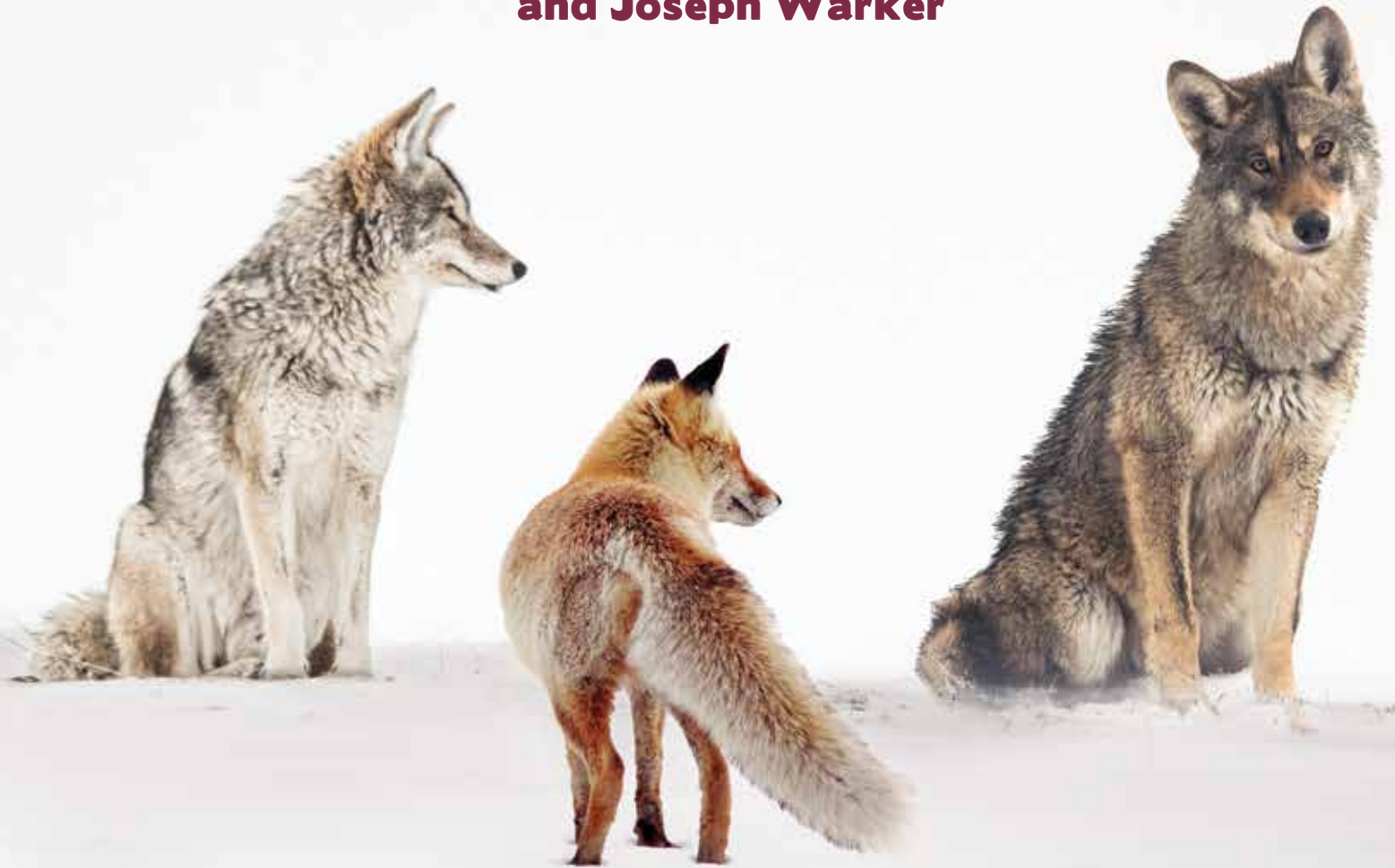


# **Wild Canines**

## **A Compare and Contrast Book**

**by Michelle Vander Neut  
and Joseph Warker**



# Wild Canines

A Compare and Contrast Book

Coyotes, foxes, and wolves are all wild canines—cousins to one of our favorite pets, dogs. Which wild canines live alone and which live in packs? They all eat meat but one hunts large animals and the others hunt smaller animals. Which will also eat fruits and plants. How do they communicate with each other? Which wild canines might you spot in your backyard? Focused on wild canines found in North America, this book describes the similarities and differences between these animals in the latest installment of the Compare and Contrast Series.

Arbordale Publishing offers so much more than a picture book. We open the door for children to explore the facts behind a story they love.

