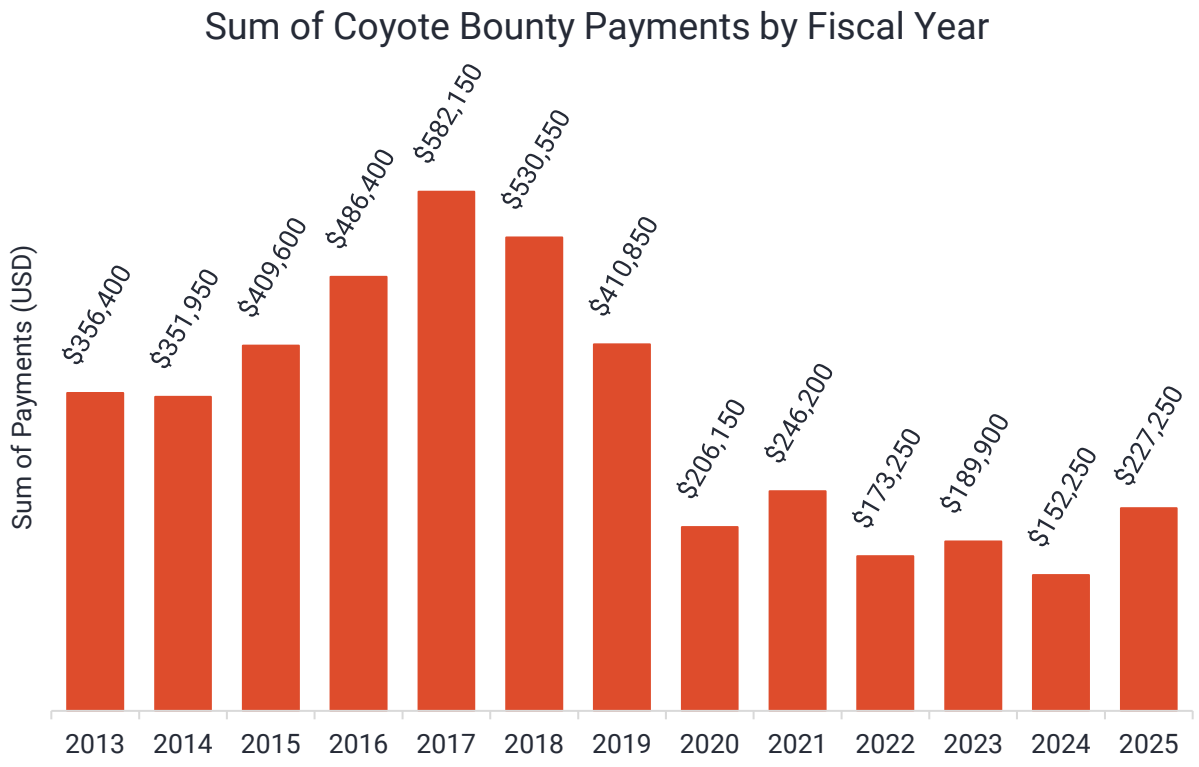

Figure 1. *Utah legislatively appropriated funds paid out to participants in the coyote bounty program. Figures do not include costs incurred for program administration.*

Impact of the Program: Estimates from Survey Data

The Division's yearly furbearer survey provides supplementary information about coyote harvest in Utah. In the 10 years preceding the implementation of the *Mule Deer Protection Act*, annual coyote take reported in the furbearer harvest report averaged 6,332 per year. The reported harvest of coyotes by hunters holding a furbearer license during the 2024-2025 season was 3,805.

The total reported coyote take by the general public, consisting of coyotes turned in for bounty payments (4,422) and coyotes reported in the furbearer harvest survey (2,161), during FY25 was 6,583. To calculate an accurate total without duplication, the reported take from the furbearer harvest survey was corrected for coyotes counted in both the harvest survey and bounty payout.

Additionally, the Division has a cooperative interagency agreement with the Utah Department of Agriculture and Food (UDAF) to remove coyotes under this program. UDAF personnel reported removing 3,854 coyotes during FY25. Of the coyotes killed by UDAF, 697 were shot or trapped in mule deer core areas.

The total estimated number of coyotes killed for FY25 through the General Predator Control Program (4,422), reported through the furbearer harvest survey (2,161), and by UDAF (3,854) was 10,437 coyotes (Figure 2).

