## WHAT YOU SHOULD DO IF...

You See a Coyote: Enjoy the beauty of these ambassadors of nature. Simply seeing a coyote is not a problem, especially if the coyote keeps its distance. DO NOT offer food or anything else to a coyote. Even if you love to see coyotes, do not let them know it; it goes to their heads. It is important to keep them cautious and wary of humans. Never ignore, turn your back on, or run from a coyote. Carry a walking stick or noisemaker at night or during an early morning walk, and be ready to use them. Keep your pets next to you on a leash if they are with you.

A Coyote Approaches You: Make eye contact. Don't let coyotes intimidate or scare you. Coyote attacks on adult humans are very rare and are not routine coyote behavior. If you are walking a small dog, picking it up may protect your dog, though an unusually aggressive coyote may bite you while trying to get to your pet. You should look and sound as big and authoritative as possible. Scare or appear threatening to coyotes with claps, shouts, loud noises, bright lights and waving your arms. Do not hesitate to pick up small objects, such as a tennis ball or a light stone, and throw it at an approaching coyote. If a water hose is close, spray the coyote with it. Do not turn your back on a coyote; to get away, face the coyote and carefully back away slowly.

A Coyote Attacks: Call 9-1-1 if a coyote or other wild animal is threatening or attacking a human.

COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES

**Department of Agricultural Commissioner / Weights & Measures**

**acwm.lacounty.gov**


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**Department of Agricultural Commissioner/ Weights & Measures**

# COYOTES

## OUR PERMANENT NEIGHBORS

COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES

**A permanent strand of the beautiful tapestry of nature woven through many of our Los Angeles County neighborhoods is the highly resourceful and adaptable coyote. Revered in time-honored legend and folklore, coyotes are an important, ongoing presence in our modern communities.**

Coyotes help keep the urban ecosystem in balance, as their primary diet consists of small rodents such as mice, rats, and squirrels. However, coyotes aren't finicky; they'll eat rabbits, raccoons, birds, insects, berries and other fruit, vegetables, human garbage and compost, outdoor pet food, and small, unprotected pets.

You may be fortunate enough to catch a glimpse of these fascinating native mammals while enjoying a vigorous hike on a remote trail or when taking a relaxing stroll on a paved suburban sidewalk.

Coyotes look much like dogs and are brownish-gray with a light gray to reddish cream-colored belly, slender muzzle, bushy tail, and weigh anywhere from 15 to 40 pounds.

Coyotes are at home in a variety of habitat types and will raise their young in brush, under downed trees, and even in culverts. Coyotes are monogamous and can be found as lone individuals, pairs, or members of packs. Typically, only the dominant pair breeds and produces one litter per year. Breeding occurs between January and March, with a gestation period of 62 days. Litters range from 4-7 pups and the young will remain with the parents, learning how to hunt, until late summer.

While coyotes are most active between dusk and dawn, they can be seen at any time of the day. Generally shy and wary of humans, they can also be quite curious and will often observe human activity from what they perceive to be a safe distance. This behavior is normal and part of peaceful coexistence.

**Problems may result if humans – intentionally or not – teach coyotes to be dependent on humans.** As tempting as it can be, it is important that humans never attempt to feed a coyote. Coyotes have adequate food sources and the species will survive without our help. **It is also critical for peaceful coexistence that coyotes never learn to associate people with food.**

Coyote attacks on humans are very rare, but when they have happened, they have usually involved a coyote that has become accustomed to seeking food from humans instead of continuing to exhibit normal, beneficial coyote behavior. In such situations, they lose their natural meekness and become demanding and even aggressive.

Humans have unintentionally taught individual coyotes to become dependent on humans by providing accessible garbage cans, compost bins, outdoor pet bowls, and free-roaming pets.

Unattended pets are no different to a coyote from any other animal in their territory. Without human protection, pets may be treated like potential prey or competition for resources.

**Teach your children that they should never approach coyotes or other wild animals.** Never leave your children unattended at locations where coyotes have been known to roam. Check your yard before letting pets outdoors, and close and secure pet doors after dark.

If you have taken the precautions we list here and are still experiencing coyote problems, contact your city offices, or, if you're in an unincorporated community within Los Angeles County, contact us at (626) 575-5462.

**Coyotes will be less likely to dwell on your property the more of these steps you take:**

1. Keep garbage cans closed and secure; do not leave filled plastic trash bags out at night and put your garbage out the morning of pick-up.
2. Keep small pets indoors (especially overnight) and keep pet food indoors or promptly remove dishes when pets complete their meal outside.
3. Pick up fallen fruit and cover compost piles.
4. Put away bird feeders at night to avoid attracting rodents and other coyote prey.
5. Clear brush and dense weeds from around your property.
6. Have a wall or fence at least six feet high around your backyard, with extenders facing outward at the top of each post. Fences must have secure gates. All fences should have a galvanized wire apron buried at least 4 to 6 inches into the ground, which extends out from the fence at least 15 to 20 inches and is securely attached at the bottom of the fence.
7. Share this information with your neighbors.

Photo courtesy of Wayne Nelson

A listing of animal control and welfare agencies in Los Angeles County is available on our website:

**acwm.lacounty.gov**