Your Wild Neighbors: Coexisting with Coyotes

Our cities and towns are home for people, as well as native plants, birds, and animals. You may see or hear your neighbor, the coyote. Learning about our urban coyote prevents conflicts and helps us to live in harmony.

Facts About Coyotes

- Coyotes weigh 18–35lbs in the west.
- Coyotes are common in cities and towns across North America, with coexistence the widely accepted management strategy.
- Coyotes may live alone, in pairs (they mate for life), or in family groups and may be seen during the day or night.
- Coyotes are omnivores, eating rabbits and rodents, fruit, vegetation, insects, and carrion. They provide free and non-toxic rodent control, and are nature's "cleanup crew," removing carrion and keeping our natural communities in balance.

Keeping Coyotes at a Distance

Wild territory is shrinking, forcing wildlife to live closer to people. The following steps can help prevent coyotes from being attracted to your home:

- **Don't feed or attempt to tame a coyote!**
- Don't feed wildlife in city parks. It's illegal, harmful, and can attract coyotes.
- Clean community areas after events.
- Never leave or store pet food outside.
- Tightly secure garbage, recycling and green bins. Store inside until collection day.
- When composting, use well-secured bins. Don't add meat, dairy, or eggs. Remove fallen fruit from the ground.
- If a coyote frequents your yard, consider installing motion-activated lights and/or sprinkler system, (e.g. *Scarecrow™*), a nighttime animal deterrent, (e.g. *Nite Guard™* or *Predator Guard™*), or adding reflective mylar and/or rolling pvc top to your fence, (e.g., *Coyote Roller™*).
- Trim under bushes so that a coyote can't find easy shelter. Close off crawl spaces under porches and sheds.
- Remove water sources, especially in times of drought.

Note: Trapping and relocating wildlife is illegal in California. In addition, killing doesn't work since other coyotes will quickly fill vacancies often within weeks.

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Keeping Domestic Animals Safe

Coyotes don't know the difference between a rabbit and a cat, and may view small domestic animals as prey, while larger dogs may be viewed as a threat, particularly during mating season (winter) and pup rearing (spring & summer). Most interactions with coyotes in urban areas result from the presence of a dog.

- Don't allow your dog to interact with a coyote in any way, including chasing or playing!
- Keep your dog under control at all times. Use a leash even in off leash areas if you can't keep voice control.
- If you walk your small dog at dusk or dawn in a coyote area, keep the leash short and be aware of your surroundings.
- Don't allow companion animals to roam free and keep them inside at night.

If You Encounter a Coyote

Coyotes may lose their natural wariness of people because of intentional or unintentional feeding. Encourage coyotes to avoid people by "hazing" if one approaches or follows you.

- If you can make eye contact, wave arms, make noise. Be "Big, Bad and Loud!" until s/he retreats.
- Keep yourself between a coyote and your companion animal. Keep small children near and calmly leave the area.
- Read and share the *Coyote Hazing Field Guide* from the resources link at ProjectCoyote.org - Hazing correctly and consistently are key to shaping unwanted coyote behavior.

Note: Coyotes are not considered a disease threat. They keep populations of disease carrying animals down.

Coexistence is a Neighborhood Effort!

If you think neighbors are providing food or shelter for coyotes, talk to them. **It is illegal to feed wildlife** (Marin County Ordinance 8.04.226). Report the feeding of coyotes to the Marin Humane Society, 415-883-4621. Additional tips and tools are available for download from ProjectCoyote.org - please share with your neighbors!

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