

Public Comments – Coyote Predation Discussion

Collected between October 1, 2025 and January 30, 2026

In Favor – 4

Against – 9

General Comment – 4

Also includes an article from 2019 as provided by a member of the public.

From: Dominique Brisson <dominique.brisson@icloud.com>
Sent: Friday, January 30, 2026 5:06 PM
To: Scotty L. Kelly <Scotty.Kelly@mysanibel.com>
Subject: Re: Coyote Working Group to Propose Sea Turtle Protection to City Council

Thank you for this very well written presentation.

I hope they will agree to authorize the removal project. For having witnessed a single coyote attack 5 different nest and successfully depredate 3 of them (all within the same zone in one hour span), it's a needed solution for the amount or hatchlings they kill.

I'll be watching on the video conference

Sent from my iPhone

Sanibel City Council
City of Sanibel

Dear Mayor and Council members,

I write as a concerned resident about increasing depredation of sea turtle nests and to oppose the proposed targeted lethal removal of coyotes on our Sanctuary island. I urge the Council to pursue a different path.

Please listen to the SCCF podcast “Coyotes and Sea Turtle Nest predation” and read “Coyotes on Our Islands” Ryan Orgera, Ph.D. The scientists use the terms “speculation” “we just don’t know” “data gaps” “we do not yet understand the full dynamics”.

What is clear is that Sanibel is recovering from Hurricane Ian , and natural systems are rebalancing. SCCF explain that turtle nest depredation by coyotes has increased primarily because of reduced human beach traffic and the struggle for food sources; fewer rabbits and rodents, reduced vegetation, and loss of other prey species such as iguanas. The City must not act impulsively, the island is recovering, beach traffic is increasing and coyote food sources are becoming more abundant. Changing the Sanibel Plan to permit shooting coyotes is unacceptable. This island is a sanctuary for all wildlife and we owe it our resident coyote population — and to our broader ecosystem — to study them and implement a thoughtful management plan. Research shows that immediate lethal measures worsen conflicts rather than resolve them, breaks pack structure, vacant territory attracts dispersing coyotes so population rebounds, incoming coyotes breed more successfully (larger litters, higher pup survival), all this, offsets removals.

I ask the Council to support actions that emphasize coexistence, protection, and rigorous data collection, including:

- Implement Community guardianship programs to “protect the nests” with expanded public education and tourism outreach.
- Implement Public hazing workshops following FWC guidance so guardians and all residents can learn how to safely deter coyotes and reduce conflicts.
- Support Immediate non-lethal protections during nesting season: targeted night patrols, low-impact temporary fencing where appropriate, and nest relocation only when professionally warranted.
- Listen to our scientists and find funding to enable them to gather robust data using camera traps - monitoring, collar tagging and scat/DNA analysis(hair) , to implement a full and concise Coyote management plan. This will allow all future decisions to be evidence-based.

Specifically, I respectfully request that the Council 1) support immediate community education and guardianship measures for the upcoming nesting season. (We have enough residents and visitors willing to help patrol and protect nests. 2). Designate Bowman's Beach as a pilot site for non-lethal coyote management and commit to collecting the data to implement that program.

Thank you for your attention to protecting all our wildlife and restoring the island's ecological balance. As a Sanctuary island, we should honor the Sanibel Plan. With local volunteers and conservation partners, our Bowmans Beach pilot will become a model for humane, science-based management all over the world.

Sincerely,
Catriona Presland-Byrne
catrionapb@gmail.com

From: **gayle Wyman** <gayle@wa-mp.com>

Date: Fri, Jan 30, 2026 at 11:52 AM

Subject: Re: Coyote Working Group to Propose Sea Turtle Protection to City Council

To: <blinstrom@sccf.org>

Has some form of birth control been considered?

