



Coyotes in Southern California

Identification and Biology

- *Canis latrans*
 - Dog family
- Resembles a small German Shepard
 - Longer, narrow snout
 - Bushy black-tipped tail
- Average weight 18 – 25 pounds
- Average height (at shoulder) 18 inches
- Average lifespan 6 – 8 years



Breeding

- Occurs Annually
 - Late January and February
 - Pups born in March and April
- Litter size is normally 4 – 7 pups
 - Function of food availability and coyote population density
- Remain in a family unit for at least 6 months
 - By late Fall juveniles may disperse
 - With adequate food sources they can remain with the family unit



Space Use and Food Habits

- Adaptable behaviors
- Adaptable Food Habits
- Coyotes can live in almost any habitat type in California
 - Arid Deserts
 - Riparian Areas
 - Chaparral
 - Parks, open space, urban areas



Coyote Home Range

- Larger Home Ranges where food is scarce
 - 15 sq miles or more
- Smaller Home Ranges where food is abundant
 - 1-3 sq miles or less
- When food sources are sufficient, dominant pairs may share their territory with other related coyotes
- Coyotes can live successfully as transient/nomads, as pairs or as family units



Coyote Diet

- Opportunistic
- Omnivores
- Rodents and Rabbits
- Insects
- Fruits, berries
- Garbage
- Pet foods
- Carrion
- Unprotected small pets and livestock



NPS Coyote Diet Study

- 60 – 70% of diet came from human food sources.
- In an urban setting 20% of the diet was cats
- In a rural setting 3-4% of the diet was cats
 - Foraging behaviors are a function of food availability



Behavior Around Humans

- Normally elusive animals that avoid contact with humans
- Coyotes thrive in urban areas because food, water and shelter are abundant
- Coyotes come to associate humans with food and protection
 - Fed intentionally or unintentionally
 - No corrective behaviors – hazing



Recognizing Problem Coyote Behavior

Predictable pattern of behavior change:

1. Increase in coyotes on streets and in yards at night
2. Increase in coyotes approaching adults and/or taking pets at night
3. Coyotes on streets, and in parks and yards in early morning/late afternoon
4. Coyotes chasing or taking pets in daytime
5. Coyotes attacking pets on leash or near owners; chasing adults
6. Coyotes seen around children's play areas, school grounds and parks midday
7. Coyotes acting aggressively toward adults in midday

Recognizing Problem Coyote Behavior

- Attacks on pets and humans are preventable.
- Area-wide corrective actions are recommended BEFORE pets are being attacked during the day; which is where Wildlife Watch comes into play.
 - A leadership and educational program guided by agency personnel to manage human- wildlife conflicts



Coyote Conflict Management Exclusion

- Fencing - minimum 6 feet high
- Install an overhang at least 18 inches or roller-type devices on top of the fencing
- Bury fencing 4-6 inches to prevent coyotes from digging underneath
- Close off crawl spaces under homes, porches, decks and garden sheds



Hazing and Behavior Modification

- Hazing = using sound or visual stimuli to frighten coyotes away from the area
 - Shouting
 - Throwing rocks
 - Squirt with water hose
 - Portable air horn
- Must be combined with habitat management for long term effectiveness



Habitat Management

- Make your property less attractive to coyotes
 - Clear or thin vegetation
 - Remove brush and dense weeds
 - Prune lower limbs and branches from shrubs and small trees
 - Harvest fruits promptly



Pet Management

- Feed cats and dogs indoors
- Remove food and water dishes after feeding outside
- Store pet food indoors
- Keep small pets indoors
- Large dogs should be brought inside after dark



Pet Management continued...

- Always use a leash to walk your dog
 - Keep them close – no more than 6 ft
- Carry a walking stick, cane or umbrella
- Mix up your routine
 - Coyotes can learn your schedule
- Avoid walking pets at dawn or dusk
- Avoid areas of dense vegetation and cover



Pet Management - Livestock

- Install quality fencing
- Confine livestock and poultry dusk to dawn
 - Use lights above corrals
- Control rodents
- Be vigilant during pup-rearing season when lambs and kids are also born
 - March - August





Never Feed Coyotes

- Intentionally or unintentionally
- Results in habituation – lose fear of people
- Intentionally feeding coyotes puts everyone at risk
- The entire community must do their part to prevent human-coyote conflicts



Responding to Coyote Aggression and Attack

- Frighten it away
 - Shout in a deep voice – look directly in its eyes
 - Wave arms
 - Throw objects
- Make yourself look larger
 - Stand up if seated
 - Spread your coat out like a cape
- Do not turn your back and run
 - Walk slowly backward



Responding to Coyote Aggression and Attack

- If bitten or scratched by a coyote
 - Report coyote attacks to CDFW
 - Seek medical attention
- Risk of Rabies
 - Most coyotes are healthy
 - Rabies can be carried by coyotes
 - Seek post-exposure immunization
- Handling a pet that has been attacked
 - Seek medical (veterinary) attention
 - Coyote saliva can pass rabies on to humans



CDFW Relocation Policy

- Relocation is not used to resolve human-wildlife conflicts
 - Moves a “problem” elsewhere
 - Wildlife return to their home range
 - Other animals quickly take their place
 - Spreads disease
 - Low survival rate when relocated
 - Competitors
 - Starvation
 - Vehicle strikes



Coyote Removal

- Some residents or municipalities choose to selectively trap and euthanize aggressive coyotes
- Typically implemented by predator control professionals in suburban settings.



Coyote Management

- Difference in opinions as to how government agencies should protect the public when a coyote has been declared a public safety animal.
- The CDFW supports selective removal for wildlife declared a public safety threat by agencies when the totality of the circumstances is investigated.



*“Working together to solve
urban wildlife conflicts”*



WILDLIFE WATCH

Wildlife Watch establishes a comprehensive, integrated management strategy for minimizing human-wildlife conflicts and improving the quality of life in urban settings. The approach applies conservation and ecological principles, agency and community leadership coaching and respect for wildlife and one another.

<https://wildlife.ca.gov/wildlife-watch>