

Coyote and Owl Scat Analysis

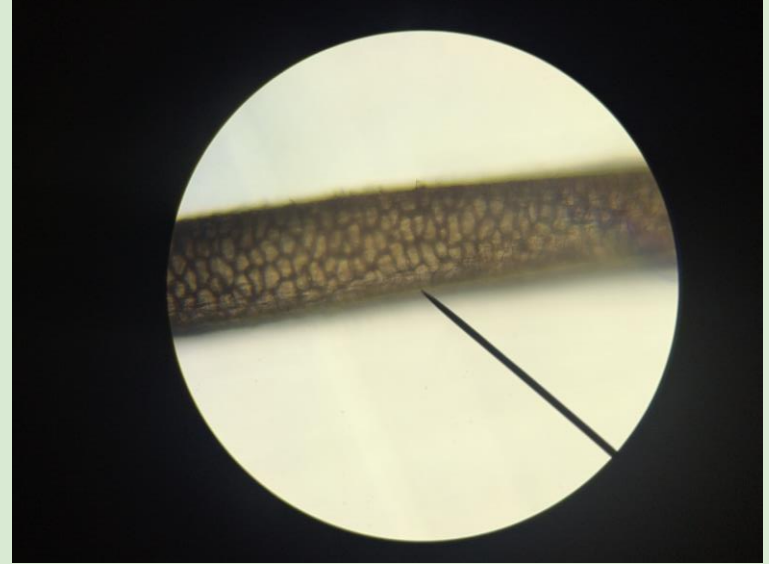
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Analyzing Fecal Matter

Coyotes have only recently been introduced to Vashon's ecosystem, which has triggered competition for prey animals with the long-time Vashon residents, the owls. We are curious to see what effect they might be having on other species both as predators and competitors. What do coyotes eat? How much overlap exists between coyote diets and the other major predators on Vashon, owls? We searched through the contents of dried coyote and owl waste, which was supplied and prepared by volunteers.