Scotty L. Kelly

From: rebecca Monroe <shelttails@comcast.net>
Sent: Friday, January 30, 2026 7:07 AM
To: Mike Miller; Holly Smith; Laura J. DeBruce; John Henshaw; Richard Johnson; Scotty L. Kelly
Subject: Coyotes

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Dear City Council,

I am unable to attend the meeting on Tuesday, but wanted to share my opinion on our Coyote population and SCCF's plan to target killing them.

I believe Coyotes manage their pack. There is a lot of data to prove that Coyote will begin breeding more to build back their pack.

It is tragic that Coyote eat Sea Turtle eggs, but nature is not kind and we, as ignorant humans, have no understanding of how to control nature. Time and time again, with various species, like Wolves up north, we attempt to thin them out and then we bring them back. We are always failing at this.

Sanibel is a sanctuary island: we say this all of the time. I do not think we have parenthesis in the phrase that state who is not included...

I am the owner of two small dogs. We have had a Coyote on our raised porch standing at our front door! We are cautious with our dogs in our own yard and still I am against killing these beautiful animals.

If we want to deter the Coyote from eating turtle eggs, let's increase the bunny population and give them more to eat.

What about the raccoon or any other predator of Sea Turtles? Why are Sea Turtles higher on the pyramid than Coyote? Are we going to target all of their predators? Perhaps limit tourism May to October?

I am a volunteer for SCCF through the Osprey group. I think SCCF is a well-run, amazing organization, but I do not and cannot support the actual killing of one species to save another. I leave those decisions to nature not man. We can barely manage ourselves these days let alone something as beautiful and complex as wildlife.

Respectfully,

Rebecca Monroe
925 Whelk Dr.

Sanibel, FL 33957
815-341-5839

Scotty L. Kelly

From: pkoury@comcast.net
Sent: Thursday, January 29, 2026 9:04 PM
To: Scotty L. Kelly
Subject: Coyotes--Dart and relocate, like alligators.

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This takes guns off the beach. Money would be available, same as for big alligators who threaten.
Thank you.
Peter Koury

From: **Michelle G** <michelle.greenern@gmail.com>

Date: Thu, Jan 29, 2026 at 7:33 PM

Subject: Re: Coyote Working Group to Propose Sea Turtle Protection to City Council

To: Barbara Linstrom <blinstrom@sccf.org>

Good article and good work saving the loggerheads. We appreciate all that SCCF and CROW does for our fragile environment.

Just a thought. What about using solar powered electric fencing?

-- Michelle Greene



Outlook

Coyotes

From MM Merryfield <merrymerryfield@gmail.com>

Date Thu 1/29/2026 6:40 PM

To Scotty L. Kelly <Scotty.Kelly@mysanibel.com>

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How you been in touch with Project Coyote? They are a national organization that works with communities to find ways not to kill coyotes if they are threatening other species.

I live in Gulf Pines and really do not want to see any coyotes killed near us. We love the coyotes and if they had other food sources they would not be going after turtle eggs.

I can't believe Sanibel will sanction killing wild animals who are just trying to survive. We moved here because it protects wildlife and is a sanctuary island.

Merry Merryfield

Please share with Holly and Rachel



Get rid of the coyotes on island

From Trevor Nette <trevor@trevornette.com>

Date Thu 1/29/2026 5:24 PM

To Scotty L. Kelly <Scotty.Kelly@mysanibel.com>

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My family and children have lived on the island for over 35 years. Why not get rid of all the coyotes? They are not native to the island and have only been on island less than 15 years. They are a proven nuisance to pets, island residents and guests as well as federally protected sea turtles. Their numbers continue to aggressively increase.

Who in their right mind consider getting rid of only the ones that hit the beach and sea turtles ? Absurd. The others will end up there also and turtle nests will continue to be depleted by them. The coyote population will continue to be a nuisance. How do you tract that anyway - are they going to check in and let you know their whereabouts! Give me a break!

How may people who pay property taxes on the island are sensitive and against reducing and or being rid of the entire coyote population on the island? Guessing not many! For sure minority.

Please share with all the island residents what benefit a coyote population brings to sanibel and captiva island since they landed here 15 years ago ?

