

## What do coyotes look like?



- Brownish-gray with a light gray to reddish, cream-colored belly
- Slender muzzle
- Bushy tail
- Typically weigh between 20 to 50 pounds
- They often appear heavier due to thick, double coat of fur

## What do coyotes eat?

Coyotes are opportunistic mammals. Up to 70% of a coyotes diet consists of small mammals (mice, rabbits, rats, squirrels, voles, etc.). The remaining 30% is a combination of fruits, vegetables, insects, fish, birds, eggs and other available items. In urban areas coyotes also prey on rats, squirrels, garbage, fallen fruit/berries from trees and small pets.

## When are coyotes most active?

Coyotes can be active any time, day or night, but are especially active at dawn and dusk. Conflicts with pets occur year-round and are more likely to occur during the breeding season (February and March). As people and their pets spend more time outdoors during this time, the possibility of a coyote encounter increases.

## Can we make them leave?

Coyotes have adapted to neighborhoods because our environment supports them. Populations may fluctuate, but coyotes probably won't leave. Eradication programs in North American cities have proven to be expensive failures.

These animals have adapted to our presence and have lost their natural fear of us. That doesn't mean that you can't do anything – you can. It is imperative that the community works together to instill the healthy and natural fear of humans back into the coyotes – for their health and safety and ours. Coyotes are quick learners, and consistent negative experiences can teach them to avoid people.

### What you can do

You have options when it comes to dealing with coyotes in your neighborhood:

#### **Do nothing.**

If you have no concerns about coyotes, you can go about your business. However, we recommend you understand the possible risks to your pets and yourself.

#### **Take steps to prevent conflict.**

Follow the advice in this brochure to eliminate attracts around your property and safeguard your pet when walking in open spaces or areas where coyotes may be present.

#### **Haze coyotes when you see them.**

Every citizen can help both people and coyotes by taking action to re-instill them with a healthy and natural fear of people. Clap your hands, yell, honk an air horn or throw small rocks or sticks when you see coyotes so they can re-learn to avoid humans.

#### **Contact Village staff when you see them.**

In Illinois, coyotes are protected as a furbearer. Coyotes in urban areas that become problems may be removed if a Nuisance Wildlife Permit is issued by an Illinois Department of Natural Resources District Wildlife Biologist. Olympia Fields Village Code prohibits any person from feeding any wild animal.

For more information or to report the feeding of coyotes, or their aggressive behavior towards humans, please contact the Olympia Fields Police Department at (708)503-8101.

**Olympia Fields Police Department**

# Your Guide to Avoiding Human-Coyote Conflicts



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## Coyotes in Urban Settings?

While coyotes are found throughout rural areas, they are extremely adaptable and can thrive in urban areas. From outlaying western and northern parts of the State to the smallest suburb, coyotes are not new to residential communities. They can and will be found in any neighborhood that provides their basic needs – food, water, shelter and space.

### Why are they here?

Residential areas provide inviting habitats for coyotes. Plentiful food sources exist, such as mice, rabbits and voles. These small animals feed on birdseed, berries and garbage, which are commonly found and easily accessible. Shelter and water can be found in landscaped parks and yards and ponds in the Village. Space is plentiful throughout parks and natural areas. As coyotes adapted to the presences of humans, they have lost their natural fear of us.

### What attracts coyotes to our neighborhood?

Coyotes are attracted to neighborhoods due to the availability of garbage, pet food and even pets, which coyotes see as prey. The following list illustrates some of the attractants that draw coyotes close to people. Remove these attractants to discourage coyotes from visiting your property:

- Outdoor pet food or water
- Birdseed or food sources that attract small animals
- Accessible garbage or compost
- Fallen fruit or berries from trees or shrubs
- Shrubs, woodpiles, decks or any other structure that can provide cover or be used as a den



## How can you protect your pet?

It can be difficult to accept, but pets can be seen as a food source to coyotes and large dogs can be seen as a threat or possible mate. Coyotes have taken pets from backyards, open spaces and even right off the leash. Keep your pet current on vaccinations. Reduce the risk to your pet by following these guidelines:

### Cat Owners:

The only way to guarantee your cat's safety is to keep it indoors. Outdoor cats also face potential death from cars, diseases, foxes, parasites, raccoons, dogs and birds or prey such as owls.



### Dog Owners:

- Always supervise your pet outside, especially at dawn and dusk.
- Keep your dog on a short leash while recreating – avoid retractable leashes.
- Do not allow your dog to play or interact with a coyote.
- If possible, pick up your dog when coyotes are visible.
- Avoid known or potential den sites and thick vegetation.
- Like domestic dogs, coyotes will defend their territory and their young.
- If must leave your dog outside, secure it in a fully enclosed kennel.



## When are coyotes a risk to you?

Although naturally curious, coyotes are usually timid animals and normally run away if confronted. Coyote attacks on humans are rare.

In many cases these attacks occur as a result of people feeding coyotes. Coyotes have adequate food supplies and are capable of surviving without our help. A coyote that associates humans with food may become demanding and aggressive. A coyote that bites a person must be destroyed. By feeding coyotes you put yourself, the neighborhood and coyotes at risk. It is unlawful to feed wild animals, including coyotes in Olympia Fields.

### Be prepared

If you have concerns about encountering a coyote, you may want to keep a deterrent handy. Deterrents can include rocks, pots and pans, vinegar in a water gun, paintballs, air horn or a repellent spray. Contact village staff to ensure that you are using a legal method.

### Do what you can to discourage a coyote's approach

- Be as big and loud as possible.
- Wave your arms, clap and throw objects at the coyote.
- Shout in a loud and authoritative voice.
- Do not run or turn your back on the coyote.
- Face the coyote and back away slowly.

### Teach your children

- Never approach wild animals or dogs you don't know.
- If a coyote approaches wave your arms, stomp your feet and tell it loudly to *Go away!*
- Call for help.
- If the animal doesn't leave, walk out of the area, keeping the animal in your sight.