

Coyotes in the Community

January 22, 2010

Coyotes, like other wild animals, sometimes come into conflict with humans. Since migrating to Ontario from the west over 100 years ago, coyotes have adapted well to urban environments and can now be found in both rural and urban settings. Changes in land use, agricultural practices, weather and natural food shortages may contribute to increased coyote sightings in your community.

Responsibility for managing problem wildlife on properties

- Landowners are responsible for managing problem animals on their property. For example, if there are coyote problems on municipal property it is the municipality's responsibility to deal with them.
- The Ministry of Natural Resources helps landowners and municipalities deal with problem wildlife by providing fact sheets, appropriate agency and animal control services referrals, and information necessary to obtain authorizations where required.
- The Fish and Wildlife Conservation Act sets out the legal actions property owners can take to deal with problem wildlife. Generally, landowners or their agents may capture, kill, or harass problem wildlife to prevent damage to their property. There is no closed season for coyotes in the majority of southern Ontario.

Homeowners can take steps to ensure coyotes aren't attracted to their property and to keep their pets safe. To reduce the potential for coyote encounters, the Ministry of Natural Resources has these tips for the public.

Do not approach or feed coyotes

- Coyotes are usually wary of humans and avoid people whenever possible. However, they are wild animals and should not be approached.
- People should NOT feed coyotes. Feeding them makes the animals less fearful of humans and habituates them to foods provided by humans.
- Aggressive behaviour towards people is unusual for coyotes, but people should always exercise caution around wildlife.

If you encounter a coyote

- Never attempt to "tame" a coyote.
- Do not turn your back on or run from a coyote. Back away from the coyote while remaining calm.
- Use whistles and personal alarm devices to frighten an approaching or threatening animal.

Secure garbage and minimize attractants on your property

- Properly store and maintain garbage containers to help prevent coyotes from becoming a problem.
- Place trash bins inside an enclosed structure to discourage the presence of small rodents, which are an important food source for coyotes.
- Put garbage at curbside the morning of the scheduled pickup, rather than the night before.
- Use enclosed composting bins rather than exposed piles. Coyotes are attracted to dog and cat waste as well as products containing meat, milk and eggs.
- Pick ripe fruit from fruit trees and remove fallen fruit from the ground and keep bird feeders from overflowing as coyotes are fond of fruit, nuts, and seeds.

- Protect vegetable gardens with heavy-duty garden fences or place vegetable plants in a greenhouse. Check with your local nursery to see what deterrent products are available.
- Consider eliminating artificial water sources such as koi ponds.
- Keep pet food indoors.

Use deterrents and fences to keep coyotes away from your home and gardens

- Use motion-sensitive lighting and/or motion-activated sprinkler systems to make your property less attractive to coyotes and other nocturnal wildlife.
- Fence your property or yard. It is recommended the fence be at least six feet tall with the bottom extending at least six inches below the ground and/or a foot outward. A roller system can be attached to the top of the fence, preventing animals from gaining the foothold they need to pull themselves up and over the top of a fence.
- Electric fencing can also help deter coyotes from properties or gardens in some circumstances
- Clear away bushes and dense weeds near your home where coyotes may find cover and small animals to feed upon.
- Close off crawl spaces under porches, decks, and sheds. Coyotes use such areas for denning and raising young.

Keep all pets on leashes or confined to a yard

- Cats and small dogs may be seen as prey by coyotes, while larger dogs may be injured in a confrontation. To avoid these situations consider the following suggestions:
- Install proper fencing (see above).
- As coyotes are primarily nocturnal, animals should be kept inside at night.
- Keep cats indoors and do not allow pets to roam from home.
- Walk your dog on a leash at all times. If your yard does not have a fence, use a leash while on your property to keep your dog close to you.
- Spay or neuter your dogs. Coyotes are attracted to, and can mate with, domestic dogs that have not been spayed or neutered.

Prevent predation on livestock

- Barns or sheds can provide effective protection from coyote predation for livestock that bed inside or nearby at night.
- Guard animals, such as donkeys, llamas and dogs can be a cost-effective way to protect livestock from coyotes. Guard animals will develop a bond with livestock if they are slowly integrated and will aggressively repel predators.
- For more information on preventing livestock predation, please visit the [Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs \(OMAFRA\) website at www.omafra.gov.on.ca/english/livestock/sheep/predator.html](http://www.omafra.gov.on.ca/english/livestock/sheep/predator.html).

LEARN MORE

- To learn more about coyotes, including how to deal with coyote problems, call your [local Ministry of Natural Resources district office](#). If the coyote poses an immediate threat or danger to public safety, call 911.