From: Natalie King <nking1225@gmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, January 29, 2026 5:07 PM
To: email-list <email-list@mysanibel.com>
Subject: Re: Sanibel Coyote Working Group to Share Proposal for Sea Turtle Protection at City Council Meeting on Feb. 3

I would be so upset if we starting killing coyotes!

From: Robert Blakely <rrblakelyjr@yahoo.com>
Sent: Thursday, January 29, 2026 5:03 PM
To: email-list <email-list@mysanibel.com>
Subject: Re: Sanibel Coyote Working Group to Share Proposal for Sea Turtle Protection at City Council Meeting on Feb. 3

The lethal removal of Coyotes is a horrible idea. Let nature take its course. Sanibel seems to be more worried about turtles than people and redevelopment of the island. STOP WITH THE TURTLE FOCUS!!! We have many things that are more important and playing God for the turtles is not one of them.



Coyote turtle predation

From mildews_caddish9f@icloud.com <mildews_caddish9f@icloud.com>

Date Thu 1/29/2026 4:56 PM

To Scotty L. Kelly <Scotty.Kelly@mysanibel.com>

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Scotty,

Has the coyote working group considered how many iguanas that the coyotes beneficially remove from Sanibel? Mike Kirkland, the Python Elimination Program Manager for the South Florida Water Management District (SFWMD), spoke at CROW a couple of weeks ago, and mentioned that after pythons, iguanas are the number two concern for invasive species in SW Florida. They are egg eaters too.

I live on West Gulf dr and have seen Green Iguanas on my property for the first time this January. It's been obvious that after hurricane Ian, the Green iguanas were dispersed far further through the island, and green iguanas represent egg predation too.

Might you consider stronger measures to protect sea turtle nests while allowing coyotes to continue to remove iguanas?

Respectfully,
Robin Shield

From: **Evelyn Stewart** <evelyn@adventuresinparadise.com>

Date: Thu, Jan 29, 2026 at 4:49 PM

Subject: Re: Coyote Working Group to Propose Sea Turtle Protection to City Council

To: <blinstrom@sccf.org>

Sirs:

The Coyote population has increased substantially since Hurricane Ian. Yes we need to protect our turtle nests, but we also need to protect our citizens our domestic animals as well as our native animals.

The statistics that you state in your report is evidence that “City of Sanibel we have a problem”!

The Coyote's can multiply every 60 some days.....so “we”, the City of Sanibel, need to get this under control before it becomes lethal to those we are protecting.

Thank you,

Evelyn Stewart

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From: **Sharon Finkelstein** <sharonefinkel1@gmail.com>

Date: Thu, Jan 29, 2026 at 4:19 PM

Subject: Re: Coyote Working Group to Propose Sea Turtle Protection to City Council

To: <blinstrom@sccf.org>

ABSOLUTELY NOT!!!! WE ARE A WILDLIFE SANCTUARY ISLAND! LET NATURE BE! There will be a pushback and lawsuit.

Sent from my iPhone 14   

From: Taylor Heilpern-Baxter <jthbax@gmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, January 29, 2026 1:13 PM
To: Mike Miller <Mike.Miller@mysanibel.com>; Holly Smith <Holly.Smith@mysanibel.com>; Laura J. DeBruce <laura.debruce@mysanibel.com>; John Henshaw <John.Henshaw@mysanibel.com>; Richard Johnson <richard.johnson@mysanibel.com>
Subject: Coyotes

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To whom it may concern,

I am writing regarding the coyote discussion being held by the city. I hope that I am not in the minority, but it's likely that I am.

I studied wildlife ecology, and when I relocated to South Florida, one of the things that drew me most to Sanibel was its identity as a sanctuary island—where 75% of the land is preserved and where environmentalists before me tirelessly fought to protect her wildness and the creatures who call her home. As someone who cares deeply about the environment and wildlife, Sanibel felt like home from the moment I moved here in 2017.