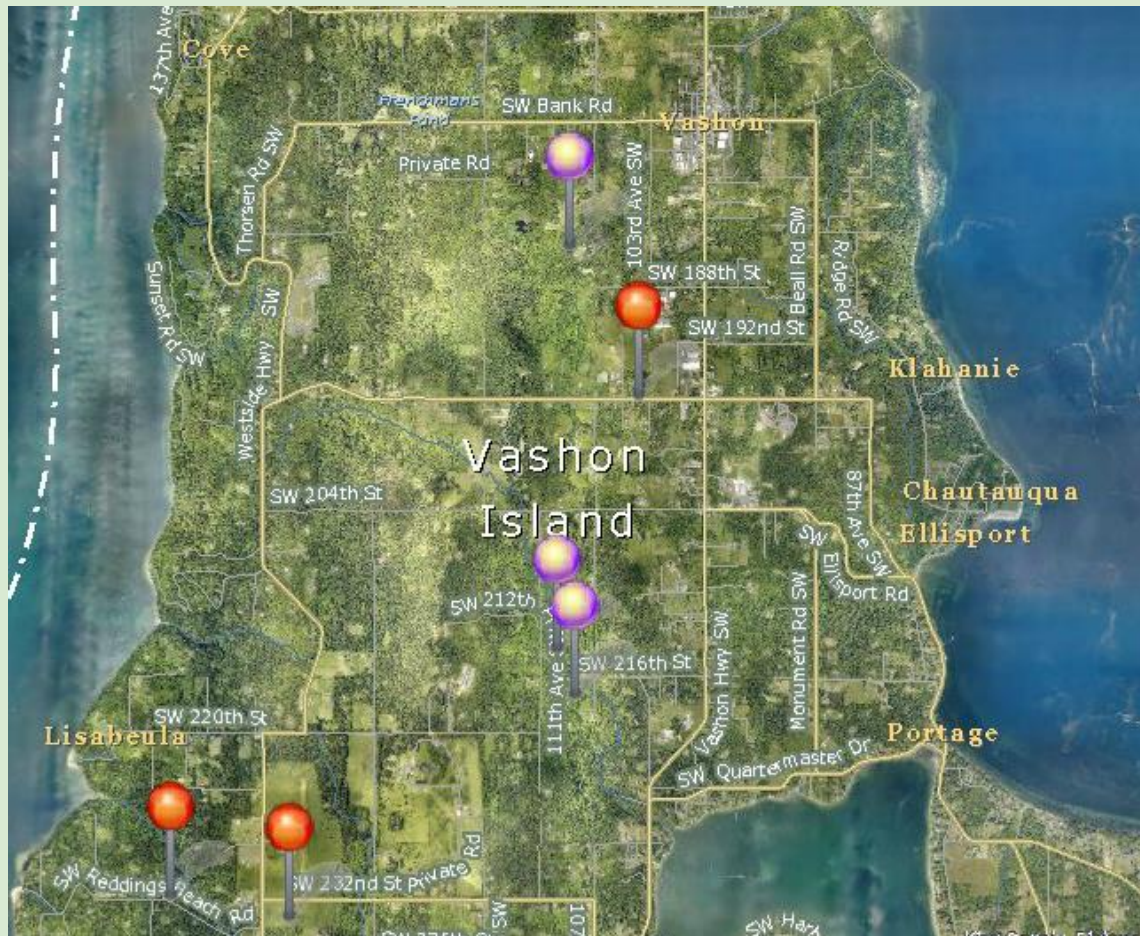


We discovered a variety of animal bones and fur in both the coyote and owl waste. Using a guidebook, we matched the bones and fur to species' described traits.



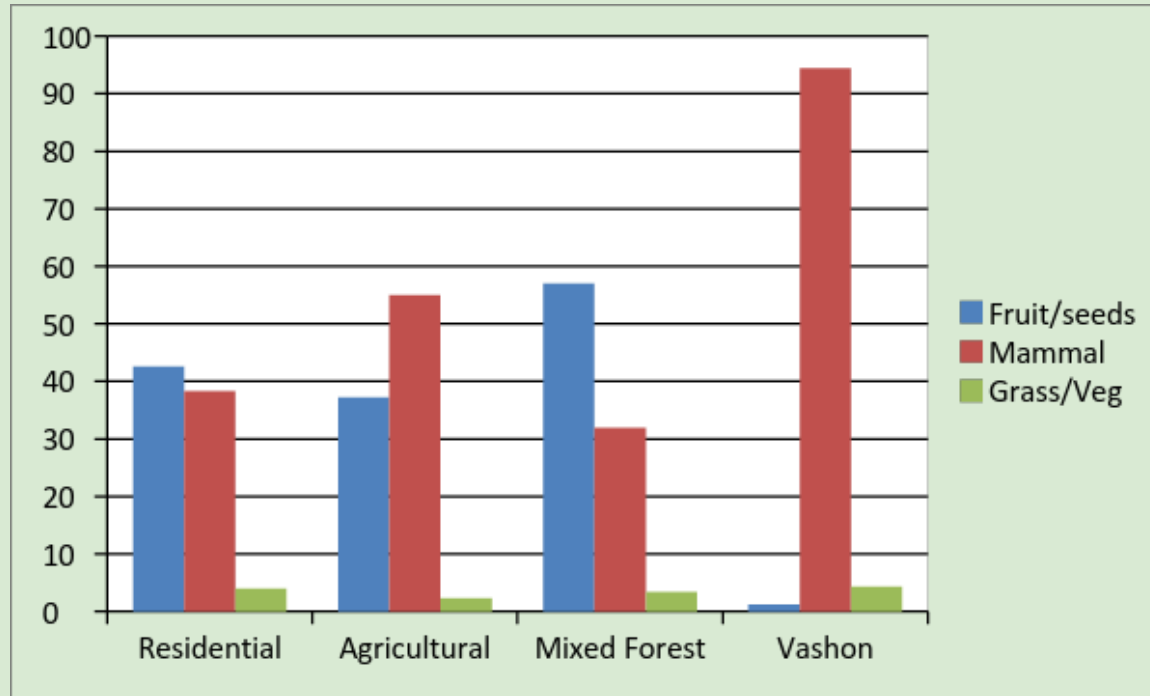
Key

- **Red pin:**
coyote scat
- **Blue pin:**
owl pellets
- **Purple pin:**
coyote scat
and owl
pellets



