

LIVING WITH COYOTES

Coyotes are generally reclusive animals who prefer to avoid human contact. However, coyotes inhabit every state in the continental US and are clever, highly adaptable creatures. For this reason, they thrive not only in the wilderness but also in urban and suburban environments.

In adapting to life (and the search for food) near people, some coyotes become more willing to venture into yards and neighborhoods. Though our coyote neighbors are important members of our local ecosystem, we can also take steps to discourage their visits to community spaces and prevent negative interactions between wildlife, pets, and people.



PREVENTION: Please Don't Feed Wildlife!

The easiest way to keep coyotes out of your yard is to **not invite them to dinner!** Pet food and garbage left unattended outside is an easy meal opportunity. This also establishes an incentive for coyotes to explore neighboring community spaces.

HAZING: Reshaping Established Coyote Behavior

If you already have local coyotes visiting your neighborhood, hazing is an effective tool to re-establish a coyote's natural wariness of people. Hazing utilizes tools, your voice, and your body to move an animal out of an undesirable location. Some coyotes may return multiple times and may even adjust to a certain sound or object, so it's important to change it up and to keep hazing until the animal has fully left the area. Here are some things you can do:

- ♦ **Use Your Body:** The simplest method of hazing is making yourself loud and large. Stand tall, wave your arms and yell at the coyote until it runs away.
- ♦ **Use Noisemakers:** Try whistles, air horns, bells, soda cans filled with pennies or rocks, foot-stomping, or pots and pans banged together.
- ♦ **Use Projectiles:** Toss sticks, small rocks, cans, tennis balls, or rubber balls near the coyote with the goal of startling it (do not toss objects at the Coyote and attempt to hit or harm it).
- ♦ **Others:** Spray water hoses, water guns with vinegar water, spray bottles with vinegar water, pepper spray, or bear repellent.
- ♦ **When Walking Your Dog:** Carry whistles or small air horns (which can be bought as necklaces), pepper spray, or pick up rocks and sticks to throw.

SAFETY FIRST: When to Call for Help

Coyotes are generally skittish by nature and will respond to hazing by retreating. However, if a coyote appears to be sick or injured, or has been socialized to humans, it may result in unpredictable behavior. If a coyote is acting aggressively toward humans or pets, or entering personal space, **contact the City of Port Aransas Police Department at (361) 749 – 6241 and DO NOT interact with or attempt to haze the animal.** All other coyote sightings are reported on the City's website (cityofportaransas.org). Select "I WANT TO" and then "REPORT", or by calling the Animal Shelter at (361) 749 - 5941.

YOUR PETS: Free-Roaming Pets and Feral Cat Colonies

Free-roaming pets, especially cats (and sometimes small dogs), may attract coyotes into neighborhoods. Here are steps you can take to protect our furry companions:

- ♦ **Supervise Dogs:** Don't leave dogs of any size unattended outside unless your fence is "coyote-proof" (at least 8 ft tall and made of a material they cannot climb, or 6 ft tall with a protective device on top such as a "coyote roller" or similar device. When walking in public areas, dogs should always be on a leash and should never be allowed to interact with a coyote.
- ♦ **Keep Cats Secured:** Keep cats inside, unless they're being supervised on a harness and leash or are inside of a fully secured "catio" type enclosure. The cats themselves can attract coyotes as prey, so it's important to keep them inside as much as possible.

REMOVAL: Why can't coyotes be removed?

Programs intended to remove coyotes are ineffective and inhumane.

- ♦ Studies indicate that most urban coyotes can live in close proximity to humans for long periods of time without being noticed. It's extremely difficult to target and remove the particular coyote(s) who are problem-causing. Additionally, removing coyotes empties a "territory" and invites new coyotes to move in. If the attractants that invite coyotes into neighborhoods aren't fixed, the new coyotes will then create the same nuisance.
- ♦ Research suggests that when coyote populations are controlled aggressively, the remaining coyotes often experience a reproductive boom. Populations bounce back quickly, even when up to 70% of their numbers are removed. It is nearly impossible to eradicate coyotes from an area, which is evidenced by the failure of large-scale efforts to do so over the last 100 years.
- ♦ Though live traps are an option, the animal must then be euthanized or relocated. Relocation may seem like a humane alternative, but it is most often a death sentence for a coyote. They're territorial and occupy large home ranges. After being relocated, they will do almost anything to return to their home range and can run into roads, highways, and get into territorial disputes with other coyotes.

The most effective solution for managing coyote conflicts is a combination of community education and awareness, preventative measures, and hazing as discussed in this document.