

are more active and defensive when pups are born (generally in April or May).

SAFEGUARDING OTHER ANIMALS

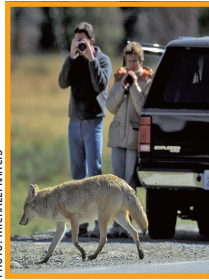
Although primarily rodent-eaters and scavengers, coyotes can harm or kill pets and small livestock. To reduce risks:

- Keep animals within a fenced area. Electric fencing with 5–9 strands is very effective.
- Keep animals closed in a secure shelter at night.
- Use frightening devices (see above).
- Use guard animals such as llamas, burros, and guard dogs.
- Provide captive rabbits with a wire-covered enclosure with fencing buried below the ground, plus an escape shelter with an opening just large enough for the rabbit to enter. Cages are not recommended.



Please share this information with your neighbors. Your efforts may be futile if someone in your neighborhood is providing food or shelter for coyotes. Remember, coexistence is a neighborhood effort!

PHOTO: MICHAEL FRANCIS



IF YOU ENCOUNTER A COYOTE

Coyotes usually avoid people, but may become fearless due to intentional or unintentional feeding. Coyotes must be encouraged

to fear people. They are usually frightened by aggressive gestures and loud noises.

- Never feed or attempt to “tame” a coyote.
- Do not turn your back or run from a coyote.
- If followed or approached by a coyote, make loud noises and make yourself look big.
- If necessary, throw sticks or small stones (to scare, not injure).
- Move toward active or populated areas.
- Always keep yourself between a coyote and small children or companion animals.
- If walking in coyote areas, carry a deterrent such as an airhorn, whistle, or walking stick.
- Because coyotes use the same trails and travel at the same time of day, consider periodically changing walking schedules and routes.

Note: Coyotes are not considered a disease threat. They often reduce density of skunks and foxes, who are more likely to be infected with the rabies virus, and thus can serve as a buffer against the disease.

PRODUCTS

- Roll Guard, Inc. produces Coyote Rollers™ for installation on top of fences to keep coyotes, dogs, and other animals from climbing over. Visit www.coyoteroller.com.

MORE INFORMATION

- Learn more about our Coexisting with Wildlife Program at www.coexistingwithwildlife.org.
- For information on reprints, downloading a free copy, or how to order more of this or our other Coexisting with Beavers, Geese, Deer and Wildlife brochures, visit www.bornfreeusa.org/catalog or call (202) 450-3168.
- Please share this information with your friends, family, neighbors, homeowners associations, city and county councils.
- Join us by becoming a member of Born Free USA and help Keep Wildlife in the Wild. Visit www.bornfreeusa.org/membership.

KEEP WILDLIFE IN THE WILD

Born Free USA is a national animal advocacy non-profit 501(c)(3) organization whose mission is to end the suffering of wild animals in captivity, rescue individual animals in need, protect wildlife in their natural habitats, and encourage compassionate conservation.



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KEEP WILDLIFE IN THE WILD®



Coexisting with
COYOTES

COEXISTING WITH COYOTES



PHOTO: ALBERTA INSTITUTE FOR WILDLIFE CONSERVATION

COYOTE BIOLOGY AND ECOLOGY

Since well before the Europeans arrived in North America, indigenous tribes revered the coyote for its intelligence and mischievous nature.

European settlers, however, considered coyotes “pests,” a view that unfortunately lingers today. The coyote remains one of the most persecuted and misunderstood animals in the United States.

Coyotes weigh 20 to 45 pounds and look like a tan Shepherd-type dog. Coyotes play an integral role in maintaining the health of a variety of habitats, primarily by regulating the numbers of smaller predators, such as foxes, raccoons, and skunks through competitive exclusion or killing. Other studies have found that coyotes also have indirect positive effects on songbirds and waterfowl.