The *For Creative Minds* includes

- Fact or Myth?
- Canine Communication
- Not Pets! Identify the Canine
- Coexist with Wildlife

Thanks to Jennifer Shields, Educator Curator at the Baton Rouge Zoo, for verifying the information in this book.

Arbordale's interactive ebooks read aloud in both English and Spanish with word-highlighting and adjustable audio speed. Available for purchase online.

**Michelle Vander Neut** is the Education Coordinator at Wolf Sanctuary of PA. In addition to teaching visitors about the wolves, she helps to care for the wolves and wolfdogs that reside there. She has studied wolf behavior and ecology since 2013 and has a master's in environmental studies from the University of Pennsylvania. She hopes this book will get kids excited about wild canines, especially wolves, and how each animal is uniquely adapted to survive in their natural environment. This is her debut picture book. She currently resides in Southeastern PA with her family.

**Joseph Warker** has a deep passion for animals and has been an animal caretaker and handler at the Wolf Sanctuary of PA since 2019. Raised in Pennsylvania's Amish country, Joe majored in environmental science in college. This is Joe's debut picture book.



Michele Vander Neut

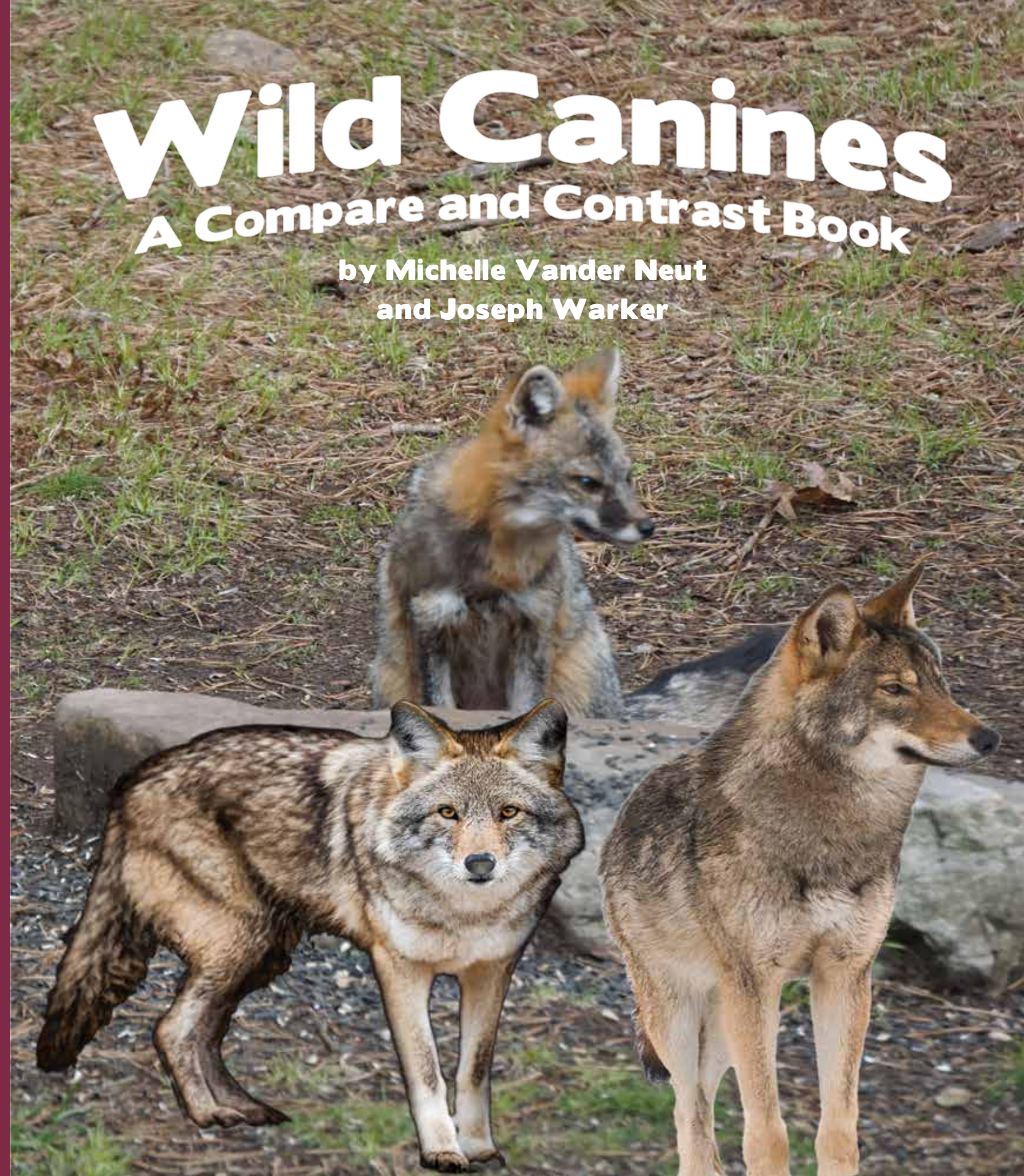


Joseph Warker

# Wild Canines

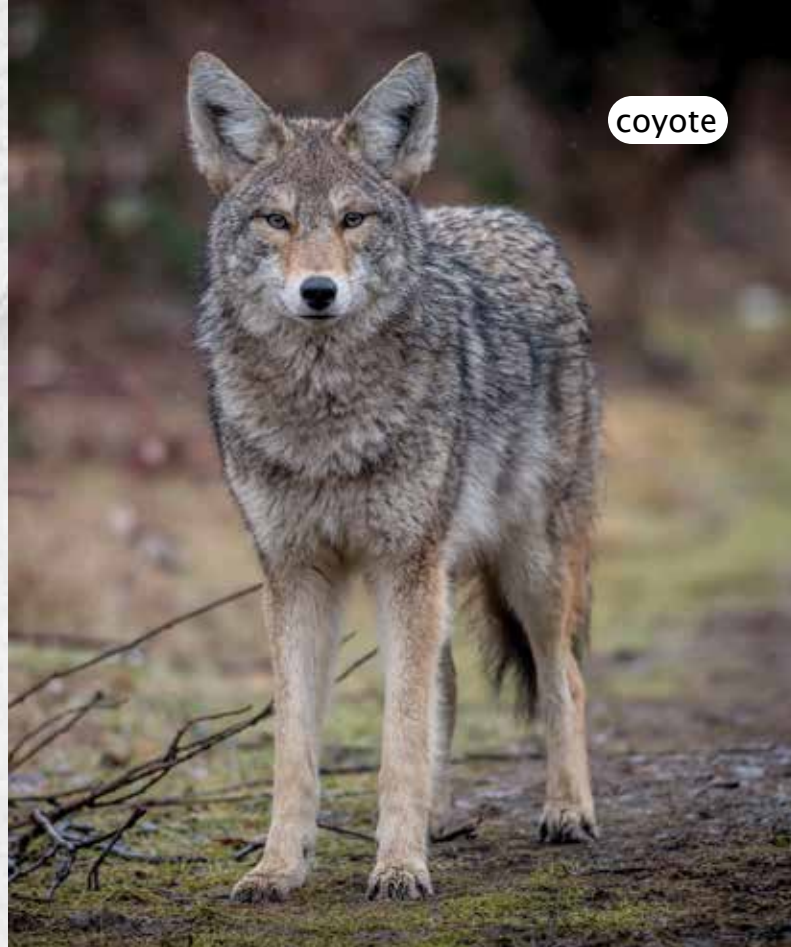
A Compare and Contrast Book

by **Michelle Vander Neut**  
and **Joseph Warker**



Have you ever met a dog? Maybe it wagged its tail or even licked you! Dogs make great pets; they are not wild animals. But they do have cousins in the wild—the wild canines.

