

LIVING WITH COYOTES

Perhaps no other wild animal has endured the wrath of humans—while evoking such genuine heartfelt admiration—than the coyote. Some people curse their existence; Native Americans consider them to be the smartest animal on earth ("God's dog"), and many urbanites revel in opportunities to see and hear these vocal predators.

Coyotes are extremely adaptable animals and rapidly adjust to changing conditions. In the past, wildlife managers have found that coyote populations can actually expand rather than decline in response to eradication attempts. As a result, a variety of lethal and non-lethal control methods are used to manage populations and control damage.

Coyotes (described by Mark Twain as "a living, breathing allegory of want") are found in most of North America, but are most abundant on the open prairie and deserts. They are comfortable in the country, mountains, or in cities, as long as there is appropriate shelter and food. As a result, people must be aware of their presence and take precautions to avoid conflict with them. With a better understanding of coyotes and their habitat, humans can coexist with these adaptable and "cunning" animals.

When Coyotes Meet People

Coyote behavior varies depending upon its environment. In the wild where they are actively hunted and trapped, coyotes are generally elusive. Near cities or in areas where hunting and trapping is not allowed, coyotes may be aggressive. In urban settings, they can lose their fear of people and may even threaten domestic pets. Although attacks on humans are extremely rare, there have been cases where coyotes have attacked young children.

What To Do If You Live in Coyote Country

-
- If you live in areas where coyotes have been seen, **protect your pets!** Coyotes will attack and kill cats and dogs. Do not allow your pets to roam, especially at night. Make sure your yard is appropriately fenced. We suggest at least a six-foot fence, or, better yet, keep your dog in a completely enclosed kennel.
 - **Do not allow dogs to run with coyotes.** Although it appears they are "playing", coyotes can turn on dogs to defend their territory.
 - **Don't leave pet food outside.** This invites wildlife into your yard and problems may result.
 - **Protect livestock, especially chickens, young calves and sheep.** Contact your local extension office for appropriate methods to prevent depredation.
 - **Keep your garbage in a storage facility or in a tightly sealed container.** Clean garbage cans regularly to reduce residual odors by using hot water and chlorine bleach.

What To Do If You Meet a Coyote

- Coyotes provide an enjoyable wildlife viewing experience. Keep your distance and **do not approach the animals**. Enjoy the opportunity to view wildlife.
- **Keep your pets on a leash** when walking them.
- If a coyote approaches you or your pet, you can **throw rocks or sticks to frighten it away**.
- Use a **loud, authoritative voice to frighten the animal**.

QUESTIONS

- If you have an emergency situation involving coyotes, contact the nearest Division of Wildlife office (970) 947-2920, Monday through Friday during regular business hours. Outside normal business hours, contact the Colorado State patrol of your county's sheriff's office. Pitkin County Sheriff's non-emergency number (970) 920-5310.