

# Urban Wildlife

## Issues:

## Understanding Coyotes

Historically, coyotes were most commonly found on the Great Plains of North America. Their range now extends from Central America to the Arctic.

Except for Hawaii, coyotes live in all of the United States, Canada, and Mexico. In spite of being hunted and trapped for more than 200 years, more coyotes exist today than when the U.S. Constitution was signed.



Hardly any animal in America is more adaptable to changing conditions than the coyote. Coyotes can live just about anywhere. They are found in deserts,

swamps, tundra, grasslands, brush, and dense forests, from below sea level to high mountains. They have also learned to live in suburbs and cities like Los Angeles, New York, Phoenix, and Denver.

One of the keys to the coyote's success is its diet. A true scavenger, the coyote will eat just about anything. Identified as a killer of sheep, poultry and deer, the coyote will also eat snakes and foxes, doughnuts and sandwiches, rodents and rabbits, fruits and vegetables, birds, frogs, grass and grasshoppers, pet cats and cat food, pet dogs and dog food, carrion, and just plain garbage.

Coyotes are active mainly during the nighttime, but they can be moving at any time during the day. Most sightings of coyotes occur during the hours close to sunrise and sunset.

## Tips to Limit Coyote Interest in Your Yard

**Coyotes primarily hunt rodents and rabbits for food, but will take advantage of whatever is available, including garbage and pet food.**

- **Put garbage in tightly closed containers that cannot be tipped over.**
- **Remove sources of water, especially during dry periods.**



Photo from Encyclopedia Britannica, "Advocacy for Animals"

- **Bring pets in at night, and do not leave pet food outside.**
- **Put away bird feeders at night to avoid attracting rodents and other coyote prey.**
- **Pick up fallen fruit and cover compost piles.**
- **Ask your neighbors to follow these tips.**

**Please respect and protect wild animals.**

**Keep them wild.**



*For more information or to report a coyote sighting, please call the Middleton Public Lands Department at (608) 827-1044*

# Coyote Behavior is a Response to Human Activities

Wild animals are in trouble, and the problem is people who are careless with



food and garbage. Coyotes play an important role in the ecosystem, helping to keep rodent populations under control. They are by nature fearful of humans.

When coyotes are given access to human food and garbage, their behavior changes. They lose caution and fear. They may cause property damage. They might threaten human safety. They might be killed.

Relocating a problem coyote is not an option because it only moves the problem to someone else's neighborhood. Help prevent deadly conflicts for these beautiful wild animals.



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## Coyote Precautions

- Never feed or attempt to tame coyotes. The result may be deadly conflicts with pets or livestock, or serious injuries to small children.
- Install motion-sensitive lighting around the house.
- Trim ground-level shrubbery to reduce hiding places.
- Be aware that coyotes are more active in the spring, when feeding and protecting their young.
- If followed by a coyote, make loud noises. If this fails, throw rocks in the animal's direction.



## Coyote-Proof Containers

Use garbage cans that have a locking mechanism on the lid. Use a rope or elastic cord to secure the can to a fence or solid object so that it cannot be tipped over.



Call 827-1044 to report a sighting

Further information on coyote behavior is available from the National Wildlife Research Center's Web site at [www.aphis.usda.gov/ws/nwrc](http://www.aphis.usda.gov/ws/nwrc).

Info for this brochure is condensed from:

"Keep Me Wild," Brochure, California Department of Fish and Game

"Urban and Suburban Coyotes," Factsheet, U.S. Department of Agriculture, April 2002