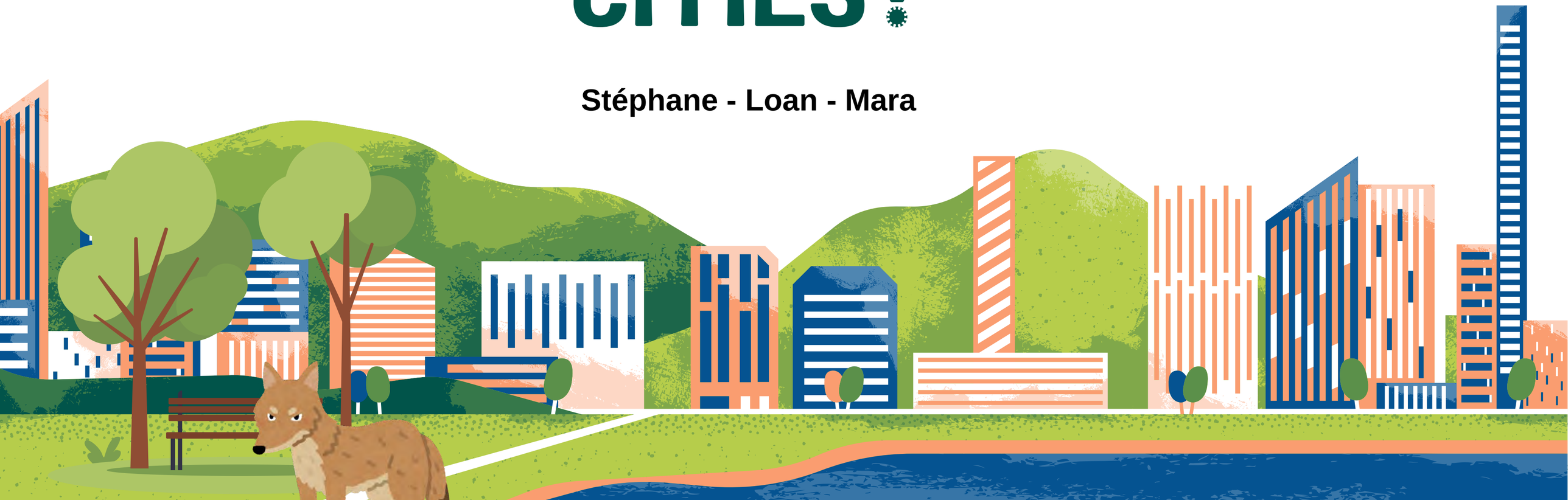
Friday, November 6

Ecology Key



CAN WILD ANIMALS AND HUMANS COEXIST IN CITIES?

Stéphane - Loan - Mara



INTRODUCTION



Who

Myles Bess, journalist and host of “Above the Noise”, a YouTube show linked to PBS

When

Around Earth Day 2021, during the COVID-19 pandemic

What type

Educational explainer, video-journalism style: conversational and humorous

CONTEXT - URBANIZATION

- **Cities keep growing** : Cities are more populous every year and now hold the biggest share of the world’s population.

For example : 80% of the U.S. population live in urban areas and that includes cities and suburbs. And those areas are projected to keep expanding.

