

LIVING WITH URBAN COYOTES



Fast Facts

ACTIVITY	Primarily from dusk to dawn in urban areas
COLOR	Varies from pale yellowish grey to reddish to almost black
SIZE	Height about 1 - 2 feet high at shoulder; Length 3 - 4 feet plus tail; Weight 25 - 40 pounds
HABITAT	Woods, old fields and grasslands, brushy hill areas
DIET	Mice, rabbits, other small animals, carrion, and fruit
MATING	January through April; Gestation 58 - 63 days; Litter size 5 - 7 pups
SCAT	Similar to dog scat but contains hair and can appear chalky

Reducing Coyote Conflicts

GENERAL INFORMATION

- **Always keep pets on a leash** or in a yard with a coyote-proof fence.
- **Securely cover garbage cans** and compost bins.
- **Remove fallen fruit** from your yard.
- **Eliminate opportunities for rabbits, rats, and mice to breed in and around your yard.**
- **Never deliberately approach a coyote** and teach children to respect all wildlife from a distance.
- **Be a responsible pet owner.** Keep pets indoors and allow only controlled access to the outdoors. Always keep pets in from dusk to dawn when coyotes are most active.
- To prevent coyotes from entering your yard, consider **removing unnecessary brush**, installing a motion-sensitive lighting system, or installing a coyote-proof fence. To be effective, fences must be at least 6 feet tall, have no openings greater than four inches, and should be flush with the ground.
- If you do not want coyotes around your home, **let them know that they are not welcome.** "Haze" them by shouting, making loud noises, and waving your arms.

THE PRESENCE OF COYOTES (*Canis latrans*) on urban and suburban landscapes is neither surprising nor necessarily cause for concern. Coyotes are highly adaptive members of the dog family and have demonstrated an ability to survive in the most urbanized environments in cities across North America.

Most urban coyotes go about their lives without ever raising awareness of their presence among their human neighbors; however, coyote sightings are becoming more common in urban areas across the U.S., including in the Omaha metro area.

Coyotes are at home in a variety of habitat types and will den in burrows, under downed trees, and in thick brambles and culverts. While coyotes are most active between dusk and dawn, they can be seen at any time of the day.

Generally shy and wary of humans, they can also be quite curious and will often observe human activity from what they perceive to be a safe distance. They will protect active dens from predators including other coyotes and dogs.

Their primary diet is made up of small rodents, but coyotes are opportunistic and will consume a vast array of foods including birds and insects, fruits and vegetables, human garbage and compost, outdoor pet food and small free-roaming pets, particularly cats and small dogs.

By providing accessible garbage cans, compost bins, outdoor pet bowls and free-roaming pets, humans have inadvertently promoted urban coyote populations.

Coyotes typically do not present risks to humans and with a few behavior modifications we can learn to coexist and appreciate the animal that Navajo sheep and goat herders referred to as "God's dog."

Additional Tips FOR LIVING WITH URBAN COYOTES

TIPS FOR HOMEOWNERS

Coyotes, like all wild animals, come to an area for food, water, and/or shelter. If you eliminate these attractants, you will reduce the likelihood coyotes will come onto your property.

- Install a secure fence at least 6' high.
- Remove potential food sources from your yard such as pet food, garbage, birdseed, or exposed compost.
- Regularly clean outdoor grills.
- Accompany small dogs and children while outside and keep cats indoors.
- Deter nuisance coyotes from your property by making loud noises, throwing rocks near them, or spraying them with a hose.
- Use flashing lights, motion sensors, and noise makers to "haze" coyotes and make your property unwelcome.

TIPS FOR PET OWNERS

Given all of the dangers for free-ranging pets outside, including cars, would-be thieves, neighbors who do not want pets on their property, wildlife, parasites, and diseases, it is imperative that you **be a responsible pet owner** and keep your pets under your control at all times.

- Always keep pets on a leash or in a yard with a coyote-proof fence.
- Keep cats inside. Keeping cats indoors protects them from disease, parasites, and danger, and greatly lengthens their life expectancy.
- Keep your dogs inside at night. Allow only controlled access to the outdoors (fenced yards and leashes).
- Ensure that your pets are up-to-date on vaccines and parasite prevention.
- Spay and neuter your pets to keep coyotes and other dogs from approaching.

WHAT TO DO IF YOU ENCOUNTER A COYOTE

If you see a coyote, keep your distance and the animal will most likely avoid you. In the unlikely event that you encounter an aggressive animal (one that approaches to within 10 yards):

- Never approach or touch a wild animal.
- Do not turn your back or run from a wild animal.
- Back away from the animal while remaining calm.
- Stand tall, wave your hands, and make lots of noise.
- Carry a flashlight at night.
- "Haze" nuisance coyotes by yelling, throwing rocks near them, or spraying them with a hose.
- If a wild animal poses an immediate threat or danger to public safety by chasing people or pets, biting, or growling while approaching — call 911 or the Nebraska Humane Society.

WHAT TO DO IF YOU SEE A COYOTE

If you simply see a coyote, there is no cause for alarm. Coyotes live successfully in the city without human conflict every day. Provided the coyote keeps a distance from people and is simply existing in the area, there is no need to report a sighting to authorities.

- If a coyote in your neighborhood is acting aggressively (i.e. growling and approaching to within 10 yards), remove pets and people from the area and contact authorities.
- Do not feed it. If you are worried about the welfare of the coyote because it appears sick, injured, or orphaned, contact Nebraska Wildlife Rehab.
- Enjoy the opportunity to observe these beautiful wild animals!

For further assistance:

Nebraska Humane Society — For coyotes or other wild animals that pose a threat to public safety or for injured or ill wildlife: www.nehumanesociety.org • 402-444-7800 ext. 1

Nebraska Wildlife Rehab, Inc. — For injured, orphaned, or ill coyotes and other wildlife, or for further advice on wildlife issues: www.nebraskawildliferehab.org • info@nebraskawildliferehab.org • 402-234-2473

Nebraska Game & Parks Commission — For wildlife outside of the Omaha metro area that poses a threat to public safety, or for more information about wildlife laws: www.outdoornebraska.gov • 402-471-0641

Your local police or sheriff's department — For coyotes that pose an immediate threat to public safety, call 911.