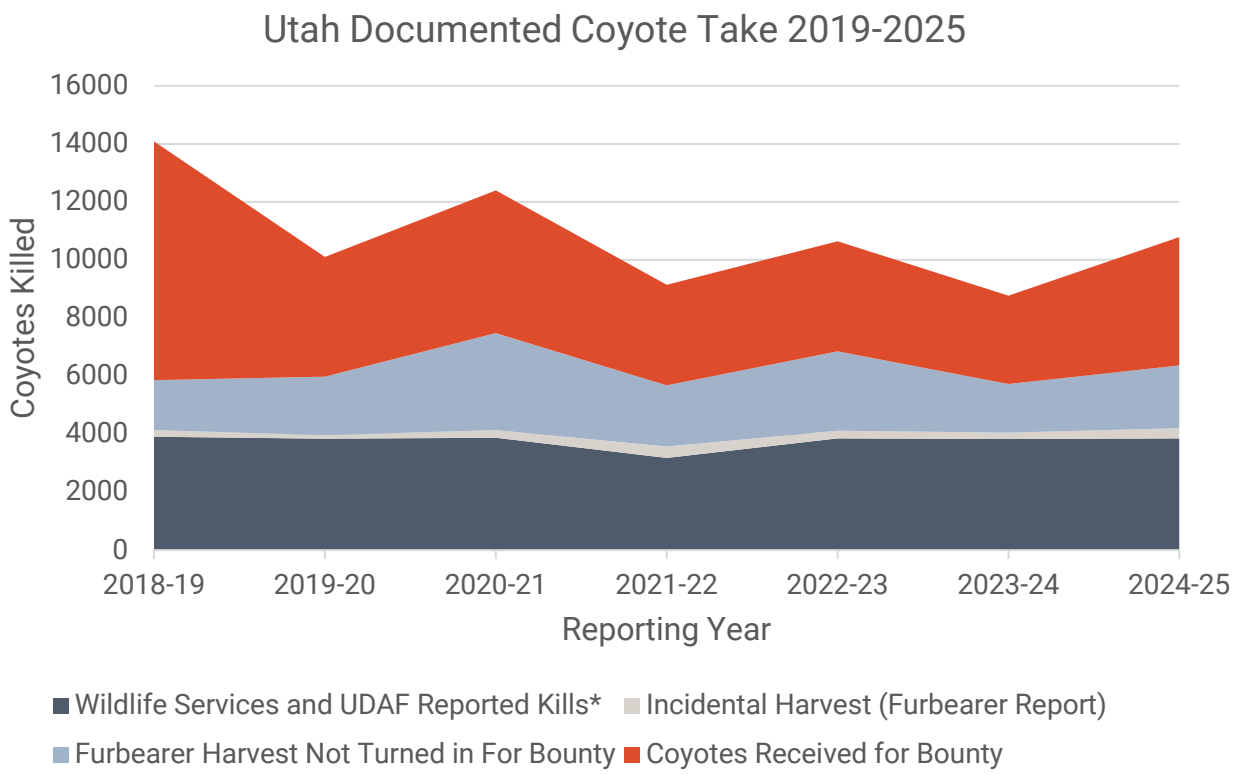

Figure 2. *The total number of coyote kills documented in Utah during FY25.*
**Wildlife Services conducted targeted coyote removal from 2018-23 and UDAF took over in FY24.*

Temporal Distribution of Coyote Submissions and Harvest

Coyote kills in FY25 peaked in November 2024 (Figure 3) and bounty submissions peaked in January 2025 (Figure 4). This is comparable to the general pattern observed in previous years, although there was a large increase in the number of coyotes submitted in December and January. On the whole, the trend continues to reflect a seasonal increase in coyote kills through the winter months, with a lag between kill data and bounty check-in.