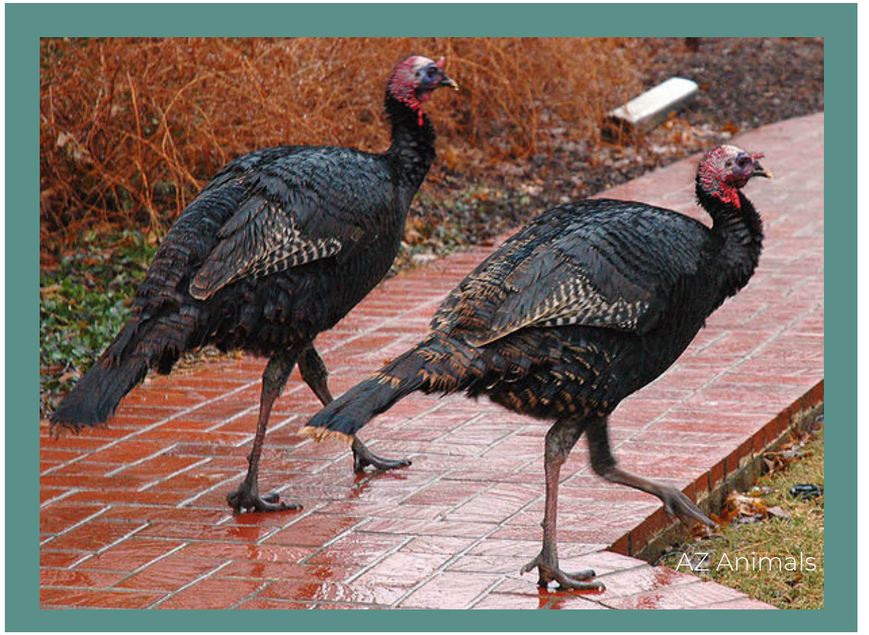


CONTEXT - WILDLIFE AND COEXISTANCE



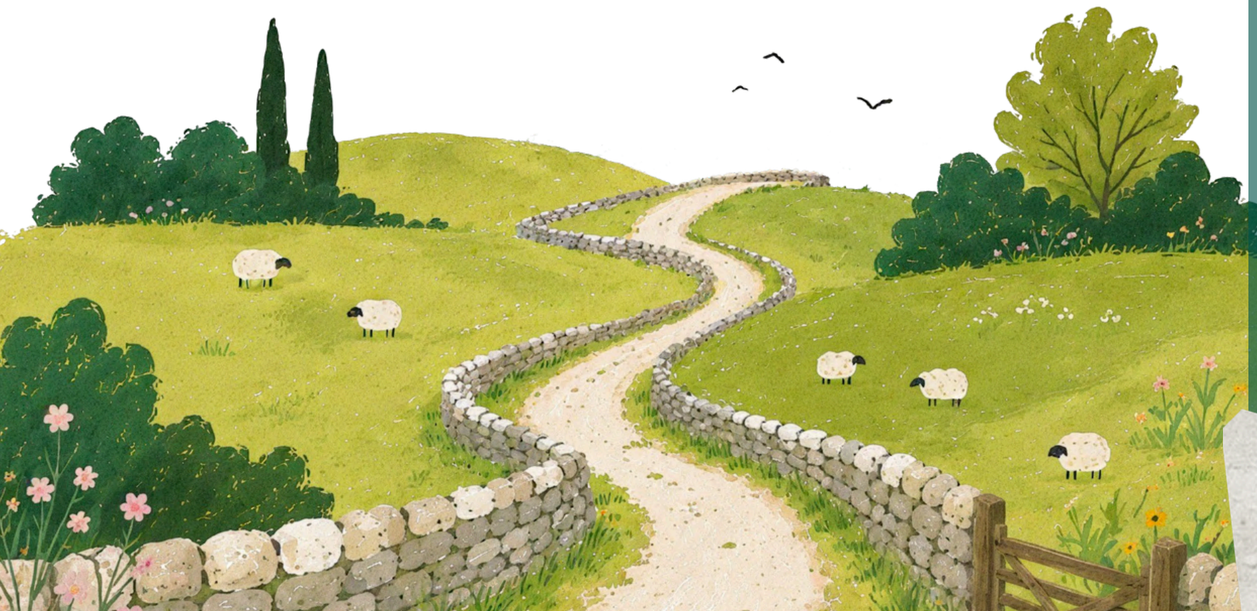
At the same time :

- Urban areas are quite poor ecologically
- Urbanization cause changes in wildlife behavior and trophic web : interactions and conflicts between humans and wildlife in urban areas (for example wild boars in Rome parks, Turkeys in the street of Oakland)



CONTEXT - THE ANTHROPAUSE

= global slowdown of human activity, that is given all sorts of animals, the green lights ahead into cities and surrounding suburbs.



During COVID-19 : cities all over the world have seen an increase in wild animals

CAN ANIMALS AND HUMANS LEARN TO COEXIST IN AN URBAN WORLD ?

It seems it might be possible, but let's see issues and topics about this subject !



