Marauding Coyotes Threaten Farm Animals Near Kinder

KINDER, La. (UPI) — The howl of coyotes is causing a strange echo in southwest Louisiana — the banging of an auctioneer’s gavel.

Farmers in Allen Parish who raise sheep and cattle as a sideline say marauding coyotes are wiping out their sheep herds and pose a threat to cattle.

Walter and Clarence Richard, herders on a farm northeast of Kinder, say the coyotes chased them out of the business.

“We lost 40 lambs and 20 adult sheep to coyotes in the past month,” said Walter Richard. “On Saturday, Oct. 4, we were down to 27 — and the following Thursday we had 22 left. We took them to an auction barn and sold them.”

“There’s little sense raising sheep to feed the coyotes,” he said.

Clyde Vienney, a wildlife biologist and acting chief of the Wildlife and Fisheries Commission trapping division, says coyotes are a problem.

“They’re in almost every parish in the state,” Vienney said. “We’ve had a lot of complaints about coyotes killing cattle, but in the year and a half I’ve been involved in the program, we haven’t been able to document a coyote kill of a cow or calf.”

Vienney said coyotes may feed on the carcasses of cows and calves that die of other causes, however, and stockmen mistake this for cattle kills.

He said sheep are another matter.

“We have six trappers working statewide and we stay weeks behind. We try to encourage farmers and land owners to work with our men a few days and learn how to catch the coyotes, then do their own trapping.”

Vienney said interest in trapping fell off last year when the prices paid for coyote pelts dropped sharply.

Coyotes inhabit the entire state except the extreme southeastern tip, Vienney said, with the biggest populations in the northwest and southeast sections.

Two of the state trappers, Frank Turner and Ernest Williams, live in the Pitkin area. They echo Vienney’s thoughts.

“At the Richard place, the coyotes came to the front gate to take sheep,” Williams said. “Our problem is that there are more complaints than we can handle.”

Walter Richard said the state trappers have caught some of the coyotes but “all signs indicate the population is growing to epidemic proportions.”

Julius Meaux, president of the 1975 International Rice Festival, opens the two-day harvest celebration with a broad grin which was indicative of the mood of the crowd and the clearing skies. (Post-Signal Staff Photo)