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Phil Gipson, Rod Gonzales talk about Brownie the coydog

Fairbanks, Alaska

Steve Lay, interviewer

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Phil Gipson and Rod Gonzales talk about Brownie the coydog. Brownie has been bred and produced a litter of nine pups. They have been checked and all of them are healthy. Brownie has been tracked every weekend almost since October 18th. She has been staying with her pups and making her rounds at the feeding stations. They have proposed leaving two of the pups with their mother and tagging them with a radio transmitter like their mother is. The other pups will be adopted out if they are adaptable. They will have potential adopters reviewed by a panel. Coyote dog hybrids have been bred by an before. Normally a beagle is used. One doctor, Michael Fox, has done some behavioral analysis of litters of hybrids. He has documented behavior. They will be using the basic research. He'll be looking at dominance hierarchy and aggressive behaviors. The pups will have to be from four to ten weeks of age to observe behavior. As they develop there are certain times in its life that it will initiate certain behaviors. There are other tests to illicit certain responses. They will gauge how the pup responds. It would be more than a manipulation. They will record observations. The dominance struggle happens at about four or five weeks of age. Aggression behaviors start between seven and nine weeks of age. Simply because of their nature they develop these behavior patterns. One of the tests is taking the pup and place it on its back. They then pinch on opposite sides of the cheek. They start looking for aggressive behavior. They see how frustrated the little pup gets. The more aggressive the more gnashing and growling. It gives a suggestion of the wilder side of the pup. They then record the observations and see where they fall in the range of cited literature.

The two pups they leave with their mother will not be selected because they are the wildest pups. They would like to have a male and female left with the mother. The plans are still tentative. The Alaska Department of Fish and Game have given tentative approval. The pups going to private homes will be sterilized. People adopting the pups will be adopting a wild and domestic animal. Even with three quarter dogs some of the wild traits will come through. Shyness is one of the traits. They may also be unpredictable.

The pups left with their mother will be monitored as they develop. They missed the early stages of Brownies early development. They hope to monitor the development through the spring and summer. They may not sterilize them immediately. They might consider neutering the female in the fall of 84. They don't feel like there would be any danger of them becoming part of the gene pool. They talked about the types of collars that will be used on the pups. They will use an expandable collar until they are eight months of age. Then they will be fitted with a regular collar. They hope to continue the research

until the fall of 1984. The research is important because coyotes are not a big factor in the Interior but they are expecting an increase in population. They would like to know how the coyote populations will affect domestic animals. They hope to be able to control any problems in the future through their research. They talked about expandable collars and the use of foam rubber on the inside of the collars. After a couple of months it will still be necessary to recapture them and adjust collars.

Several people in the neighborhood feed Brownie. The homes are visited regularly. She does occasionally eat other dog's food. She is friendly with the other dogs in the neighborhood. She is just one of the dogs in the community. She has been well fed and is in excellent condition and that has contributed to the health of the puppies. She may also hunt on her own, but they have not observed this behavior. They have not been able to find any of her scat to observe her diet.

There have been several projects with urban coyotes. The coyotes do seem to rely heavily on garbage and dog dishes as their food source.