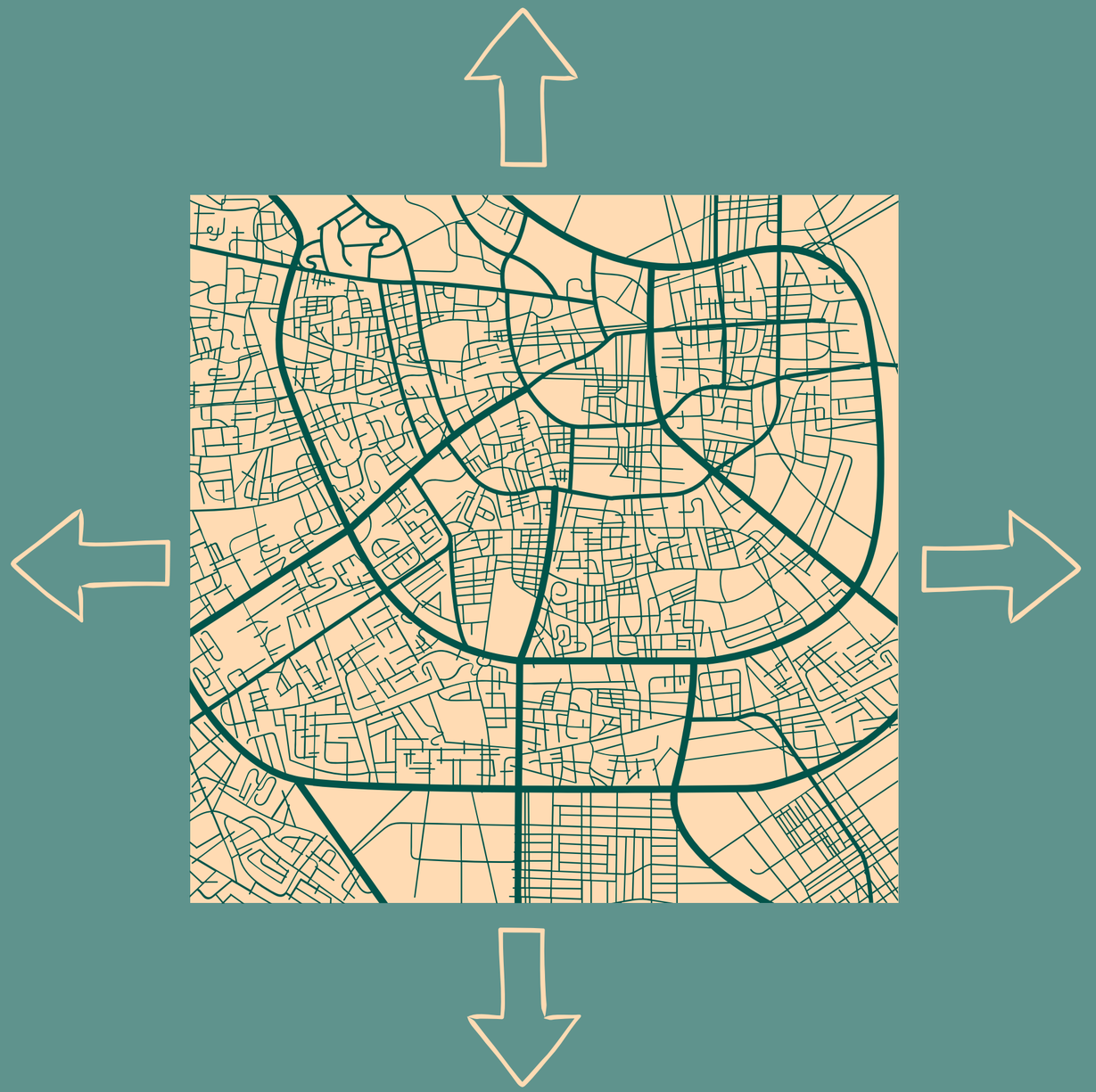
DEMOGRAPHIC GROWTH AND RURAL EXODUS

2021 ~50% of urban pop, 7.5 billion

2050 ~66% of urban pop, 9.8 billion

- more construction
- more land
- more pushing into forest and fields and rivers

Consequence : habitat loss and decline of biodiversity



BIODIVERSITY LOSS

In a 42-year span between 1970 and 2012, the size of vertebrate animal populations, **declined on average by almost 60%.**



BIODIVERSITY LOSS

Habitat loss

Climate change

URBANIZATION

Pollution

Poaching



COEXISTENCE

Animals are learning to adapt to urban life, what should we do ?

Increase of “conflicts” : example of Coyote in Chicago and San Francisco : a real nuisance ?

- Generalist (eat trash)
- spreading virus or disease
- any attacks ?