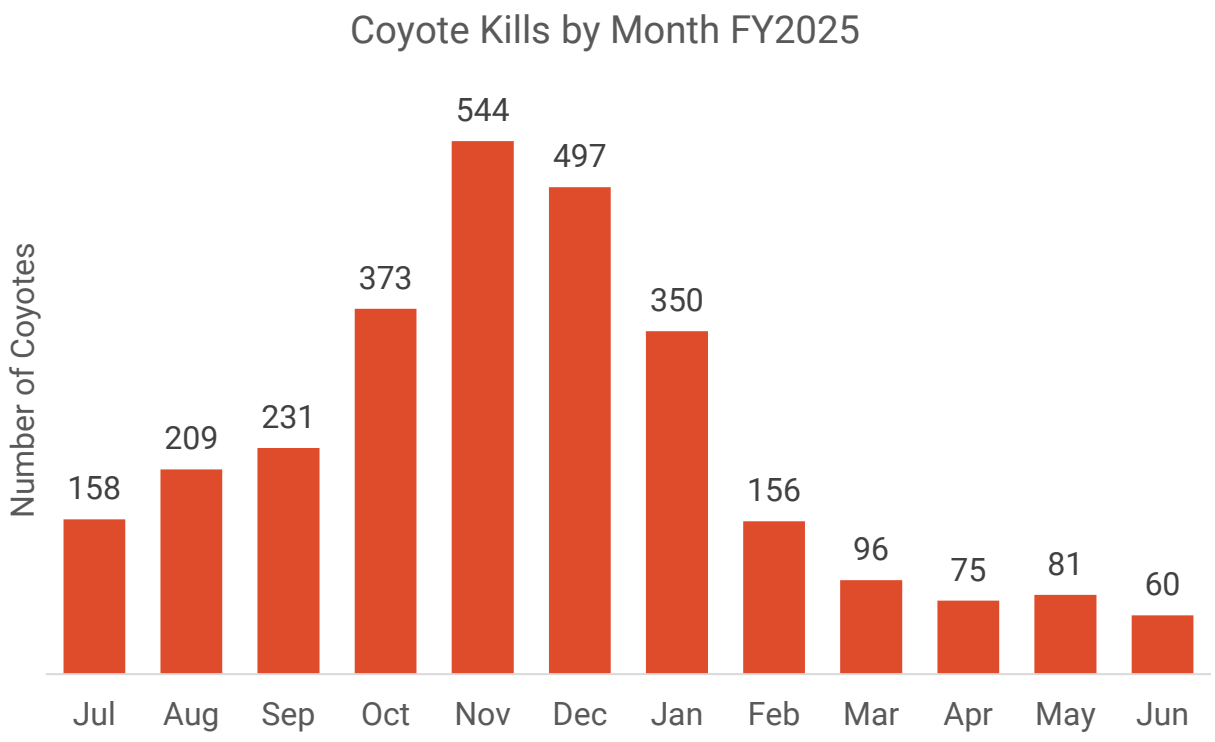

Figure 3. *Number of verified coyotes killed and reported in the Utah Bounty Reporter Survey123 app by month in FY25, which runs from July 1, 2024 to June 30, 2025.*

