

Are coyotes dangerous?

Although naturally curious, coyotes are usually timid animals which run away if challenged. Coyotes can be a risk to people once they become comfortable around humans, usually as a result of feeding or indifference. When this occurs, coyotes lose their natural fear and learn to see humans, their yards and their pets as food sources and safe havens. You must aggressively discourage coyotes from feeling comfortable around you and your family by:

- Never intentionally feeding coyotes, eliminating attractants (food sources, including pet food) from your yard. Intentional feeding of coyotes and other wild animals is illegal in California.
- Use aggressive gestures (hazing) toward coyotes when you see them, and encouraging your neighbors to do the same.
- Avoid areas where coyotes may be denning or feeding/hiding pups.
- Appreciate coyotes from a distance. Share this information with family and friends.



Traits and behaviors.

Coyotes are clever and opportunistic wild canines, and they are well adapted to living in various environments. When developments are built in their habitat, coyotes are not permanently displaced. Some move on to other areas, but many simply adjust to their new surroundings. Coyotes can be seen at golf courses, parks and preserves and in neighborhoods.

- Coyotes often mate for life, are devoted parents, and are highly communicative (barks, yips, howls)
- Coyotes may be seen in groups, called family units, or alone.
- Local coyotes generally weigh between 18-35 pounds.
- Coyotes eat whatever is available, including seeds, dates and other fruit, dead animals, rodents, rabbits, garbage, pet food, cats and small dogs.
- Coyotes breed every year. They have two to 12 pups per litter, with an average of six. Pups are raised in a den.
- Coyotes are naturally wary of people but can habituate to our presence and the reliable food sources we provide.



Living with Coyotes



Coyotes have been seen in all areas of Huntington Beach.

Please read this information so you will understand how to live with coyotes.



City of Huntington Beach

What should I do if a coyote approaches me?

If a coyote approaches you, appear as large and threatening as possible. Make aggressive gestures (haze) by moving arms and legs, shout in a low voice, and throw rocks, sticks or objects toward, not at the coyote. Maintain eye contact and move slowly away toward a building or area of increased activity; never run.

Be consistent and persistent: haze every time you see this too-close-for-comfort behavior. Do not stop until the coyote has left the area or you risk teaching the coyote that your hazing behavior is “normal,” and is nothing to be concerned about.

When not to haze:

- If you think the coyote is sick or injured. Call your local wildlife rehabilitation center or animal control/services office.
- If it is March-July, and you are in a park or open space and think you could be near a coyote den, or if you think that pups could be present.
- If the coyote is at a comfortable distance from you. Seeing a coyote at a distance is no cause for alarm. They have adapted to urban environments.



What about children's safety?

Education is the key to preparedness. Children should be taught how to behave around coyotes. Teach children to **Be Big** (stand up and raise their arms in the air), **Be Mean** (sound angry, stomp their feet, and throw something toward the coyote), **Be Loud** (yelling “Go Away Coyote” so people nearby will come help), and **Never Run**.

How can I keep my pets safe?

- Supervise your pet when outside, especially at dawn or dusk.
- Always walk your pet on leash.
- If confronted by a coyote, pick up small pets and do what you can to discourage its approach.
- Never leave cats or dogs outside after dark. If you must leave your pet outside, secure it in a fully enclosed kennel.
- Do not leave food or water outside for pets.



How can I discourage coyotes from entering my yard?

Coyotes generally avoid humans, even when their home range encompasses largely urban or suburban habitat. However, the presence of a free buffet in the form of pet food, compost or trash can lure coyotes into yards and create the impression that these places are bountiful feeding areas. Without the lure of food or other attractants, their visits will be brief and rare. But a coyote which finds food in one yard may learn to search for food in others.

To help discourage wildlife activity in your neighborhoods:

- Keep pet food indoors and do not leave food of any kind outside at night. Food left out at night will be taken as a welcome invitation by wildlife, and may prompt a future visit.
- Keep cats and small dogs indoors or in the close presence of an adult.
- Remove any fruit, which has fallen to the ground.
- Store trash in covered, heavy-duty containers.
- Keep yards free from potential shelter such as thick brush and weeds, and enclose the bottoms of porches and decks.
- Eliminate garbage, debris, lumber piles, etc.
- Check fencing and try to eliminate access points to rooftops.
- Change automatic sprinkler settings regularly.

Resources

For more information on living with urban wildlife, call Orange County Animal Control at 714-935-6848 or California State Fish and Game at 858-467-4257.