It is a common misconception among newer residents that coyotes have not preceded us on this island until recently. This is untrue. They existed at the time of the native Americans and for some time after, but were eventually wiped out by storms. So the belief that they are non-native is not factual.

One of the biggest misunderstandings that I hear frequently in this community is that coyotes are out to hurt people and our animals. This is inaccurate. I do, however, understand why people have this belief, as many people are coming from urban areas and they do not understand that a coyote is a highly adaptable creature, and when in an urban environment, they alter their behavior to survive. They have very little space for their dens and become more protective and feel more threatened in highly trafficked areas. They are also starving because all of the creatures they would normally hunt have relocated to areas with less traffic. So the coyotes in cities and the neighborhoods surrounding are often more aggressive because they are trying to survive.

On Sanibel, I can confidently say that the coyotes are well fed, which is a wonderful sign of environmental resilience. When you see coyote populations thriving, that is a wonderful sign that our ecosystem is re-balancing. If a coyote is following you, it's almost always a mama herding you away from her den. She is not trying to eat you. Coyotes are timid by nature, and although they have cohabitated near humans since the beginning of their existence, they are naturally fearful of us and their curiosity is often mistaken for “stalking.”

I think most important to point out here is that when one makes the decision to invest in a home on Sanibel, they must understand what it stands for. There are many places that one can buy a home by the water that are not sanctuary islands. I think by giving in to people who want coyotes removed (and alligators and bobcats for that matter), we are failing what all of these environmentalists before us have fought so hard to preserve. The residents of this island must always understand that living here means that there is an expectation to coexist and respect wildlife, and the grounds where we all walk. We will send a terrible message to the public if this is compromised just because new islanders did not do their homework prior to relocating.

I also feel that it could be very valuable to have a wildlife ecologist from UF Gainesville come to speak on the island to educate people on coyote behavior, and all wildlife behavior and explain how the removal or the reduction is scientifically proven to backfire and more importantly, damage a healthy ecosystem that has suffered enough the last few years.

Thank you for your consideration in continuing to be a voice for our voiceless residents and for considering an educational approach, rather than an approach that will go against all we stand for here.

Sincerely,
Taylor Heilpern

Coyotes On Our Islands

December 27, 2019 SantivaChronicle.com

by SCCF CEO Ryan Orgera, Ph.D.



Ryan Orgera

Over the past months we have increasingly heard about coyotes on our islands. The safety of our residents is a high priority of mine, but so is the integrity of our natural habitats—these are not mutually exclusive. We have coyotes and ostensibly will always have them. While it seems logical that because Sanibel and Captiva are islands that we should be able to control the coyote population easily. This is a much more complex reality than some would suggest.

Culling is a popular rhetorical response to human-coyote interactions. Hundreds of communities around the country have gone down that path, they have almost without exception proven to be tremendous wastes of public funds. Indiscriminate coyote killing does not work. Coyotes are highly adaptive animals, when their populations are threatened they biologically switch to

what is referred to as compensatory reproduction. This means that females enter a highly fecund state where they produce much larger litters of pups. So, as communities remove coyotes through culling programs they discover their efforts foiled by coyote population booms.

Additionally, some initial research suggests that coyotes arrive by swimming across Pine Island Sound and San Carlos Bay, as well as by simply walking across the causeway. Coyotes are among the most successful mammal species in Florida, they thrive in wild and urban settings. No matter how you cut it, coyotes are here to stay. There is no effective eradication program—and should we eradicate those that live on our islands, they will simply be replaced by off-island kin.

So, what is the answer? We must finish Sanibel's Coyote Management Plan. Our City's Natural Resources Department is doing just that; working with all their island partners: SCCF, CROW, J.N. "Ding" Darling, and others. Without a proven, scientifically anchored plan, endorsed by the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission, we will never successfully understand, or effect change in human-coyote interactions.

Public funds are scarce, especially those for environmental management. When we act on policy from a place of fear rather than developing a meaningful, scientifically sound plan, we are not being the best stewards of our public dollars. There is a simple fact: culling coyotes without a management plan in place is a false trail. If our community chooses to move in that direction, we

will be collectively opting to forge ahead with a plan that we know to be ineffective, costing our communities tens of thousands of dollars.