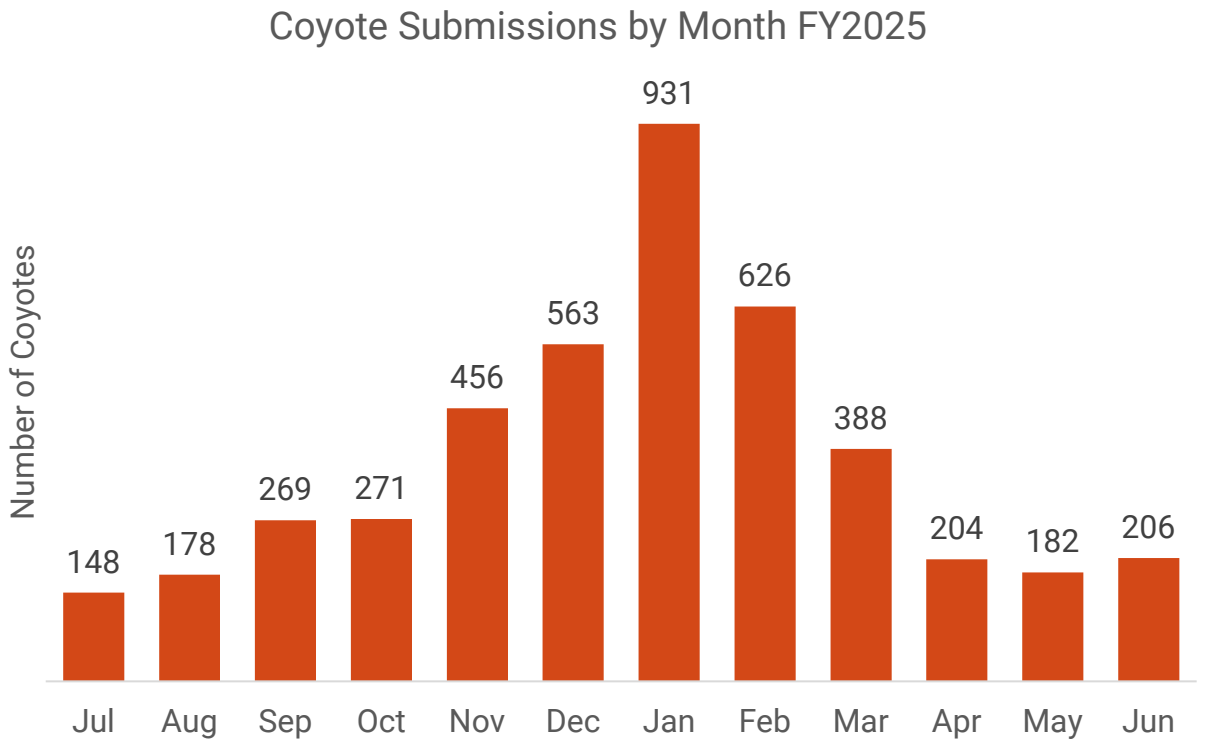

Figure 4. *Number of coyotes checked in for bounty payments by month during FY25, which runs from July 1, 2024 to June 30, 2025.*

Biological Data

Biological data was compiled for 2,830 coyotes submitted in FY25 via the Utah Coyote Bounty Reporter form in the Survey123 app and verified at check-in between July 1, 2024, and June 30, 2025[1]. The results show that 1,336 (47%) of the coyotes were female and 1,494 (53%) were male. The take method reported for these coyotes included shoot/call (2,127; 75%), trap/snare (589; 21%), roadkill (81; 3%), and other methods (33; 1%).

Tooth data to establish the age structure of coyotes turned in for bounty was collected in FY25. The results are currently being processed, and will be available in the FY26 report. To see earlier trends in coyote age, please refer to previous annual reports.

Spatial Distribution of Coyote Take

In FY25 2,830 coyotes were recorded in the bounty reporter app with usable spatial data and verified at a check-in[1]. Of those, 1,089 (38%) were killed in crucial mule deer range, 394 (14%) were killed in substantial value mule deer range, and 1,347 (48%) were killed outside of the mapped mule deer range (Figure 5).

A desired outcome of the 2025 rule changes is to increase the coyote take within mule deer habitat to improve mule deer production. While the percentages remained similar to the previous year, the total number of coyotes taken within mule deer habitat increased from 910 in FY24 to 1,483 in FY25.

Analysis of FY25 coyote removal locations within Utah's deer management units found that coyote removal was variable across the state. The San Juan, Abajo Mountains unit had the most kills (241) and the North Slope, Summit unit had the fewest, with no coyote kills documented (Table 1). Coyote removal locations were also recorded by county, and the highest number of kills (353) was in Tooele county (Table 2). Removals were fairly dispersed across the state this year, with the greatest number occurring in central and southern Utah (Figure 5).

[1] Coyotes killed during FY25 may be verified at check in during FY25 or FY26 since participants have 365 days from the kill date to submit their coyotes for payment. As such, the verified number of coyotes with reliable biological and spatial data at the time of this report is lower than the total number of coyotes killed in FY25 due to the check in lag (as shown in Figures 3 and 4).

