

Coexisting with Coyotes

If you are lucky enough to live near land that still supports wildlife, you may meet one of your neighbors, the coyote. By learning about local wild animals, we can coexist peacefully.

Facts about Coyotes

- Coyotes weigh 20–45 pounds and look like a tan, Shepherd-type dog.
- 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.



Keeping Coyotes at a Distance

Coyotes are drawn to neighborhoods for two reasons: human encroachment into coyote habitat and availability of food, water, and shelter. The following steps can help prevent coyotes from being attracted to your home:



- Tightly secure garbage cans with bungee cords or rope. Store trash bins inside sheds or garages.
- Put garbage out the morning of pickup, not the night before.
- When composting, use well-secured bins. Don't add dog or cat waste, meat, dairy, or eggs.

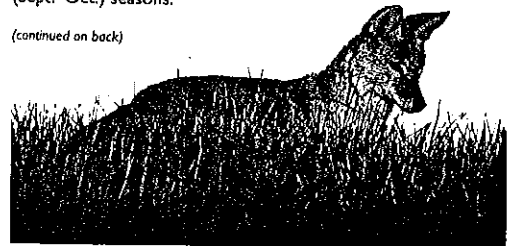
- Never leave or store pet food outside.
- Keep outdoor grills clean.
- Pick ripe fruit off trees and keep fruit off the ground.
- Keep bird feeders from overflowing.
- Fence vegetable gardens or use a greenhouse.
- Eliminate artificial water sources and fish ponds.
- Install motion-activated outdoor lighting and sprinkler systems.
- Fence your property or yard. The fence must be at least 6 ft. tall with the bottom extending at least 6 in. below the ground and/or 1 ft. outward. Fences can be made more effective by outwardly overhanging the top of the fence or by using electric strands along the top and bottom. Existing fences can be augmented with a Coyote Roller™ system (or PVC piping that is free to spin around a tight wire), which makes it difficult for animals to pull themselves up and over.
- Clear bushes and dense weeds where coyotes may find cover and small animals to feed upon.
- Close off crawl spaces under porches, decks, and sheds.

Note: Trapping and relocating coyotes is not recommended (and is illegal in some states/localities). Disruption of families can cause orphaned juveniles to seek easy prey, including small dogs and cats. Other coyotes are likely to move into the vacated area.

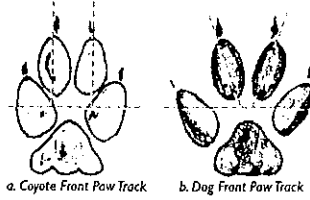
Keeping Domestic Animals Safe

Although primarily rodent/rabbit eaters and scavengers, coyotes may view livestock, cats, and small dogs as prey, while larger dogs may be viewed as a threat, particularly during mating (Dec.–Feb.), breeding (April–May), and dispersal (Sept.–Oct.) seasons.

(continued on back)



- Keep companion animals inside at night.
- Do not allow companion animals to roam free.
- Never leave or store pet food outside.
- Walk your dog on a leash. If your yard is unfenced, use a leash on your property and do not leave your dog unsupervised while leashed.
- Spay or neuter your dogs. Coyotes can mate with unsterilized dogs.
- Keep livestock within a fenced area. Electric fencing with five to nine strands is very effective.
- Keep livestock in a secure shelter at night and eliminate access points.
- Install motion-sensing outdoor lighting and sprinkler systems.
- Use guard animals such as llamas, burros, and dogs for protecting livestock.



The two outer toes of the coyote track (a) are larger than the inner toes and the inner toes usually remain straight and parallel to each other. The dog track (b) is more spread out.

a. Coyote Front Paw Track

b. Dog Front Paw Track

If You Encounter a Coyote

Coyotes usually avoid people, but may become fearless because of intentional or unintentional feeding. Coyotes must be encouraged to fear people.

- Never feed or attempt to "tame" a coyote. ("A fed coyote is a dead coyote.")
- Do not turn your back on or run from a coyote; if approached, make loud noises and make yourself look big.
- If necessary, throw sticks or small stones (to scare, not injure).
- Move toward active or populated areas.
- Always keep yourself between a coyote



- and small children or companion animals.
- Use a powerful water hose or Super Soaker water gun to scare a coyote away.
- If walking where there are coyotes, carry a deterrent such as an air horn, whistle, or walking stick.
- Because coyotes will use the same trails at the same time of day, consider periodically changing your walking schedules and routes.

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

Please Share This with Your Neighbors

Your efforts may be futile if someone else is providing food or shelter for coyotes. Remember, coexistence is a neighborhood effort!

For more information and a free copy of API's publication, *Coyotes in Our Midst: Coexisting with an Adaptable and Resilient Carnivore*, contact:

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