



LEAWOOD
ANIMAL CONTROL

Coexisting with Coyotes

2007

KEY POINTS TO KNOW:

- Do not entice coyotes in by providing food sources such as pet food or garbage.
- Coyotes will not progress to hurting a human.
- Coyotes usually avoid people.
- Free roaming and unattended pets are the most susceptible to attacks by coyotes.
- Trapping and relocating coyotes is not recommended.
- Reference:

Fox, Camilla, Christopher Papouchis. [Coyotes in Our Midst: Coexisting with an adaptable and resilient carnivore.](#) Animal Protection Institute, 2005.

Is it a Coyote? (Coyote facts)

Coyotes are rather similar in appearance to a small, grizzled gray or reddish-gray German Shepherd, with buff underparts, long rust or yellowish legs, a bushy tail, and a pointed snout. Often mistaken for wolves, coyotes generally are smaller and more slender, with a relatively more narrow snout and larger ears. While running dogs and foxes usually carry their tails straight out from the back coyotes run with their tails hanging lower.



Coyotes weigh 20-50 lbs and look like a tan, Shepherd-type dog.

- The typical weight of a coyote ranges from 20 to 50 pounds.
- Coyotes occupy grasslands, deserts, forests,

agricultural lands, parks, and the urban/wildland fringe.

- Coyotes may live as solitary individuals, as pairs, or in family packs and are active during both night and day.
- Coyotes help control

rodent and small mammal populations.

- Coyotes feed opportunistically on a variety of small mammals, insects, and fruit, but prefer rodents and rabbits.
- Typically in urban areas coyotes live as solitary individuals or in pairs.



What Do Coyotes Eat?

The coyote's diet typically is comprised of 90% mice, ground squirrels, woodchucks, rats and rabbits. They are able to take down deer if the opportunity arises but usually it is a group hunt. They will also feed on fish, frogs, snakes, large insects, fruits, berries and nuts.

If their normal diet is reduced then they will look more towards domestic live-

stock and pets. In our area it tends to be the free roaming and **unattended** cats and small dogs. They will also utilize compost piles, bird feeders and unsecured garbage.

"The abundance of food regulates coyote reproduction, survival, dispersal of yearlings out of the pack, delineation of territorial boundaries, and number of

territories in the area." The number of coyotes also keeps in check the number of foxes, raccoons, skunks and feral cats through competitive exclusion or direct killing. They even have an effect on bobcats and Canadian geese.



Are Our Children at Risk?



“Most people are unaware that there are coyotes in our midst, as coyotes generally tend to keep a low profile and avoid humans.”

Coyotes will prey on our smaller pets because they are similar in size to their natural prey. Often communities assume that if the coyotes are killing neighborhood cats or dogs that they will work their way up to children. The only death was a child in the United States happening in 1981. It was a three-year-old little girl in Glendale, CA. “Tragically, the girl’s family and neighbors had been purposefully feeding the coyotes in the neighborhood, which led the coyotes to associate humans with food. (Coexisting with Coyotes)

According to desertusa.com, “Coyotes, if regularly fed by people, will come to depend on people for their food. They won’t starve if you stop feeding them, but they will be hungry and unafraid of people. They can get very aggressive in approaching other people. Some of

the national parks now have coyotes that are begging for food. Children and adults have been bitten by coyotes in California, Arizona and other states.

The most danger is in urban areas where young coyotes have learned to steal and beg for food. If they can’t find food, then small animals in the neighborhood will be come their targets to solve their need for food. Children will be at risk of being bitten.”



With Wildland Comes Wildlife!

“While coyotes appear content to share habitat with humans, some people show little patience for coyotes in their neighborhoods and prefer that coyotes stay in national parks or other public lands. Many people who move to the outskirts of urban areas seem to forget that with wild land comes wildlife. “

Humanized landscapes have actually worked to the coyote’s advantage. The suburban patchwork of wooded and open areas offers an abundance of “edge” habitat which the coyote is adept at exploiting. Here, coyotes and other wild animals find plentiful sources of food, water, and shelter. Unsecured garbage, pet food, free-roaming cats and small dogs, rodents, fruit trees, and koi ponds all attract coyotes, who can quickly adapt to the human-modified environment. The high density of food sources allows coyotes to fulfill their nutritional requirements with a much smaller area than in their natural habitat, thus increasing their overall population level per unit of land area.

According to the research that

has been done in an urban setting coyotes adjust their behavior around the fragmented habitat and human activities. “This means that coyotes try to avoid human activities by hunting more at night and at dawn and dusk (although seeing coyotes in the day should not be cause for alarm as this, too, is perfectly normal behavior). “ Coyotes typically live as solitary individuals or in pairs in the urban areas.

If one “problem” coyote is removed it will naturally be replaced by another. Research shows that the **replacement will be present within a few weeks**. It is important to determine why problems occurred before taking drastic measures by removing the population.



“The suburban patchwork of wooded and open areas offers an

Keeping Domestic Animals Safe



- Secure garbage cans by fastening the lid with a rope or bungee, or place trash bins in a shed or garage.
- Put garbage at curbside the morning of scheduled pickup, not the night before.
- When composting, use enclosed bins rather than exposed piles. Avoid adding dog or cat waste, meat, milk or eggs, as

well as any food containing these products.

- Clean up around fruit trees when fruit is ripe and falling, and don't overfill bird feeders.
- Vegetable gardens should be protected with garden fence or enclosed in a greenhouse.
- Eliminate artificial water sources and koi ponds.
- Motion-activated sprinkler systems can help keep coyotes and other unwanted wildlife out of gardens.
- Fencing can deter coyotes from entering property.
- Clear away bushes and dense weeds near your home, where coyotes may find cover and small animals to feed upon.
- Close off crawl spaces under porch, decks and sheds. Coyotes use such areas for denning and raising young.
- Never feed or leave pet food outside.

Note: Trapping and relocating coyotes is not recommended. Disruption of family units can cause orphaned juveniles to seek easy prey, such as small dogs and cats. Furthermore, other coyotes are likely to move into the vacated area.

For further information and a complete copy of Animal Protection Institute's Coyotes in Our Midst: Coexisting with an adaptable and resilient carnivore go to www.coexistingwithwildlife.org.

Coyotes are not considered a disease threat. They often reduce density of skunks and foxes which are more likely to be infected with the rabies virus.