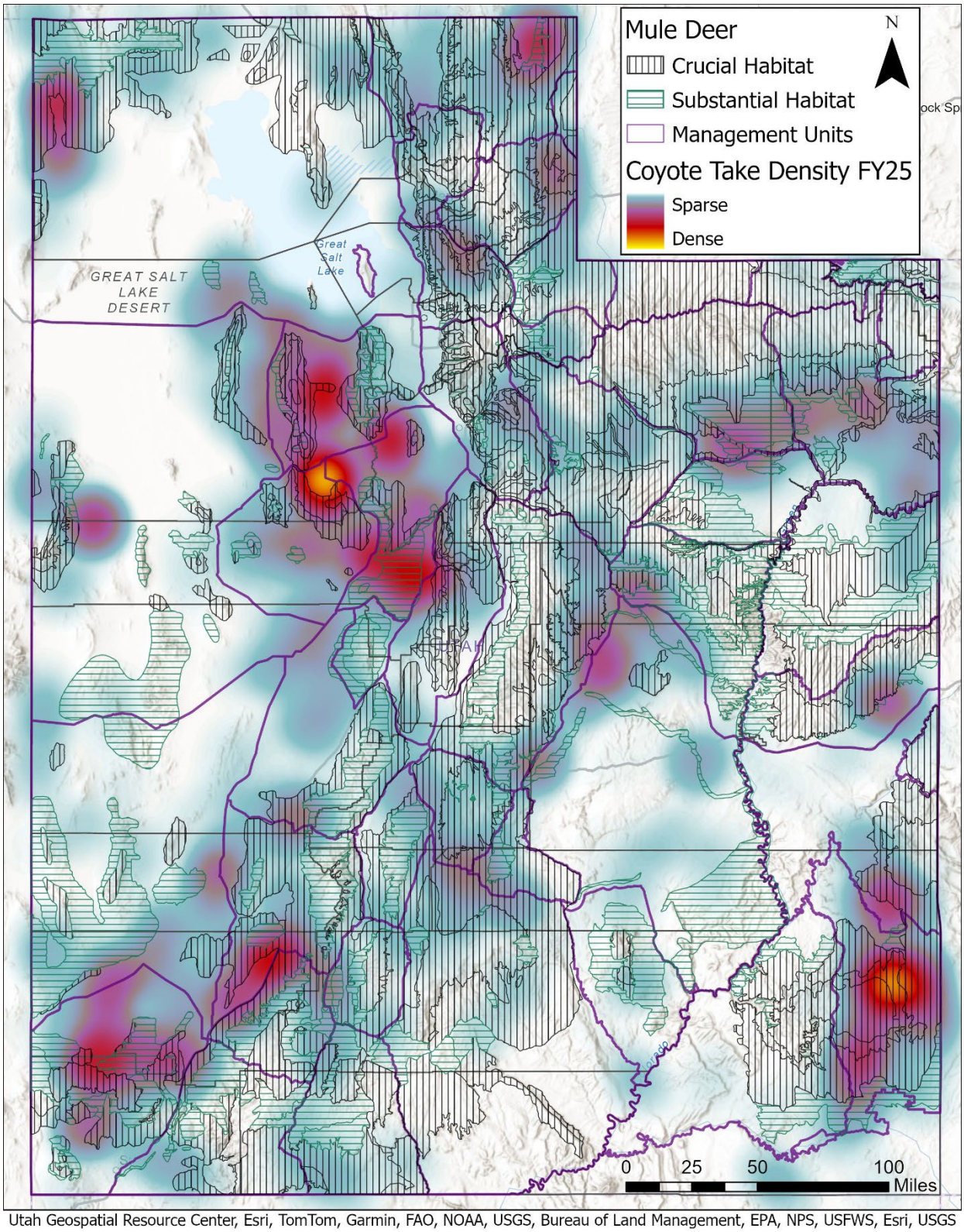

Figure 5. *Map of coyote removal densities from coyotes submitted for bounty in FY25, with boundaries for mule deer management units and mapped mule deer habitat. 48% of coyotes were killed outside of mapped mule deer habitat, 38% were killed in crucial mule deer habitat, and 14% were killed in substantial value mule deer habitat.*

Number of Coyotes Submitted by Deer Unit in FY25		
Mule Deer Management Unit	Number of Coyote Bounties Paid	Percent of Bounties
Antelope Island	1	0.0%
Beaver	110	3.9%
Book Cliffs, North	17	0.6%
Book Cliffs, South	35	1.2%
Box Elder	172	6.1%
Cache	109	3.8%
Central Mtns. Manti/San Rafael	59	2.1%
Central Mtns, Nebo	45	1.6%
Chalk Creek	20	0.7%
East Canyon	29	1.0%
Fillmore	91	3.1%
Henry Mtns	15	0.5%
Kamas	8	0.3%
La Sal	66	2.3%
Monroe	22	0.8%
Morgan-South Rich	41	1.5%
Mt. Dutton	21	0.7%
Nine Mile, Anthro	13	0.5%
Nine Mile, Range Creek	31	1.1%
North Slope, Summit	0	0.0%
North Slope, Three Corners	9	0.3%
North Slope, West Daggett	5	0.2%
Ogden	21	0.7%
Oquirrh-Stansbury	169	6.0%
Panguitch Lake	49	1.7%
Paunsaugunt	39	1.4%
Pine Valley	208	7.4%
Plateau, Boulder/Kaiparowits	62	2.2%
Plateau, Fishlake	32	1.1%
Plateau, Thousand Lakes	11	0.4%
San Juan, Abajo Mtns	241	8.6%

