

**BBC**

**PUTTING NATURE FIRST**  
THE RULES OF ETHICAL WILDLIFE PHOTOGRAPHY



# Wildlife

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## WILDLIFE CHAMPION

## MOBY

In our series about people with a passion for a species, we ask musician and animal rights activist Moby why he cherishes the **coyote**.

Interview by Graeme Green

### Why did you nominate the coyote for the New Big 5 project?

The New Big 5 project is creating a big five of wildlife photography, rather than hunting. It's clearly a much better idea to take a photograph, so you can appreciate and marvel at an animal. No one but a psychopath marvels at a dead animal. I nominated the coyote as I live in Los Angeles, in the middle of a huge coyote population. The first night I spent in the city after I moved here, I heard a pack of coyotes howling and it was a sound I'd never heard before. Since then, I spot them on an almost daily basis. I love being reminded of the fact that so much of nature is indifferent to us. I see coyotes as avatars of that indifference.

### Why are they known as wily?

Coyotes are incredibly clever and have an innate wisdom. They do what wild animals do, which is maintaining their pack and staying alive. People in LA have a tendency to anthropomorphise animals, especially if they seem familiar.

Coyotes are very



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familiar because they look like dogs but the public need to remember they are a completely different species.

### How are coyotes adapting to living in cities?

Remarkably well, especially in LA – they're so ubiquitous. Coyotes here only become problematic when they end up eating domesticated animals. They're almost everywhere – you even see them walking down Hollywood Boulevard.

### Why do people only tend to hear coyotes howl at night?

People assume, incorrectly, that coyotes howl after they've killed something. But the truth is, from my limited understanding, they're just communicating. They have their own culture and their own world. When they howl, they're talking to each other. It's such a fascinating sound, especially when there are a lot of them. If you hear

20 or 30 coyotes howling at the same time, it's an otherworldly noise.

### Why did you become a vegan and an animal rights activist?

When I was about 19 years old, I realised how inconsistent and paradoxical it was to both respect and love animals and also contribute to their suffering and death. The core of my veganism and animal rights activism is simply the belief that animals are entitled to their own lives.

### How can people learn to live more harmoniously with the natural world?

What we're seeing is one of the biggest incubating vectors for pandemic viruses is wildlife – the interaction of humans with wildlife, whether it's civets or pangolins. Apart from just respecting wildlife and letting wildlife exist on its own, one of the greatest things humans can do for self-preservation is stop interacting with wildlife. No one should come close to a wild animal, because neither species benefits. **B**

MOBY's new album *AI Visible Objects* is out now (Little Idiot). The musician is supporting the New Big 5 project, an initiative to create a new 'big five' of wildlife photography: [newbig5.com](http://newbig5.com)

### The expert view



Coyotes and wolves belong to the family Canidae. They are social species that often live in packs ranging from 2 to 15 members, with the alpha pair maintaining pack social structure by controlling the breeding and provisioning of pups and betas in the family group. Research shows that coyotes and wolves are critically important to maintaining healthy ecosystems.

Camilla Fox is the founder and executive director of Project Coyote and co-author of *Coyotes in our Midst*.

