

## Living With Coyote

When people see coyote in their neighborhood, the first response is often fear. It's understandable. Urban dwellers have been taught to fear wildlife—bees, raccoons, sharks. But in almost every situation, it's the wildlife that should be afraid of us!

Coyote attacks on humans are unbelievably rare. How rare? More people are killed each year by errant golf balls and flying champagne corks than are bitten by coyotes.



On the other hand, coyotes have been among the most violently tyrannized animals in North American history. We've hunted, trapped, and poisoned them and destroyed their habitat. They've relied upon their shrewd instincts and hardiness to adapt to a hostile environment. These highly intelligent animals have been quite successful. Once found only in the western United States and Canada, they are now in almost every state, including Alaska, and have learned to thrive in urban environments.

Like other animals that once lived quietly in our Midwestern wilderness, coyotes have taken to the streets only because their habitat has been systematically destroyed by humans. With plentiful shelter and food (like squirrels, rabbits, and mice), there would be no reason for coyotes to venture out into urban areas. Despite our attempts to vilify them as “menaces,” they are not bad animals, simply creatures trying to take care of their families and searching for food and shelter.

### Facts about Coyotes:

- Each year, more than 4.7 million people are bitten by dogs. Coyote attacks on humans, though far more publicized, are actually very rare.
- Coyotes are smaller than you may think – adults generally weigh 15-45 lbs. – about the size of a small or medium dog.
- Coyotes are omnivores and will eat just about anything available – berries, acorns, mice, rabbits, pet food and pizza.
- Coyotes are fast runners (reaching speeds of 30 mph) but poor climbers.

### What to do if you encounter a coyote:

It's important to remember that most often, a coyote doesn't want to have anything to do with you. However, because they have become more acclimated to humans, they may not necessarily run away. Just because they aren't afraid, doesn't mean they are going to hurt you. They just know that you live here, too.

- If you see a coyote on your path, keep a respectful distance. If you are walking your dog, reel in the leash so your dog is close to you. If you have a small dog, pick it up. If it's possible, walk in a different direction than the coyote. If not, allow some distance between you, stand tall and continue walking, eyes directed in front of you.

- Coyote attacks on pets are infrequent, and attacks on humans are very rare. If you live in an area where coyote populations are high and you are concerned, simply take a few precautions. Keep small pets indoors or attended on a leash. Make sure to accompany small children playing outside.
- Coyote are most active around sunrise, sunset and in the evening hours.
- Remove outdoor food sources: feed pets indoors and tightly secure garbage cans (or keep them in the garage until garbage pick-up days).
- Since coyotes usually cannot climb higher than six feet, install a tall fence (with a row of rocks buried to prevent digging)
- Generally, coyotes do not like loud noises or big movements. If necessary, deter them with a shrill whistle, by banging pots or with a motion-detected sprinkler.