

Suburban Coyotes

Hardly any animal in America is more adaptable to changing conditions than the coyote. Coyotes can live just about anywhere. They are found in deserts, swamps, tundra, grasslands brush and dense forests. They have also learned to live in suburbs and cities like Los Angeles, New York, Phoenix and Denver.

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 small livestock, poultry and deer, the coyote will also eat snakes and foxes, rodents and rabbits, birds, frogs, grass and grasshoppers, pet cats and cat food, pet dogs and dog food, carrion, fruits and vegetables, doughnuts and sandwiches and just plain garbage.



Coyotes look like small collies or German shepherds. They have erect pointed ears, slender muzzle, and a bushy tail. Most coyotes are brownish gray in color with a light gray to cream-colored belly. However, a coyote's color varies and may be somewhat darker or lighter depending on the time of the year.

In areas where they are hunted or trapped, coyotes are extremely wary of human beings. However, in urban and suburban areas where they are less likely to be harmed and more likely to associate people with an easy and dependable source of food, they can become very bold. They will come up to the door of a house if food is regularly present.

Steps to take to reduce the chance of human-coyote conflicts:

- Do not feed coyotes!
- 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.
- Feed pets indoors whenever possible. Pick up any leftovers if feeding outdoors. Store pet and livestock feed where it is inaccessible to wildlife.
- Bird feeders should be positioned so that coyotes can't get to 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.
- Secure garbage containers and eliminate garbage odors.
- Trim and clean, near ground level, any shrubbery that provides hiding cover for coyotes or prey.
- 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.

These steps may decrease the frequency of coyote sightings in your area if practiced continuously. However, coyotes are adaptable to change and are quick to learn new ways of survival. Occasional sightings most likely will continue. By making life more difficult for coyotes, you will increase the likelihood that they will go somewhere else.



Remember: If you enjoy seeing coyotes and want a closer look at them, use binoculars. Don't ever put food out to lure them closer. Nearly all wild animal bites occur when people attempt to feed them or treat them like domestic animals. Enjoy watching wild animals, but don't lead them into temptation. Animals that lose their natural fear of humans are more likely to pose a danger to humans and the lifespan of such an animal is shortened. **All wild animals are unpredictable and caution is the watchword when they are around.**

According to the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources there has never been a coyote attack on a human being in Minnesota.

If you see a coyote acting aggressive, call 911. The Minnetonka police dept. is keeping track of coyote sightings and encounters.



LIVING WITH MINNETONKA'S COYOTES



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