**Reporting Coyote Activity to 311**

By Carolyn Abernathy

Using 311 for citizen reporting of coyote was established in the Fall of 2004 as part of the first coyote management program serving residents of Austin and Travis County. Throughout that year there was an explosion of habituated coyote exhibiting aggressive and bold behaviors toward pets and humans in Northwest Hills and adjoining neighborhoods in the 78731 and 78759 zip codes.

Citizen-reported observations and conflicts with coyote are used to assess the impact of urban coyote behavior on people and pets. 311 reporting data is collected by the professional wildlife biologist at Texas Wildlife Services (TWS). The primary response of TWS is to assess the information, investigate and perform a site visit if needed, and provide education about urban coyote to those affected. The information collected for a 311 call includes the following: **1) location of coyote sighting, 2) number of coyote sighted , 3) date of the sighting, 4) time of the sighting, 5) the behavior of the coyote (i.e. aggressive or non-aggressive), and 6) coyote contact with human or animal.**

Historically, 78731 had the highest rate of coyote reporting. This is likely due to intertwining greenbelts and creek beds, the Bright Leaf Preserve (200 acres) and various other parks in the area. Urban coyote are here to stay. There has never been - and there never will be - an urban coyote eradication program in Austin or Travis County.

As we strive to co-exist with these opportunistic urban predators, we must consider the normal behaviors of urban coyote which are of low concern:

* Sighting in streets, yards, and edges of greenbelts from dusk to dawn
* Howling heard at night
* Coyote exhibiting human avoidance behavior

The following observations and encounters reflect habituated behaviors with an increased risk to pet and human safety. Hazing by adults is recommended. A coyote that does not exhibit fear of humans and acts aggressively should be reported immediately.

* Daylight observances of coyote in yards, streets, parks
* Daylight observances of coyote chasing or taking pets
* Coyote approaching, tracking, or stalking of leashed or supervised pet (any time of day)
* Coyote chasing runners, cyclists
* Daylight observances in and around play areas, school yards or parks.

**Lethal removal is an option only after there is an attack, OR, there is an incident involving a coyote growling, snarling, baring teeth, and lunging toward people or pets.**