

## **What is that? Is it a dog? It's a coyote!**

And it's in the back yard!

Now what?

One of the most important things to know about coyotes in the urban environment is not to feed them or allow them to become comfortable in residential areas. Coyotes are wild animals with a natural fear of humans. If they become habituated and lose that fear of humans, they become less likely to flee from human encounters.

Coyotes populate Broomfield and surrounding areas. They will quickly colonize a new area when one coyote is removed or killed. Although their dens will be in open space or native areas, they will actively move across their range and through developed areas. The availability of food will determine the range and movements of coyotes, so it is important that garbage, composts, or loose pets do not provide a viable food source within neighborhoods.

Here are some tips:

- Coyotes provide an enjoyable wildlife viewing experience. Keep your distance and do not approach the animals. Enjoy the opportunity to view wildlife.
- Keep your pets on leash when walking them in open space areas and on trails and sidewalks in the neighborhoods.
- Do not allow your dog to run with coyotes. Coyotes can turn on dogs to defend their territory.
- If a coyote threatens you or your pet, back away and go the other direction. If the threat continues, you can throw rocks or sticks to frighten the coyote away.
- Use a loud, authoritative voice to frighten the animal.

*Source: Living with Wildlife in Coyote Country: Colorado Division of Wildlife/Colorado Department of Natural Resources*

## **Coyote facts & myths...**

### **Humans have impacted the coyote's natural range**

**FACT:** Coyotes were originally a prairie species. Extirpation of wolves, deforestation, and the suburban landscape have all contributed to a range expansion which extends across the entire United States, up into Canada and Alaska and down into the Yucatan, Belize, and Panama.

### **Coyotes are carnivores**

**MYTH:** Dentition classifies them as carnivore, but scat and behavior indicates scavenger, omnivore, or opportunistic feeder. In other words, they are consummately flexible in their eating habits.

### Coyotes live and hunt in groups

MYTH: Hunting style depends on prey, habitat, and time of year. Most research shows that coyotes are primarily solitary hunters, but may hunt cooperatively with family members, particularly in winter. They may team up to take large prey. The coyote lifestyle depends on age and dominance. They may live a solitary and transient lifestyle, may be a monogamous pair, or in family groups dominated by an alpha male and female - known as an alpha pair - with one to five subordinates that are relatives. In some urban areas, coyotes may defend territories as groups with as many as five adults and their offspring.

### I should be nice to the coyote when it is in my neighborhood

MYTH: You should haze a coyote in your yard or roaming the streets of your neighborhood. Hazing includes: bright lights, banging on pots and pans, speaking forcefully, tossing rocks, anything that makes the animal uncomfortable. A coyote should not feel welcome in neighborhoods.

### Coyotes are smarter than my pet dog or cat

FACT: Years of wild living trump your pet's breeding for looks and demeanor. No matter how smart you think your dog or cat is, they are no match for a savvy suburban coyote.

### Coyotes are naturally skittish around humans

FACT: A wild coyote possesses a natural fear of humans. A coyote that has been fed or welcomed into a neighborhood or yard will lose its fear of humans. A coyote that is not afraid of humans is habituated.

### Humans create a food and habitat-rich environment for coyotes

FACT: Unsecured garbage, pet food, free-roaming cats and small dogs, rodents, fruit trees, fruits, ponds, and irrigation systems can attract coyotes.

### Coyotes are nocturnal

MYTH: Coyotes are typically active at dusk, sunrise and during the day in the absence of humans. In areas where there are humans and coyotes are harassed, activity changes to nocturnal.

### Coyotes are "tricksters"

FACT: There are plenty of documented cases of coyotes tricking pets into play, using tails as distractions while another ambushes, using outside distractions to their benefit, to warrant this reputation.

### Removing problem coyotes is an effective way to solve conflicts

MYTH: Often, coyotes return after they are removed, usually attributed to food resources. Removal programs have been found to be of questionable value because coyotes rebound and

recolonize the areas they were removed from. Over the long term, it would take efforts that remove over 70 percent of the coyotes in an area every year. If lethal methods are used, they may stimulate improved reproductive success and pup survival in the remaining coyotes.

The coyote I see looking in my backyard from the bike path lives in the den I see nearby at the golf course.

MYTH: Coyote home ranges vary greatly, depending on habitat, social status, and food resources. In general, home ranges average 3 to 25 miles, but the details are noteworthy:

- Wild male coyotes have a home range of 8 to 16 square miles, females have between 3 and 4 square miles.
- Coyotes in family groups have smaller home ranges, around 3 square miles, and solitary coyotes have ranges that can be as large as 25 square miles.
- Suburban coyotes can occupy a home range of 25 to 50 square miles. One study revealed that a three legged male had a home range extending over 40 square miles and 3 municipalities. Until this study, few people would have suggested the conflicts extending over three cities could be the work of one coyote.

Coyotes are not competitive creatures

MYTH: Coyotes defend territories and food resources from each other and from other species. They do not tolerate competition from foxes, raccoons, skunks, feral cats, or domestic pets.

In general, people love coyotes

MYTH: "Coyotes are just a little too much like the big, bad, wolf. Most people are perfectly happy to have them anywhere but in their own backyards," according to Robbie Fearn of the Cape Wildlife Center.

*Source: Aurora Parks and Open Space Program*