

ANIMAL CONTROL NOTICE

Coyotes are curious but timid animals and will generally run away if challenged. However, remember that any wild animal will protect itself or its young. Never instigate a close encounter.

If a coyote ever approaches too closely, pick up small children immediately and act aggressively toward the animal. Wave your arms, throw stones, and shout at the coyote. If necessary, make yourself appear larger by standing up (if sitting) or stepping up onto a rock, stump, or stair. The idea is to convince the coyote that you are not prey, but a potential danger.

Where coyote encounters occur regularly, keep noisemaking and other scare devices nearby. A starter pistol can be effective; so can vinegar-filled water guns or a powerful spray of water from a hose.

Solutions to Problems

Humans increase the likelihood of conflicts with coyotes by deliberately or inadvertently feeding the animals, whether by handouts or by providing access to food sources such as garbage, pet food, etc. When people provide food, coyotes quickly lose their natural fear of humans and become increasingly aggressive. They also become dependent on the easy food source people provide. Once a coyote stops hunting on its own and loses its fear of people, it becomes dangerous and may attack without warning. Prevention is the best tool for minimizing conflicts with coyotes and other wildlife.

Don't leave small children unattended where coyotes are frequently seen or heard. If there are coyote sightings in your area, prepare your children for a possible encounter. Explain the reasons why coyotes live there (habitat/food source/ species adaptability) and what they should do if one approaches them (don't run, be as big, mean, and loud as possible). By shouting a set phrase such as "go away coyote" when they encounter one, children will inform nearby adults of the coyote's presence as opposed to a general scream. Demonstrate and rehearse encounter behavior with the children.

Never feed coyotes. Coyotes that are fed by people often lose their fear of humans and develop a territorial attitude that may lead to aggressive behavior.

Don't give coyotes access to garbage. Keep garbage can lids on tight by securing them with rope, chain, bungee cords, or weights. Better yet, buy quality garbage cans with clamps or other mechanisms that hold lids on.

Feed dogs and cats indoors. If you must feed your pets outside, do so in the morning or at midday, and pick up food, water bowls, leftovers, and spilled food well before dark every day.

Don't feed feral cats (domestic cats gone wild). Coyotes prey on these cats as well as any feed you leave out for the feral cats.

Prevent the buildup of feeder foods under bird feeders. Coyotes will eat bird food and are attracted to the many birds and rodents that come to feeders

Keep dogs and cats indoors, especially from dusk to dawn. If left outside at night in an unprotected area, cats and small to mid-size dogs may be killed by coyotes. Pets can be easy prey for coyotes. Being raised by humans leaves them unsuspecting once they leave the safety of your home. If you suspect losing a dog or cat to a coyote, notify your neighbors. Once a coyote finds easy prey it will continually hunt in the area.

Animal Friends of the Valleys has prepared this brochure as an informational guide