

Identifying Coyotes:

Coyotes are medium sized members of the dog family that typically weigh 30-45 pounds. They are about 1 ½ to 2 ft. tall and have a length of 41-53 inches.

Their coat varies from grayish-brown to silver gray with reddish tinges around the muzzle and behind the ears.

Coyotes are often mistaken for German shepherds or collies with their narrow snout, pointed ears, and low hanging bushy tail that's tipped in black fur.

Coyote Behavior & Populations in Urban Areas

Coyotes are very adaptable animals when it comes to environment and diet, allowing them to thrive in urban areas. Their diet consists of small mammals (voles, mice, and rabbits). They eat fruit, nuts, and carrion as well. Coyotes are opportunistic, they prefer easy prey/food. An easy source of food is domestic cats, so please keep your cat indoors for their safety. If coyotes go for larger prey (in this case deer), they target weak or young individuals. Typically, they hunt alone or as a pair. They are known to form small packs, notably when going for larger prey.

They benefit farmers and landowners by keeping rodent populations down.

Coyotes are crepuscular, meaning they are most active at dawn and dusk, though it is not unusual to see them during the day.



When do coyotes become problematic? Will they attack humans?

Coyotes become problematic when they lose their instinctual flight response and have repeated close interaction with humans and pets. This is typically due to regular availability of food sources/feeding. Coyotes are generally fearful of humans and do not see humans as prey. Like any animal, coyotes may attack if cornered or threatened. Out of the ordinary attacks on small children very rarely occur. Small pets should not be left unattended as they may be seen as prey.

Preventing Conflicts with Coyotes

- Do Not Feed Coyotes
- Close trashcans, bring pet food/bowls inside when finished feeding, and enclose compost piles.
- Supervise small children and small pets when outside.
- Do not leave cats outside overnight
- Install fencing around your yard or around pets such as chickens. It is recommended that fencing is at least 5 ft. tall and that wire fencing has a roll bar across the top as coyotes are skilled climbers and jumpers. Coyotes are also skilled diggers so fencing that extends a few inches below the ground may be more effective.
- Hazing: Hazing is a method to scare or deter an animal out of an area. Coyotes can be deterred by large noises (yell, whistle, bang pots and pans together, bells, etc), projectiles (throw sticks, small rocks, cans), or other repellants such as spray bottles or hoses.

Disease: Rabies + Mange

Coyotes, like most mammals, are a vector for rabies. Coyote-strain rabies is restricted to southern Texas but coyotes are sometimes infected with strains from other animals. Rabies is rare in coyotes. Infected animals may become more aggressive towards humans, although it's important to note that most coyote attacks on humans are committed by seemingly healthy individuals.

Despite popular belief, coyotes with mange infections do not pose a threat to human safety. This disease simply causes severe skin irritation, causing excessive scratching that results in skin wounds and hair loss, it does not cause aggressive behavior. Significant hair loss may cause individuals to become more active during the day to seek out warmth.

Information for this fact sheet was sourced from The Ohio State University Extension and The Humane Society of the United States.

For more information, questions, or concerns:
City of Mentor Natural Resources Division
(440) 974-5717

Can Coyote Populations Be Managed?

Coyotes are more prevalent in our area than most people realize. The fact they are not commonly seen attests to their desire to avoid people. As long as there are readily available food sources in urban areas, coyotes will come. Removal of these animals does not provide a "permanent fix" to coyote populations in neighborhoods. New coyotes will move back into these areas to fill the "ecological opening". When aggressive management takes place, a reproductive "boom" of sorts occurs, as remaining coyotes will reproduce at earlier ages, their litter size increases and the survival rate of their young increases as research suggests.

We have little to fear with these intelligently adaptable animals. Following simple advice such as securing trash cans, removing food sources, and monitoring small pets outside will minimize any harm coyotes may cause.

