

Are Coyotes Dangerous?

Although naturally curious, coyotes are usually timid animals who run away if challenged. Coyotes lived in our community well before it was developed and can be a risk to people if they adjust to the environment around humans. When this occurs, coyotes lose their natural fear and learn to see humans, their yards, and their pets as safe havens and food sources. You must aggressively discourage coyotes from feeling comfortable around you and your family by remembering these key tips:

- NEVER intentionally feed a coyote. Eliminate items that attract coyotes such as pet food, rotten fallen fruit, open garbage cans, and other such food and water sources.
- Remember: it is **ILLEGAL** to intentionally feed a coyote in California.
- Use aggressive gestures toward coyotes when you see them. Teach your neighbors, friends, and children these techniques.
- Avoid areas where coyotes may be denning, feeding, or hiding their pups. Female coyotes can become extremely aggressive if they feel their pups are in danger.



Additional Resources About Coyotes

THE HUMANE SOCIETY
OF THE UNITED STATES



[www.humanesociety.org/
animals/coyotes](http://www.humanesociety.org/animals/coyotes)



[www.dfg.ca.gov/keepme
wild/coyote.html](http://www.dfg.ca.gov/keepme
wild/coyote.html)

Want to Learn More?

Please visit our website, friend us on Facebook, follow us on Twitter, and check out our video on YouTube. If you have questions about the Irvine Police Department or any of our programs, contact the Business Desk at 949-724-7000 during regular business hours.



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Coyote Quick Facts



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For more information about coyotes and other wildlife, call the Irvine Police Animal Services Unit at 949-724-7092, or visit the Animal Services page of irvinepd.org

Physical Traits

The coyote is a member of the canine family and is often mistaken for a wild dog or a small wolf. They range from 15 to 46 pounds and stand 23 to 26 inches tall. Their upper coat is gray-brown or yellow-gray with white along the throat and belly. Often they will have a dark cross-like marking on their shoulders. Their tail is full and droops downward, below the line of their back, when running.

Behaviors

Extremely keen and clever, coyotes adapt easily to changing environments and ecosystems. Even as humans have moved into their habitat, coyotes are not displaced. They are often seen in golf courses, parks, neighborhoods and shopping centers. Although coyotes generally hunt between sunset and sunrise, they can be observed at all hours of the day.

Coyotes usually find their mates between January and March. The average litter is six pups, usually born between May and July.

What Do Coyotes Eat?



Coyotes will eat virtually anything. By nature they are predatory animals, known for hunting rabbits, rodents, fish, frogs, and deer. However, they are also known for dining on insects, snakes, fruit, grass and birds. Because of their increasing tolerance for human activities, garbage, pet food and small pets have also become food sources to coyotes.

What Do I Do If A Coyote Approaches?

Although coyotes have adjusted to human activity, they are still generally timid animals. You can dissuade a coyote from approaching with aggressive gestures.

LOOK BIG and BE LOUD

If confronted by a coyote, energetically flap or wave your arms, stomp your feet, shout in a low tone, and throw rocks, sticks or other objects toward (but not at) the coyote. Continue these gestures until the coyote is at a comfortable distance.

Warning: NEVER use this technique if the animal is sick or injured or if you believe there are pups nearby. The coyote may be taking a defensive stance and could become aggressive. Contact the Irvine Police Department for assistance.

How Do I Keep Coyotes Off My Property?

To discourage coyotes from feeling comfortable around you and your family, consistently follow these steps:



- Keep your property well lit
- Take your trash out the morning of pick-up
- Store trash in heavy duty containers with secure lids
- Keep yards free from potential shelter such as thick brush, wood piles or excess debris
- Do not feed coyotes and eliminate potential food and water sources such as fallen fruit, standing water, and pet food

How Do I Protect My Family and Pets?

- If confronted by a coyote, pick up small pets and use aggressive gestures to discourage the coyote
- Keep small children under close supervision
- Keep cats and small dogs indoors or under adult supervision - especially after dark
- Use fenced-off animal runs and fully enclosed kennels for outdoor pets
- Always use a maximum 6-foot leash to walk pets