There are three major groups of wild canines that live in North America: coyotes, foxes, and wolves.



coyote

There's one main species of coyote that lives in North America with 19 subspecies (12 in North America and 7 in Central America). A species is a group of animals that look similar to each other, prefer a similar habitat, and are able to breed and have a family together. A species can be divided into a few different subspecies to help identify small differences between groups.

Some have nicknamed eastern coyotes “coywolves.” They also carry DNA of wolves and domestic dogs showing that they have bred with both in the last 200 years. They are larger than most coyotes and they live and travel in packs, like wolves.



fox



wolf



Eastern coyote / coywolf

There are six species of foxes in North America: red fox, gray fox, island fox, kit fox, swift fox, and Arctic fox.



red fox

Kit foxes live in the deserts of the American Southwest.

Swift foxes live in the prairies of the Great Plains region.



kit fox



gray fox



swift fox

Each species has a slightly different preference for where they like to live.

The red fox and the gray fox are the most common foxes, and the island fox is the rarest.



island fox

Arctic foxes live in Alaska and northern Canada. Their fur changes color from white in the winter to brown in the summer to help them blend into their habitat.



Arctic fox

There are two main species of wolves in North America: red wolves and gray wolves.

Red wolves once lived all over the eastern US, but now only live in eastern North Carolina. They are critically endangered.