The trouble with wilderness, or the mystification of untouched nature (Cronon, 2009)



For some conservasionist, the issue is about making room in and around cities

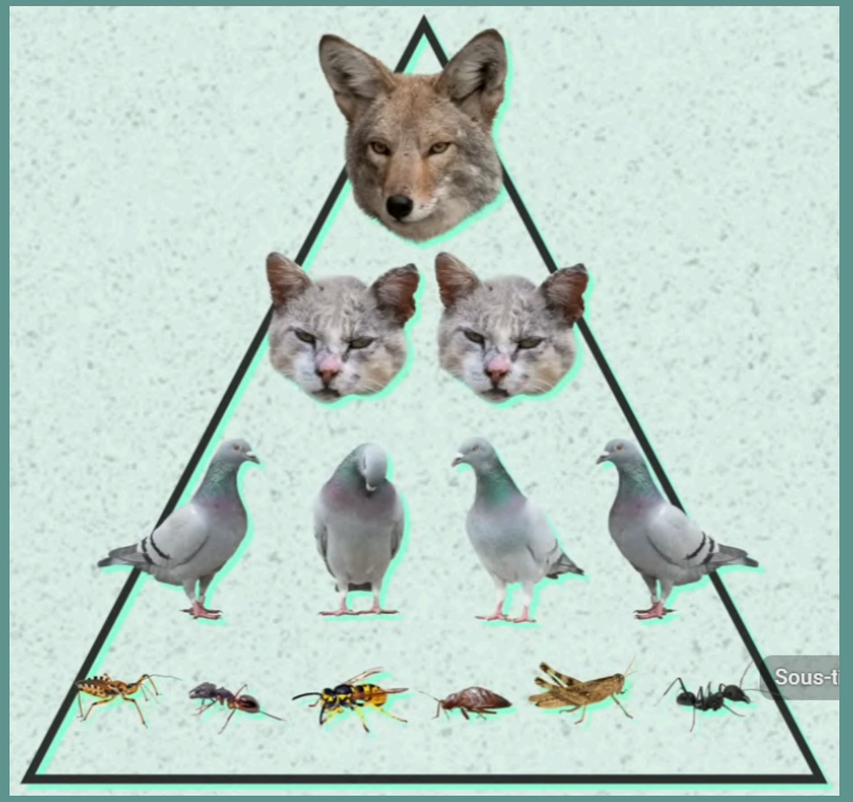
REMOVING WILD ANIMALS FROM CITIES ?

COMPENSATORY BREEDING

Coyotes have more pups when their numbers start dropping

TOP-DOWN CONTROL

Removing coyotes would disrupt the trophic web



URBAN REWILDING

= transforming urban areas so that wildife can fit in more easily

a) **Washington DC** :

- more green space per capita than any city in the USA,
- planting trees
- strict pollution laws

b) **Oakland** :

- 600 species in the lake Merritt



VOCABULARY AND PRONUNCIATION

Coyote = loup de prairie	« kaï-ô-ti »
Anthropause = anthropause	« an-thro-poz »
oak trees = chênes	« ôk trîz »
Poaching = braconnage	« pô-tchinng »
urban rewilding = renaturation de la ville	« eur-beune ri-waïl-dinng »
Turkey = dinde	« teur-ki »
Suburbs = banlieue	« seuh-beurbz »
Compensatory breeding = reproduction compensatoire	« keum-pèn-seu-tor-i bri-dinng »
wild boar = sanglier	« waïld bor »

VIDEO


Can Wild Animals and Humans Coexist in Cities?
Above The Noise
Watch on YouTube

ACTIVITY : ROLE-PLAYING DEBATE

Montpellier City Council – Can wild animals and humans coexist in our city?



4 GROUPS :

- **Naturalist Associations**
- **Metropolitan administration**
- **Citizens**
- **Hunter’s federation**

The council must decide on a plan for two motions : wild boars and nigth lighting

Proceedings of the debate

Time	Step
0-10 min	Presentation of the proceedings and the context of the role-playing debate
10-25 min	Each group will receive a role card and organize individually their arguments, data, eventual concessions
25-35 min	Opening statement : 2 min per group
35 - 55 min	Debate, questions for the other groups, crisis cards
55 - 60 min	Negotiation : Each group will be proposing one measure, followed by a vote from the council on a shared plan

<u>In each group, you can split between :</u>

- Lead speaker (introduce and conclude)
- Evidence officer (cite numbers and sources)
- Rebuttal officer (answer to the other groups).

The scenario

It is an extraordinary public meeting of the Montpellier Métropole council. Wild boars are regularly seen in parks, wastelands and residential areas. At the same time, the city is committed to reducing night-time lighting to protect biodiversity. The council must decide on a plan for two motions:

- Motion 1 – Wild boars. Should Montpellier adopt a **plan to reduce wild boar presence in the city** ? Options on the table: (a) clearing brush in wastelands and parks, (b) culling, (c) a ban on feeding plus secured waste bins, (d) targeted local studies before any intervention.

- Motion 2 – Night lighting. Should public lighting be reduced or redirected to protect nocturnal wildlife, even if some residents feel less safe?