



FAQs – Coyotes in Urban Areas

Recently many area law enforcement agencies have been receiving a high volume of calls related to citizen concerns regarding their safety and the safety of their family and pets in regards to coyotes. Listed below is information compiled by the Oak Creek Police Department and the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources regarding this concern:

1. **Are coyotes really a threat to people?** Coyotes will rarely approach a person. Coyotes have never attacked a human within the Midwest, and attacks are extremely rare on children in California and Arizona, where coyotes are much more habituated to people. Coyotes weigh 30 pounds, and thus are much smaller than an adult person, and smaller than most children that would be left outside alone to play.
2. **Coyotes are always looking for food, water and shelter – DO NOT FEED COYOTES** – Reduce these items in and around your yard and you will make your yard less desirable to a coyote:
 - a) Trimming back bushes and shrubs where pets and children play can reduce the presence of coyotes and their prey in this area.
 - b) Remove or fence off items that could be used as shelter i.e. wood piles, decks etc.
 - c) Remove or secure any food or garbage from your yard; keep trash lids on garbage cans firmly secured or locked down with bungee cords if necessary, clean up any fruit that has fallen from trees, fence off garden areas (fruits and vegetable attract coyotes), remove bird feeders (seeds attract coyote as well as the rodents/rabbits that eat the seeds do) or keep them high and clean the ground below the feeder frequently, manage compost piles carefully and fence them off, eliminate water sources (ponds, fountains and any standing water)
 - d) Remove all pet food and dog bones from your yard or deck – these will attract coyotes.
 - e) Fence your yard – although coyotes can go under and sometime over some fences – It can help.
 - f) Remove anything that attracts rodents or rabbits into your yard.
 - g) Secure/fence off areas under decks, porches and your home so coyotes cannot use them as shelter.
3. **Most coyote attacks occur at night, evening or early morning** – While walking your dog during these times, keep them on a leash and in close proximity to you (<10 feet). Following are a few suggestions to protect your pet from coyotes:
 - a) Prior to letting your dog out at night check the area with a flashlight and step outside making noise as you do with your pet – Having a coyote frightened of you while you are with your pet will cause them to identify your pet with you.
 - b) Don't allow cats outside or feed feral cats (They are looked at as a food source for coyotes, and coyotes and other wildlife will eat cat food.)
 - c) Walk your dog on a short or retractable leash.
 - d) Carry a walking stick or golf club while walking your dog.
 - e) Carry a noise making device, whistle, horn, etc.
 - f) If you see a coyote while walking your dog and your dog is small, pick it up off the ground.
 - g) If you must leave your dog outside secure it in a fully enclosed kennel.

4. **How can I tell if coyotes are losing their fear or may present a risk to my pet or children?** – Attacks are typically preceded by a sequence of increasing bold behaviors:
 - a) Regular sightings of coyotes in neighborhoods.
 - b) When seen, coyotes do not run away, and instead observe person from a distance.
 - c) When confronted with loud noises, coyotes do not run until person is in close proximity or very loud noises are used.
 - d) Known attacks of pets in the area.

5. **If you encounter a coyote** – DO NOT RUN – Coyotes have a natural fear of humans but they can become habituated to humans. To re-instill the natural fear of humans (**It is best if applied area wide – meaning all neighbors need to haze/scare coyotes – so every time they see a human they get startled – you can re-instill their natural fear**) DO NOT FEED coyotes and scare them whenever you see them near you or your home.

6. DO NOT RUN OR TURN YOUR BACK ON A COYOTE. That imitates prey.

7. To scare a coyote stand up and get big while making loud noise (Haze the coyote) shout in a deep voice, wave your arms and throw rocks or other items at the coyote. Other responses to aggression or lack of fear from a coyote:
 - a) Carry and blow a whistle.
 - b) Use a hand held air horn or any noise making device.
 - c) Clap your hands
 - d) Carry a walking stick or golf club in case you cannot scare off coyote.
 - e) If you are wearing a large jacket open the jacket and appear larger
 - f) In your backyard use of a high power water gun filled with water and vinegar
 - g) In your backyard motion lights and during the right season motion activated sprinklers near the perimeter of the yard.
 - h) Teach your children never to approach wild animals or dogs you don't know.
 - i) Teach your children if a coyote approaches they should wave their arms, Clap their hands, wave their coat in the air, stomp their feet and yell loudly numerous times "COYOTE, GO AWAY."
 - j) Teach your children to call for help and tell an adult.
 - k) Running from a coyote will cause it to chase them

8. **Removal of coyotes** – Done as a last resort when aggressive behavior has been identified. You cannot remove all coyotes and once you remove some others will fill that void and take up that territory. It would be the home owner's responsibility to contact and pay for a professional trapper remove the coyote. A list of those trappers can be found on the Wisconsin Trappers Association http://www.wistrap.org/Nuisance_Animal_Removal_2.html

9. **Additional Information.** Extensive research has been conducted on urban coyote populations and behavior in the Chicago area. That information can be viewed at www.urbancoyoteresearch.com