

Co-Existing with Coyotes

Due to the rapid loss of habitat by over-developing, many coyotes have found themselves cohabitating with humans, often to the dismay of the humans. With a little knowledge, we humans can learn to co-exist with this native species. Education and co-existence are the keys.



How to co-exist

Do not feed the wildlife. While many of us enjoy the small songbirds in our yards, large amounts of prolonged use of wild birdseed will attract not only the wild birds but also the rabbits, squirrels, mice and gophers. These little creatures will in turn attract the coyote and other predatory animals. If you do feed the wild birds, put out only small amounts of seed at a time. Table scraps, leftovers, and etc. should be discarded and not left outdoors for the wildlife. Those who employ this practice may have neighbors who would prefer to keep the wildlife at a distance. Be a good neighbor and do not encourage the wildlife to become dependant on you.

Keep all small pets indoors

Allowing small pets outside only when under supervision. Be particularly careful around dawn and dusk. Coyotes are "opportunistic" hunters, which mean that they will prey on domestic animals if they have the opportunity even if they normally eat rodents and fruit.

Spay and neuter your pets

Coyotes are attracted to and can mate with unsprayed female dogs and unneutered dogs are attracted to the scent of a female coyote in heat.

Do not keep pet food outdoors

Coyotes are scavengers and on a slow day a dish of dog or cat food really hits the spot and keeps them coming back for more.

If you have fruit trees, pick that fruit. Grapes, berries, soft fruits, and avocados are a coyote's dessert. Pick your fruit as soon as it ripens and keep rotted fruit off the ground.

Make your trashcans inaccessible. Keep trashcan lids securely fastened or keep trashcans in your garage until trash day. Ammonia or pepper in the trash may also discourage the scavenging coyote.

Dome deterrents that may keep coyotes from entering your property may include: battery operated flashing lights, tape-recorded human voices, scattered mothballs and ammonia soaked rags strategically placed.

Trapping and relocation of coyotes is not a recommended or viable alternative. Coyote pups, although weaned at an early age, may remain with their mother into their second year, often helping the mother care for her newest litter. Disruption of this "pack" can mean devastation for the whole group or cause disoriented or suddenly orphaned coyotes to deviate from the norm and prey on easy game (i.e. small dogs, chickens, cats, etc.)

Clear your property of unnecessary brush

Clear brush, bushes, weeds around property and trim up low, overgrown trees. All provide cover for coyotes and breeding areas for rodents. Coyotes eat rodents

Secure other containers

Keep sheds and compost areas closed and locked. Coyotes can smell food inside these areas

Clean up after barbeques

After barbecues, clean up any left over food items and properly dispose of scraps and also any paper plates or other preparation supplies.

Deterrents

1. Use fright/scare devices such as: Sirens, air horns, water hoses with straight nozzles or even water toy guns
2. Odor deterrents such as: cayenne pepper, hot pepper sauce recipes, rags soaked in ammonia.
3. Making areas uncomfortable for coyotes and taking away food and water sources will eliminate most problems

Coyote Encounters of the "too close" kind

1. Do not turn your back and run from a coyote. Leave the area calmly, keeping an eye on the coyote as you leave. This lets the coyote know that you're the bigger predator

2. If followed, shout or make loud noises. If you have a stick, swing it or if you have any items, throw them at the coyote.
3. Always fight back. IF confronted you can fight off attack. Attacks on humans from coyotes are rare as they are normally fearful of humans.
4. Parents should supervise all small children for safety and guidance.
5. Report all incidents involving coyotes with the Animal Services Department and/or police agencies.

Benefits

They coyote were "Song Dog" to the American Indians. Anyone who has not been thrilled by the vocalizations of these American legends has either missed a real treat or should consider moving to a coyote free area. Coyotes help keep the balance of nature in order, and are great at rodent control. Mice, gophers, squirrels or rabbits will not overrun an area with coyotes. Natural rodent control is preferable to our man-made poisons and humane traps.