

One Man's Coyote vocalization is another man's Sasquatch scream. Can we tell the difference ???

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In the year 2006 I took to the field in search of an enigma. I was in pursuit of the illusive, Sasquatch. This creature has hundreds of names spanning six continents, numerous worldwide cultures, and no apparent origin. It seems they have always been with us.

Growing up in the Pacific Northwest, my personal journey began with stories of a monkey my Grandfather saw while cutting hay. Then some five years later I had a personal experience with something extremely large. It shook thirty foot trees, broke two inch limbs twelve feet off the ground. Then screamed for ten to twelve seconds in a chord like voice. I later described the vocal to my parents. The scream sounded like a lion roar and an elephant trumpet all at once. Yes, I had been to the zoo and heard both animals so I did have personal experience to rely on with my description. The experience was so profound that when I shared it with my elementary school librarian, she recommended a book for me. It was Ivan T. Sanderson's Abominable Snowman: Legend come to life.

My interest in the Sasquatch phenomena was not a passion until internet searches on the subject became more frequent in the 1990's. Then in 2005 I had an opportunity to attend a Sasquatch conference. In attendance were many luminaries and celebrity speakers. They inspired me to get out in the field and search for answers.

I spent the first year, 2006, camping and attending expeditions with local enthusiasts. This was my learning period. Listening to those that have come before me, gleaning what information I could. I talked with witnesses, and investigators, getting a wide variety of experiences and opinions.

Soon I learned that experience vs documentation were two different goal sets. I wanted more than a story. I wanted to share my experience with others via a documentation process. So I taught myself two different investigative methods, Foot impression track casting and audio recording. I applied these methods of

documenting in several different locations over a long period of time. For the purpose of this article I want to dial in on field recording and audio analysis.

Maybe it was luck, maybe it was being ready for the moment. In 2007 I received a bionic dish listening device for Christmas. Two days later I was testing it out at a site of possible Sasquatch activity. While listening, with headphones, I heard approaching bi-pedal footsteps. The other investigators with me at the time could not hear the approaching footfalls. So I was intrigued that this listening device was giving me an advantage. Then we all heard wood knocking, in another location. Meanwhile the footsteps continued, in an apparent flanking maneuver. The knocking continued at our twelve o'clock, while the footsteps secured a position at our six o'clock behind us. I was elated with what we witnessed, but then felt remorse at not having the encounter recorded. All I had was another story.

The very next day I purchased a digital audio recorder that I could monitor and record to document the field experience. The following weekend I went back, with another investigator, to the same location. This time we had a wood knocking, back and forth exchange, plus a couple of vocalization screams. It was all recorded, documented, not just another story. I was hooked and twelve years later I am still at it, field recording and refining the process of audio analysis.

I am relating my history to help you understand my passion. I am engaged with the process of discovery. I believe audio analysis is the next big frontier for Sasquatch research. Although until Sasquatch or other relic hominids from around the world are discovered nothing is conclusive.

Some investigators have had their audio analyzed by professional crypto linguists' and knowledgeable audiologists'. The results have been positive in affirming some vocal characteristics are out of the human range capability. However in the world of science large sample sizes of repeated characteristics are needed just to raise some eyebrows.

So what can the citizen scientists of the world do to be a valuable resource? How do we separate suspicious sounds from known sounds? How do we know if what we recorded was a Coyote location call or the long moan of a possible Sasquatch? Well short answer is we can't prove a vocalization or specific sounds are the result of a Sasquatch encounter. We can however, eliminate possible known suspects through visual analysis of audio recordings.

Welcome to the world of BIOACOUSTICS. The term combines the biological study of auditory sounds and application to specific species. The method includes sonograms, or spectrographic analysis, for visual confirmation of a specific target.

Software creating a visual spectrographic representation of an auditory sound provides a clarifying aspect of the sound recorded. In short a spectrogram creates a visual voice print. Characteristics are easily identified in this medium. Visual knowledge of the main fundamental and upper harmonics, represented in Hz are revealed. A spectrogram will show, resonance in Hz, time or duration of call, and strength of signal. It gives much more identifiable information than a simple Waveform showing peaks and valleys of loudness or softness. Looking at a spectrogram the landscape becomes clear. Ambient background noise can be ignored. However when a suspicious signature is seen one can delve into its possible significance.

If you develop an interest for field audio recording, my personal recommendation is, learn how to visually compare known animals sounds to suspicious ones. You will need to find a reliable, disinterested, third party recording. I recommend the Macaulay Library of sound sponsored by Cornell University. It has a wide variety of animal sounds recorded by accredited biologists with visual confirmation. Each recording is listed with a specific catalog number and pertinent information. Each recording is accompanied by a spectrographic representation of the audio recording. So you can compare your suspicious sound to a known animal. If the voice print fails to match your recording you can keep it in the suspicious category. If however, the characteristics of resonance, duration, and structure match, then you have recorded a known animal.

The Macaulay Library has thousands of animal recordings. That being said has every vocalization of every known animal been recorded and cataloged? No, certainly not. Let's say your search of the library was exhaustive, you did not find a comparable vocalization, is the door still open for conjecture? Yes, yes it is open for conjecture and criticism. All you can say is that the sounds are suspicious but not confirmed.

Well if you can't confirm a sound is Sasquatch related what is the point of analysis? Well, I have learned to be satisfied with possibilities and case building. I have had the fortune of people, witnesses, and investigators from all over the

country share their audio recordings with me. The result is I have discovered numerous suspicious sounds that have identical similarities and characteristics.

I consider these sounds to be in the case building category. Sounds that are repeatedly recorded all across the country. Sounds that nobody's following or possibly attributing to Sasquatch. This is what keeps me going, spending long hours at the computer reviewing audio.

So if you are a passionate audiophile: Step 1 get out your recorder, take it to a Sasquatch hot spot, and turn it on. Step 2 learn how to review your audio in a spectrographic software program, Adobe, Raven, Sonic Visualizer, will do. Step 3 compare your audio to a file of a known source.

The future of audio recording analysis is bright. More and more investigators are using the spectrographic tool for analysis. I have found that visual analysis has sped up the time spent reviewing audio. I can review hours of audio in a matter of minutes. The more people share their audio findings the richer our community becomes.