I would urge our residents to support the completion of the City of Sanibel's Coyote Management Plan, as well as increased funding for population dynamics studies of our coyotes. SCCF, along with our partners, is committed to educating our communities on how to best live with coyotes. A few simple behaviors can reduce the risk of negative human-coyote interactions:

- 1) Always use a leash when walking dogs, especially smaller animals, and especially at night. If you see a coyote while walking your pet, bring him/her close to you to appear larger.
- 2) Simply seeing a coyote, day or night, is not necessarily reason for concern. If you feel uncomfortable you should "haze" the coyote. Hazing is simply scaring a coyote by yelling and waving your arms or waving a stick, golf club, cane, etc.. Yes, you will look silly, but you are doing what wildlife managers know is a best practice. Coyotes are inquisitive critters, so scaring them when they are too close to you is best for our community and coyotes alike.
- 3) Never feed a coyote. They are wild animals. Feeding a coyote is equally bad for the animal as it is for your neighbors.

Cane toads, for instance, are far more dangerous than coyotes to our pets. This highly invasive, successful species kills and injures pets (and sometimes humans) at an alarming rate through its toxins. Why are we so focused on coyotes when we could be investing in fighting much more dangerous species, like cane toads? Also, coyotes play important roles in our ecosystems, including controlling marsh rabbit populations.

No matter what you hear or maybe even believe, we are not experiencing anything unique or even of particular concern according to FWC. Let's not be hasty, let's be careful and effective; and respect nature and the safety of our residents. We really can do both.

Founded in 1967, SCCF (Sanibel-Captiva Conservation Foundation) is dedicated to the conservation of coastal habitats and aquatic resources on Sanibel and Captiva and in the surrounding watershed.

Scotty L. Kelly

From: SCCF <sccf@sccf.ccsend.com>
Sent: Thursday, January 29, 2026 4:02 PM
To: Scotty L. Kelly
Subject: Coyote Working Group to Propose Sea Turtle Protection to City Council

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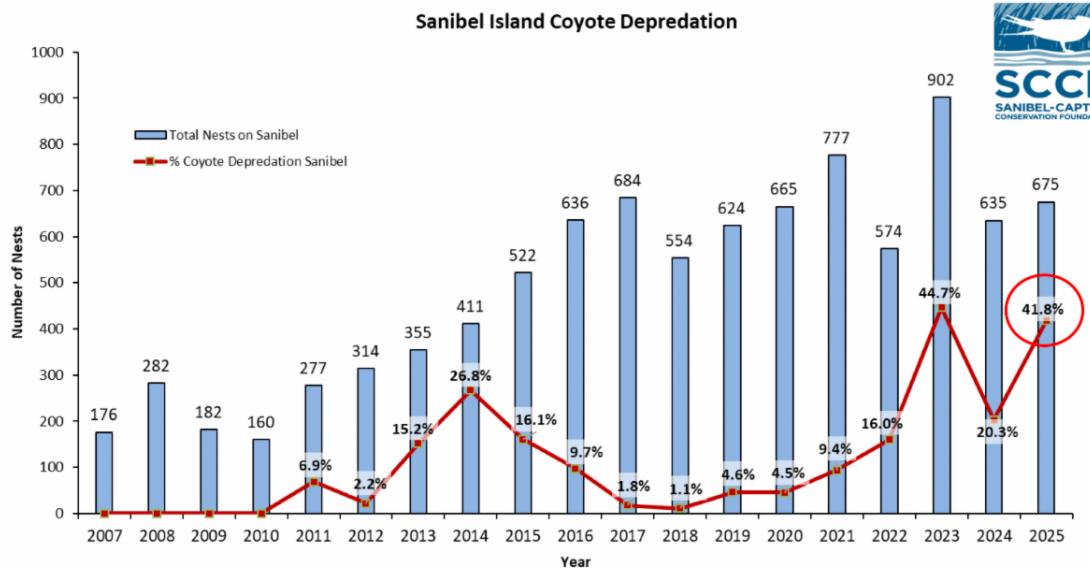
Jan. 29, 2026