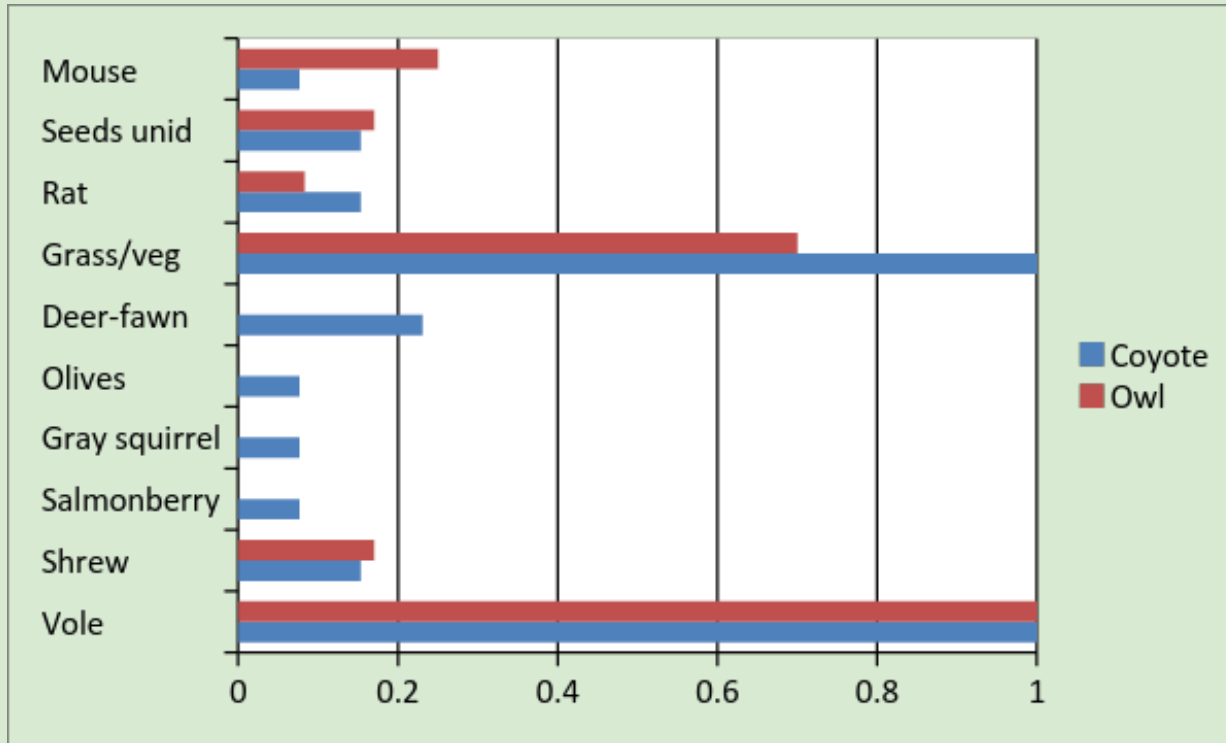
Results

This graph compares what UW student Timothy Quinn found in his 1997 study about coyote diets in the general Puget Sound area in comparison to what we found in our study about coyotes on Vashon:



Results

This graph shows the proportion of each different food item in both coyote scat and owl pellets. You can see the overlap between the two predator diets, particularly the voles.



Why the Fecal Matters:

The main conclusion we can draw from the data is that Coyotes on Vashon are more carnivorous than their mainland counterparts. This could serve as a problem later on, since the native owls are mostly carnivorous as well, and the two species may have to compete with each other over the same food supply.

