

## **Teamwork in the Natural World – Grand Canyon National Park**

Hi, I'm Ranger Lori, and I want to share with you some examples of teamwork here in the natural world at Grand Canyon National Park.

Imagine life without friends or family. We rely on each other for care and support. Well, so do plants and animals. When plants and animals benefit each other we call it a symbiotic relationship - and here at the Canyon we have lots of examples. The yucca moth pollinates the yucca. The yucca provides the moth's offspring a food source. Tassel eared squirrels need ponderosa pines for their food. The squirrel spreads fungi which brings nutrients back to the tree. A hundred years ago, wolves lived at the Grand Canyon. Wolves and ravens had an interesting relationship. Ravens have keen eyesight and flight and are able to locate carcasses, but unable to penetrate through the thick Hides - so Ravens would find wolf packs and lure them back to the carcass, the wolves would open it up and together they would share a meal. Yum, Yum. See, everybody wins with teamwork.

Perhaps one of the most interesting relationships, out there, is that between the coyote and the badger. Now, both animals are found on both rims, but badgers, are rare, and almost never seen. Both animals depend upon small mammals for a food source, things like chipmunks, pocket gophers and squirrels.

(Badger Noise)

I think I hear a badger!?! Wait over here. Look, badgers! Badgers have excellent sense of smell, but have poor vision. Now they catch their prey by using those powerful claws and digging down into the earth and eating burrowing animals - and they're fast. Now, they can dig down 10 feet in just a matter of seconds. Wow!

Now, coyotes - coyotes are very different. They've got the long legs, and the keen vision - so they catch their prey by pouncing on it from above. Now, when the two team up, the prey don't stand a chance.

See, burrowing animals build escape routes as well as the main entryway into their underground homes. So, with a badger and a coyote up top, there's nowhere to go. If they come to the surface, they're pounced on by a coyote. If they stay underground, they're dug up and eaten as a snack by a badger. See, everyone wins with teamwork, well, except for the squirrel, that is. What scientists have found, is that when coyotes, team up with badgers, they're much more successful. So, we can learn a lot from the natural world, and in this case, the example of the success of teamwork.