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COYOTES IN THE COMMUNITY

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. Coyotes are here to stay. Changes in land use, agricultural practices, weather and natural food shortages may contribute to increased coyote sightings in your community.

When natural food sources, such as mice, voles or rabbits, are scarce, coyotes will travel great distances in search of food. This is often what leads to sightings in residential areas.

The ministry continues to provide assistance and technical advice to municipalities on how to deal with coyotes. However, 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.

Secure garbage and minimize attractants on your property

- Properly store and maintain garbage containers to help prevent coyotes and other animals from becoming a problem.
- Place trash bins inside sheds, garages or other enclosed structures.
- Put garbage at curbside the morning of the scheduled pickup, not the night before.
- Properly manage waste to discourage the presence of small rodents, which are an important food source for coyotes.
- Use enclosed composting bins rather than exposed piles. Avoid adding dog or cat waste, or meat, milk, eggs or any food containing these products.
- 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 to prevent coyotes and other animals from being attracted to your property.

Deterrents and fences can keep coyotes away from your home and gardens

- Use motion-sensitive lighting to make your property less attractive to coyotes and other nocturnal wildlife.
- Use motion-activated sprinkler systems to help keep coyotes and other unwanted wildlife out of yards and gardens.
- Fence your property or yard. It is better if the fence is at least six feet tall with the bottom extending at least six inches below the ground and/or a foot outward. Some manufacturers make a roller system that can be attached to the top of the fence. This roller prevents coyotes and other animals from gaining the foothold they need to pull themselves up and



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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:

- Install proper fencing (see above).
- As coyotes are primarily nocturnal, animals should be kept inside at night.
- Do not allow pets to roam from home. Keep cats indoors where they are safe from coyotes.
- 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.

Do not approach or feed coyotes

- Coyotes are wild animals, but can become less fearful of humans if they associate us and our surroundings with food sources.
- Teach children not to approach or harass wild animals.

If you encounter a coyote

Coyotes are usually wary of humans and avoid people whenever possible. Aggressive behaviour toward people is unusual, and is most often a result of habituation due to feeding by humans. If you encounter a coyote, remember the following:

- Never attempt to "tame" a coyote.
- Never feed 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.

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.

LEARN MORE

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

RELATED LINKS

- [Strategy for Preventing and Managing Human-Wildlife Conflicts in Ontario](#) (PDF, 66 kb)