Table 1. *Number of coyotes submitted to the predator control program within each deer unit in FY25.*

Number of Coyotes Submitted by Deer Unit in FY25 (Continued)		
Mule Deer Management Unit	Number of Coyote Bounties Paid	Percent of Bounties
San Juan, Elk Ridge	17	0.6%
San Rafael	125	4.4%
South Slope, Bonanza/Vernal	114	4.0%
South Slope, Diamond Mtn	3	0.1%
South Slope, Yellowstone	80	2.8%
Southwest Desert	142	5.0%
Wasatch Mtns, East	33	1.2%
Wasatch Mtns, West	31	1.1%
West Desert, Tintic	185	6.6%
West Desert, Deep Creek	134	4.8%
West Desert, Vernon	168	6.0%
Zion	32	1.1%

Table 1 (continued). *Number of coyotes submitted to the predator control program within each deer unit in FY25.*

Number of Coyotes Submitted by County in FY25		
County	Number of Coyote Bounties Paid	Percent of Bounties
Beaver	71	2.5%
Box Elder	146	5.2%
Cache	44	1.6%
Carbon	59	2.1%
Daggett	14	0.5%
Davis	3	0.1%
Duchesne	96	3.4%
Emery	126	4.5%
Garfield	79	2.8%
Grand	55	1.9%
Iron	295	10.4%
Juab	225	8.0%
Kane	35	1.2%
Millard	147	5.2%
Morgan	32	1.1%
Piute	18	0.6%
Rich	99	3.5%
Salt Lake	14	0.5%
San Juan	319	11.3%
Sanpete	19	0.7%
Sevier	57	2.0%
Summit	28	1.0%
Tooele	353	12.5%
Uintah	147	5.2%
Utah	118	4.2%
Wasatch	37	1.3%
Washington	114	4.0%
Wayne	69	2.4%
Weber	11	0.4%

Table 2. *Number of coyotes submitted to the predator control program within each county in FY25.*

Conclusion

Utah's Predator Control Program continued across the state during Fiscal Year 2025. Take has remained relatively consistent over the last six years. The number of reported bounties was considerably higher before introducing fraud reduction measures in 2019. Changes in mule deer population estimates since the implementation of the program have varied by unit; however, a central Utah experiment found that consecutive years of coyote removal in mule deer fawning habitat increased neonate mule deer survival[2].

Further assessment of fawn recruitment and coyote removals through Utah's General Predator Control Program is necessary to understand if the program benefits mule deer at any scale. Many factors that influence deer populations, such as weather, habitat conditions, and alternative prey availability, need to be accounted for when assessing the impacts of the program. In an effort to assess the effectiveness of the program and address the aforementioned details more closely, a study[3] was initiated in 2017. Results from this observational study showed a discrepancy between where coyotes were killed for bounty and where mule deer fawns were most vulnerable within the Manti deer unit. Further studies are underway to expand this research and find better ways to estimate coyote population sizes.

[2]McMillan, B. R., Hall, J. T., Freeman, E. D., Hersey, K. R., & Larsen, R. T. (2023). Both temporal and spatial aspects of predator management influence survival of a temperate ungulate through early life. *Frontiers in Ecology and Evolution*, 11(1087063). https://doi.org/10.3389/fevo.2023.1087063

[3]Walden, Xaela M. (2025). Habitat selection analysis of mule deer to determine efficacy of the coyote bounty program in Utah. *All Graduate Theses and Dissertations, Fall 2023 to Present*. 545. https://digitalcommons.usu.edu/etd2023/545 https://doi.org/10.26076/45ca-5389