Sanibel Coyote Working Group to Share Proposal for Sea Turtle Protection at City Council Meeting on Feb. 3

The first confirmed sighting of a coyote on Sanibel was in the J.N. "Ding" Darling National Wildlife Refuge in March 2011. Since then, the City of Sanibel Natural Resources Department and its partners at the J.N. "Ding" Darling Refuge, the Sanibel-Captiva Conservation Foundation (SCCF), and the Clinic for the Rehabilitation of Wildlife (CROW) have been striving to monitor and better understand the coyote population on Sanibel.

Working collaboratively as the Sanibel Coyote Working Group (CWG) since 2014, scientists have been closely monitoring the impact of coyotes on nesting loggerhead (*Caretta caretta*) sea turtle nests. As a federally designated threatened species, loggerheads are protected under the Federal Loggerhead Recovery Plan.

"The plan is an assessment of the population status and identifies major threats in need of management to achieve population recovery," Brzoza explains. "Nest predation is identified as a threat, and recovery objectives are to minimize nest predation, keeping rates below 10 percent."



SCCF biologists who track the coyote depredation rate on sea turtle nests on Sanibel find that it has been increasing since 2021 and has exceeded 10 percent for the last four years.

"In the last two out of three years, the rate has exceeded 40 percent," says Jack Brzoza, SCCF sea turtle biologist. "Those rates are four times what is acceptable under the recovery plan."

Protecting Nests from Depredation

To try to avoid the need for lethal intervention, SCCF has tried many different measures of nest protection, many of which are not commonly seen elsewhere on Florida's nesting beaches.

Such protection measures have included standard, FWC-approved nest treatments of self-releasing screens and self-releasing cages, as well as novel treatments like habanero pepper and auditory deterrents that were authorized for use on account of the island's unique and significant depredation issue. Screens are double the thickness of the original, and rebar-anchoring stakes to fortify screens and cages have also been incorporated.

Summary of nest protection methods used



“Even cages, considered the most effective treatment, have been breached by coyotes at increasing rates,” says Brzoza. “Each year from we have increased the percentage of nests that have been caged, and each year the rate at which coyotes breached caged nests has increased; in 2025, the rate of depredation on caged nests alone rose above 10 percent.”

SCCF scientists have exhausted the approved, non-lethal methods for nest protection that are standard practice and have data demonstrating their inadequate effectiveness.

“The only strategy left that is used on other nesting beaches and has been proven to reduce depredation rates is targeted lethal removal,” he explains.

Why the Coyote Working Group is Proposing Targeted Lethal Removal

At the Feb. 3 Sanibel City Council meeting, Brzoza will be presenting SCCF’s data on sea turtle nest depredation and the numerous strategies used to try and reduce the rate to date. During this meeting, SCCF, City of Sanibel Natural Resources Department, and J.N. “Ding” Darling National Wildlife Refuge, on behalf of the Sanibel Coyote Working Group (CWG), will propose the implementation of a targeted lethal removal program in 2026 to reduce the depredation rate.