There are 4 or 5 subspecies of gray wolves in North America, each living in a different region.

Timber wolves are sometimes divided into northern timber wolves and eastern timber wolves. They live in northern deciduous forests and are common in the Great Lakes Region. They have brown or beige fur with distinct black saddle markings to help them blend into the trees and forest.

Great Plains wolves live in states like Wyoming, Idaho, and Montana. These are the wolves you may see at Yellowstone National Park. They also have a brown or beige fur coat. Some might have all black fur that turns gray as they get older.

Mexican gray wolves live in the American Southwest deserts. They are small in size and have reddish fur.

Arctic or Tundra wolves live in Alaska and Canada. They are the largest of the gray wolves and have white fur to help them blend into their snowy habitat.



red wolf



Northern timber wolf



Eastern timber wolf



Great Plains wolf



Mexican gray wolf



Arctic wolf

Most coyotes tend to live alone or in small family groups, but some of them, like the eastern coyotes or “coywolves” like to live in small packs like wolves.

Foxes live alone except when mating and denning. Once kits are old enough, they leave the den and find their own territory.

Wolves are very social animals and tend to live and hunt in packs consisting of a breeding pair and their pups. Older siblings may help with younger pups or may leave to start their own pack. Pack sizes range from 5 to 7 wolves but may have more if there’s enough prey to feed a larger group.



red foxes



coyotes



wolves

# For Creative Minds

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## Fact or Myth?

Use what you learned reading the book to determine whether the statement is a fact (true) or a myth (false).

1

Wolves howl at the moon because of mystical forces.



2

Coyotes, foxes and wolves live in dens all year long.



3

Wolves are social creatures and depend on their pack to survive.



4

Foxes have a scent gland on their tail called the violet gland.



5

Wolves are not nocturnal, but they are crepuscular.



Answers: 1:Myth, 2:Myth, 3:Fact, 4:Fact, 5:Fact

## Canine Communication

Coyotes, foxes, and wolves all communicate in three major ways: vocalization, scent marking, and body language. Body language includes facial expressions, body postures, and tail positions.

What do you think these animals are trying to say or communicate?



## Not Pets! Identify the Canine

Wild animals, including wild canines, do not make good pets.

Wolfdogs are an animal that has a recent ancestor (like a parent or grandparent) who is a wolf, and a recent ancestor who is a dog. Because they have recent wolf ancestry, their instincts and behaviors do not make them good pets.

Can you correctly identify the canines?

coyote

domestic dog

fox

wolf

wolfdog



Answers: 1:wolfdog, 2: coyote, 3:fox (Arctic), 4: domestic dog (malamute), 5: wolf

## Coexist with Wildlife

As more houses are built and land is developed, wild animals don't have as many places to live, find food, and raise their young. While it might be exciting to see wild canines, they don't really want to be near humans.

In general, one way to prevent wild canines, bears, raccoons, and other wildlife from coming too close to where you live is to not leave pet food outside. It's also important to keep garbage in closed, sealed containers. Never feed wild animals. Not only is human food not good for them, but it may encourage them to stop looking for their own food.

Foxes are probably the most commonly seen wild canine wandering through backyards. They might even make a den in your backyard or under a porch! If so, leave them alone. After the kits are born and out of the den, the foxes will leave.

Wolves have had a bad reputation as a villain for centuries. But they are important to the ecosystem. They tend to be shy and avoid human populations. Wolves prefer to keep to the forests to prey on wild game. However, if their habitat is reduced, they may drift into areas where livestock are held. One way to prevent them from coming in contact with livestock is to tie a rope along the top of a fence and put red ribbons or flags on it. The flapping scares the wolves away.

Coyotes are much more likely to live closer to human populations than wolves. They prefer to avoid coming into contact with people as long as food is not left out.



Thanks to Jennifer Shields, Educator Curator at the Baton Rouge Zoo, for verifying the information in this book.

Thanks to Joseph Warker for the use of his photos. Thanks to Tim Coonan/NPS for the Island Fox photo, taken at Channel Islands National Park. All others are licensed through Adobe Stock Photos.

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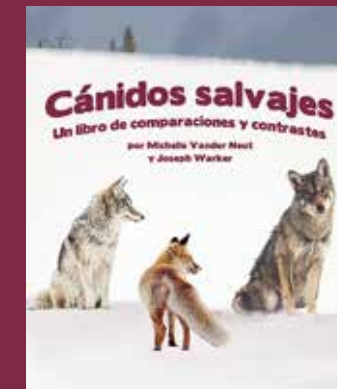
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