Coyotes are opportunistic omnivores and feed on small mammals, insects, and fruit, although they prefer rodents and rabbits. Their feeding habits can place them in conflict with humans, especially in agricultural and suburban areas.

INCREASING COYOTE ENCOUNTERS

Encounters between humans and coyotes have become more common in the expanding cities and suburbs of North America. The suburban patchwork of wooded and open areas offers an abundance of “edge” habitat that the coyote is adept at exploiting. Here, coyotes and other wild

animals find plentiful sources of food, water, and shelter. Unsecured garbage, pet food, free-roaming cats and dogs, rodents, fruit trees, dirty grills, and fish ponds all attract the adaptive and omnivorous coyote.

While many people welcome the opportunity to see a wild coyote, others respond with fear and panic. Yet coyotes are far less of a threat than the dog next door. Dogs kill an average of about 20 people per year in the U.S., while there has only been 1 documented case of a coyote killing a person. The effectiveness of killing coyotes in response to conflicts is short-lived at best.



PHOTO: MELANIE PIAZZA

Coyote populations are naturally regulated by available food and habitat. Lethal control, however, can disrupt the pack hierarchy, which causes pack members to disperse, allows more coyotes to reproduce, and encourages larger litter sizes because of decreased competition for food and habitat.

Most often conflicts result from people providing coyotes (and other wild animals) with food. Whether intentional or unintentional, wildlife feeding must be addressed immediately, since this is most often the source of a coyote’s bold behavior. If local ordinances prohibiting the feeding of wildlife do not exist, then concerned citizens and public officials should work to enact such legislation (contact Born Free USA for assistance).

Solutions can frequently be found in simple alterations of human behavior, as described next.

KEEPING COYOTES AT A DISTANCE

Coyotes are drawn to neighborhoods for three reasons: food, water, and shelter. The following steps can help prevent coyotes from being attracted to your home:

- Tightly secure garbage cans with bungee cords or rope. Store trash bins inside sheds, garages, or other enclosed structures.
- Put garbage out the morning of pickup, not the night before.
- When composting, use well-secured bins. Don’t add dog/cat waste, meat, dairy, or eggs.
- Pick ripe fruit off trees and from the ground.
- Keep bird feeders from overflowing.
- Fence vegetable gardens or use a greenhouse.
- Eliminate artificial water sources and ponds.
- Install motion-activated outdoor lighting.
- Install motion-activated sprinkler systems. (And use a powerful garden water hose to scare away a seen coyote.)
- Fence your property or yard. The fence must be at least 6’ tall with the bottom extending at least 6” below the ground and/or 1’ outward. Fences can be made more effective by outwardly overhanging the top of the fence or by using electric strands along the top and bottom. Existing fences can be augmented with a Coyote Roller™ system (or PVC piping that is free to spin around a tight wire), which makes it difficult for animals get over.
- Clear bushes and dense weeds where coyotes may find cover and small animals to feed upon.
- Close off crawl spaces under porches, decks,

and sheds.

Note: Trapping and relocating coyotes is not recommended (and is illegal in some areas). Disruption of coyote families can cause orphaned juveniles to seek easy prey, including small dogs and cats. Other coyotes are likely to move into the vacated area.

KEEPING COMPANION ANIMALS SAFE

Coyotes may see cats and small dogs as prey, while larger dogs may be viewed as a threat, particularly during mating (Dec.–Feb.), breeding (April–May), and dispersal (Sept.–Oct.) seasons. Protective steps include:

- Keep companion animals and livestock inside at night.
- Do not allow companion animals to roam free.
- Never leave or store pet food outside.



PHOTO: © MICHAEL FRANCIS

- Walk your dog on a leash. If your yard is unfenced, use a leash on your property and do not leave your dog unsupervised while leashed.
- Spay or neuter your dogs. Coyotes can mate with unsterilized dogs.

Note: Since one coyote can make eleven different vocalizations, the howling of a few is often mistaken for that of many, particularly during mating season (Dec.–Feb.). In addition, coyotes