

CPW Urban Coyote Conflicts Talking Points

Overview

While coyotes are found throughout the West, they are extremely adaptable and can thrive in urban areas. From downtown Denver to the smallest suburb, coyotes are not new to residential communities. They can be found in any neighborhood that provides their basic needs--food, water, shelter and space.

The Division of Wildlife can provide you with information on coexistence and how to protect your pets. While we promote coexistence, we recognize that there may be instances where hazing and lethal control of coyotes is necessary, specifically if there are human safety threats. Colorado state law states that coyotes can be killed year-round on private property when causing damage*, but local ordinances may prohibit you from taking lethal action. It is imperative that you work with your city leaders to address questions you may have about hazing and lethal control work.

Can we make them leave?

Coyotes have adapted to neighborhoods because our environment supports them. Populations may fluctuate, but coyotes probably won't leave. Eradication programs in North American cities have proven expensive failures. These animals have adapted to our presence and have lost their natural fear of us. That doesn't mean that you can't do anything – you can. It is imperative that communities work together to instill the healthy and natural fear of humans back into coyotes — for their health and safety and ours. Coyotes are quick learners and consistent negative experiences can teach them to avoid people.

When are they most active?

- Coyotes can be **active any time, day or night, but especially at dawn and dusk.**
- **Conflicts with pets** can occur year-round and are **more likely to occur during the breeding season (February and March).**
- Because young are born in the **spring**, food requirements of the nursing females and growing young remain high **until late summer.** As people and their pets spend more time outdoors during this time, **the possibility of a coyote encounter increases.**

Tips to avoid conflicts around your home:

- Protect your pets! Coyotes will attack and kill cats and dogs. Your dog left unattended in your yard may be vulnerable to an attack by a coyote. Stay with your pet when you let it out in your yard, especially in the morning and evening. A six-foot fence can be a deterrent for coyotes but to better protect your pets, keep them in a completely enclosed kennel (with a roof). When on a walk, do not allow your pets to roam, especially at night.
- **Don't leave pet food outside.** This invites wildlife into your yard and problems may result.
- **Place trash out for pickup on the morning of collection, not the night before.** Clean garbage cans regularly to reduce residual odors by using hot water and chlorine bleach or ammonia and cleaning inside and out.

- **Use birdfeeders responsibly.** Keep the area underneath feeders clean of hulls and debris so as to not attract small mammals such as mice, squirrels and rabbits to your yard. Coyotes will follow this prey base. Be aware that shrubs, woodpiles, decks or many other structures can act as cover or be used as a den by coyotes.
- **Feeding coyotes, and most other mammals, is unlawful.** Do not feed coyotes or leave attractants out for coyotes (such as pet food or trash). Coyotes can easily become dependent on human food sources and lose their fear of humans.
- **Use deterrents:** throwing rocks or tennis balls, banging pots and pans, spraying the coyote(s) with a garden hose or water gun, or using paintballs, air horns or repellent sprays can help instill a fear of humans. You may need to **contact local authorities to ensure that you are using a method that is lawful under your local ordinances.** If a coyote comes very close to you, kick it or hit it with a stick. Talk to your neighbors about a coordinated effort in which everyone works to re-instill in coyotes a healthy fear of humans.

What should you do if you encounter a coyote?

Do what you can to discourage a coyote's approach:

- Be as **big and loud** as possible
- Wave your arms and throw objects at the coyote
- Shout in a loud and authoritative voice
- DO NOT RUN or turn your back on the coyote
- Face the coyote and back away slowly

If you are concerned about encountering a coyote, you may want to **keep a deterrent handy. Deterrents can include rocks, pots and pans, vinegar in a water gun, paintballs, air horns or a repellent spray.** Contact local authorities to ensure that you are using a legal method.

Pet Owners:

If you own a cat:

The only way to guarantee your cat's safety is to keep it indoors. Outdoor cats also face potential death from cars, diseases, foxes, parasites, raccoons, dogs and birds of prey such as owls.

If you own a dog:

- Always supervise your pet outside, especially at dawn and dusk
- Keep your dog on a short leash while recreating - avoid retractable leashes
- Do not allow your dog to play or interact with a coyote
- If possible, pick up your dog when coyotes are visible
- Avoid known or potential dens sites and thick vegetation
- Like domestic dogs, coyotes will defend their territory and their young
- If you must leave your dog outside, secure it in a fully enclosed kennel

It can be difficult to accept, but pets can be seen as a food source to coyotes and large dogs can be seen as a threat or possible mate. Coyotes have taken pets from backyards, open spaces, and even right off the leash. Keep your pet current on vaccinations.

What you can do

You have options when it comes to dealing with coyotes in your neighborhood:

Do nothing.

If you have no concerns about coyotes, you can go about your business. However, we recommend you understand the possible risks to your pets and yourself.

Take steps to prevent conflict.

Follow the advice in this brochure to eliminate attractants around your property and safeguard your pet when walking in open spaces or areas where coyotes may be present.

Haze coyotes when you see them.

Every citizen can help both people and coyotes by taking action to re-instill them with a healthy and natural fear of people. Clap your hands, yell, honk an airhorn or throw small rocks or sticks when you see coyotes so they can re-learn to avoid humans.

Evaluate lethal control for coyotes.

State law (Colorado Revised Statute 33-6-107(9)) allows you to manage coyotes that are causing damage to your property. This management may only be performed on your property. Be aware that cities and counties may have more restrictive ordinances and laws. Contact your city and county officials to find out what options are permitted.

*Colorado state law (Colorado Revised Statute 33-6-107(9)) allows a landowner to manage coyotes if the coyote is causing damage to their property. This law is rooted in Colorado's rural ranching tradition that allows cattlemen, sheep producers, and other ranchers to solve problems they have with coyotes preying on their ranch animals. This management may only be performed on the landowner's property. It is important to note that cities and counties may have restrictive ordinances and laws such as not allowing the discharge of a firearm/weapon. **Landowners should contact their city and county officials to find out what options are permitted.**

For more wildlife information or to report the feeding of coyotes, or their aggressive behavior towards humans, please contact the Colorado Division of Wildlife, Monday through Friday, from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m., by calling 303-291-7227. After hours, call Colorado State Patrol at 303-239-4501. Information is also available on our website at **www.wildlife.state.co.us**