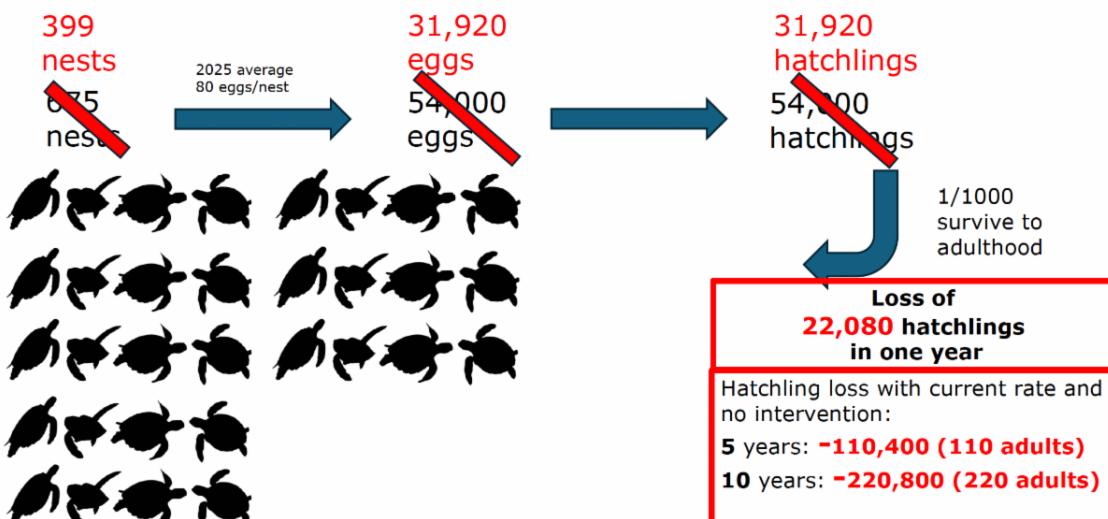
CROW, as a member of the CWG, joins in the distress of its partners and the public regarding the loss of sea turtle eggs and hatchlings from coyote depredation on the islands and issues this statement:

“We appreciate the ongoing communication and exploration of alternative strategies by our partners; however, as a wildlife hospital whose mission is saving wildlife, we must abstain from the targeted lethal removal discussion, which will be presented to City Council. That said, please continue to count on us for research, education, and outreach as we work together to educate the residents and businesses on Sanibel and Captiva and beyond on community-based and prevention initiatives.”

The group’s proposal comes at a critical time to protect the sustainability of loggerheads.

2025 Sanibel Nest Counts

41%
Depredation



"This difficult decision is data-driven, based upon our data showing that none of the viable, non-lethal measurements have been effective in reducing the depredation rate, the depredation rate has increased to match increased caging efforts, and targeted lethal removal has been effective at reducing the depredation rate on other nesting beaches in Florida," says Brzoza.

The proposed program **WOULD:**

- Only occur on a small stretch of Sanibel where sections of beach experienced depredation rates over 80%
- Only remove coyotes on the beach showing evidence of nest depredation behavior
- Only be conducted by trained US Department of Agriculture wildlife professionals

The proposed program **WOULD NOT:**

- Attempt to reduce the entire coyote population
- Target coyotes not seen on the beach
- Occur outside the designated area of beach

Depredation Causes Significant Egg Loss From 2021-2025:



Coyotes depredated:
69,655 eggs.



Storm loss:
50,952 eggs**

*Minimum estimation from egg counts

**Approx. based on no. of nests lost & avg. clutch size (2021-2025)

In his presentation, Brzoza will provide data showing that more sea turtle eggs were lost to coyote depredation than to storms over the past four years. He will also speak about the potential impacts that such losses can have on future populations.

“Our obligation to sea turtle conservation requires us to take action to protect sea turtles and work towards population recovery. If depredation rates as high as we are experiencing on our islands continue, in as little as five to ten years, we could be looking at the loss of hundreds of reproductive adults, moving us in the opposite direction of recovery,” he said.

The group recognizes this is a challenging issue and remains sensitive to the public's concerns and perspectives. Public safety regarding coyotes is a separate matter handled by the City. Please [click here](#) for more information.

*The CWG encourages islanders to attend and/or watch the City Council meeting to hear the full presentation. The meeting is on **Tuesday, Feb. 3, at 9 a.m. at City Hall** or available for [online viewing here](#). Public comment will be taken during the meeting or may be provided in advance by emailing scotty.kelly@mysanibel.com. [Click here](#) for the agenda.*

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**SCCF is a nonprofit 501(c)(3) founded
in 1967 on Sanibel Island, Florida
EIN**

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