



**P.O. Box 1088
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Urban Coyotes

Recently, various city of Austin agencies have received inquiries from some neighborhoods where there has been an increase in reported coyote sightings near green belt areas. This paper is part of the City's effort to keep citizens informed regarding efforts to deal with the situation.

The Situation

The ubiquitous coyote is found throughout North America, and hardly any animal in America is more adaptable to changing conditions. Coyotes can live just about anywhere, and as humans expand their living areas and coyotes expand their range as well, contact is inevitable. Most of the time, coyotes go out of their way to avoid humans, but they are discovering that the urban environment provides a variety of sources of food. Resourceful and adaptable as coyotes are, they will take advantage of this when they can.

One of the keys to the coyote's success is its diet. A true scavenger, the coyote will eat just about anything. Identified as a killer of sheep, poultry and deer, the coyote will also eat snakes and foxes, doughnuts and sandwiches, rodents and rabbits, fruits and vegetables, birds, frogs, grass and grasshoppers, pet cats and cat food, pet dogs and dog food, carrion and just plain garbage.

The most serious problem with the urbanization of coyotes is that the animals have become used to being around people. As they lose their fear of people, they become bolder in approaching people and may put themselves in hazardous situations they would normally avoid.

Coyotes are active mainly during the nighttime, but they can be moving at any time during the day. Most sightings of coyotes occur during the hours close to sunrise and sunset.

It is doubtful that the coyote problem will go away, however, it can be managed and mitigated.

Ten things residents can do to help the situation

1. Do not feed coyotes or other wildlife!
2. Eliminate sources of water.
3. Bird feeders should be positioned so that coyotes can't get the feed. Coyotes are attracted by bread, table scraps, and even seed. They may also be attracted by birds and rodents that come to the feeders. They are also attracted to deer feed.
4. Do not discard edible garbage where coyotes can get to it.
5. Secure garbage containers and eliminate garbage odors.
6. Feed pets indoors whenever possible. Pick up any leftovers if feeding outdoors. Store pet food where it is inaccessible to wildlife.
7. Trim and clean, near ground level, any shrubbery that provides hiding cover for coyotes or prey.
8. As in all cases, small children should never be left unattended.
9. Don't allow pets to run free. Keep them safely confined and provide secure nighttime housing for them. Walk your dog on a leash and accompany your pet outside, especially at night.
10. Discourage coyotes from frequenting your area. If you start seeing coyotes around your home or property, chase them away by shouting, making loud noises or throwing rocks.

What are local governments doing about the situation?

Travis County and Texas Wildlife Services, a Department of the Texas Cooperative Extension Service, have entered into a contract to address the coyote problem in Travis County. Under the agreement, the state will provide technical and direct assistance. Technical assistance involves assisting citizens by providing advice, recommendations, information or educational material; and direct assistance will involve removal of the animals. The city will participate in the partnership between the county and the state and will assist with implementation of the program.

What should I do if I see a coyote?

To report coyote sightings, call 3-1-1. You will be asked to describe in detail the nature of your complaint, time, location, etc. The city's Animal Control Program will gather data related to coyotes and provide that information to Texas Wildlife Services for response/follow-up once the agreement between that agency and Travis County is in place. Animal Control will respond to reports of injured or trapped coyotes.

Call 9-1-1 to report a coyote attack on a human (to date there have been no reports in Travis County of coyotes attacking humans)

For more information, call 3-1-1 and ask for Animal Services or visit one of the following websites:

http://www.aphis.usda.gov/lpa/pubs/fsheet_faq_notice/fs_wscoyote.html

<http://www.fundwildlife.org/coexist/coyotes.html>