

The Trapped Coyote

This is a story about how people can see the same thing differently.

Gail and I were walking through the commercial exhibits at the Black Hills Stock Show in Rapid City South Dakota in February of 2011.

We were filling in some time before the start of the evening rodeo. There were a couple of old trappers staffing the Dakota Fur Trappers Association booth. I chatted with them about hides and traps and such. We swapped a few short stories and the subject of coyote hides came up.

The trapper told the following coyote story.

He was once driving on a backcountry road, checking his trap sets, when two coyotes crossed ahead of him. He had a 222 rifle handy and shot them both. When he collected the carcasses he found that one of the coyotes had a #2 trap on his front paw. The leg was healed and much of the trap was grown over with new skin. The exposed parts of the trap were shiny and bright. Apparently the coyote was getting pretty good use of the leg.

Even with the trap and his injury, the coyote's pelt was in excellent condition. He was fat and sleek. The trapper surmised that the coyote's pack mates had been feeding him.

Thinking what a rare and unique specimen this coyote trap combination was I said, "I supposed you had that coyote stuffed with the trap still on his leg"

He replied, "No".

Then I said, "Well, I suppose you kept the trap on the hide when you tanned it".

He cocked his head a little, gave me a questioning look and replied, "No. That was a perfectly good trap".