

### **1.) Why Are Coyotes Here In The City?**

Coyotes have been in Connecticut since the 1950's, Residential areas provide habitat, food, water, shelter and space for coyotes. Plentiful food sources exist such as mice, rabbits, squirrels, voles, turkeys and other small animals. Urban coyotes have also learned to take advantage of human-associated foods, such as garbage, pet food, and compost piles. Some coyotes have also learned that unattended pets are an easy food source. Shelter for coyotes are often found near water, parks, golf courses, yards and wooded areas.

### **2.) Why Do We Have Conflicts With Coyotes?**

Coyotes have adapted to the easy life that cities provide and as they continue to habituate they lose their natural wariness of people. Coyotes often live in close proximity without negative consequences. Feeding coyotes or other wildlife can create problem behavior. Minimizing conflicts typically requires a two-prong approach: 1.) Educating residents on how their actions influence coyote behavior. 2.) Getting a community commitment to remove attractants and haze coyotes that approach too closely.

### **3.) Can't These Coyotes Be Captured And Taken Back Where They Belong?**

Urban coyotes are where they belong. Generation after generation of coyotes have been born and raised in cities and have adapted to the easy life that cities provide them. Although there are varying opinions on whether coyotes should be in the city, the reality is that cities have, and always will, provide the habitat required to support coyote populations.

### **4.) What Attracts Coyotes To My Yard Or Neighborhood?**

Coyotes are attracted to neighborhoods due to the availability of their natural food sources. Coyote and other wildlife are also indirectly fed by homeowner's by allowing access to garbage, pet food and animals attracted by bird feeders. Very few residents and neighborhoods take steps to deter or haze coyotes away from them. These coyotes adapt to the presence of humans making them comfortable in our back yards.

### **5.) What Should I Do If I Am Approached By A Coyote?**

Do not run or turn your back on a coyote. Be as big and loud as possible. Wave your arms, clap your hands and throw objects in the direction of the coyote. Shout in a loud authoritative voice. Whistles, air horns, bells, "shakers" cans full of pennies, and garden hoses also work well. If the coyote does not leave the area, face the coyote and slowly back away.

### **6.) There Are Too Many Coyotes In The City. Can't We Reduce Their Numbers?**

Coyotes have adapted to not only live, but to thrive, in residential communities. It is the availability of habitat that dictates how many coyotes are in an area. With collaborative efforts, we can influence people's actions and coyote behavior. It's important to know that your city is not the only place dealing with coyote conflicts. Many eradication programs have been attempted in other North American cities and all have proven to be failures. Even the best eradication efforts can not remove all of the coyotes and research has proven that such eradication will cause the remaining coyotes to increase reproduction creating larger litters. The numbers quickly meet or exceed pre-control numbers.

### **7.) Why Can't You Just Kill The Coyotes That Are Killing Our Pets?**

Responsible pet ownership is key in reducing coyote conflicts. It is difficult to pinpoint an individual coyote that is believed to be the culprit but it is suggested that you contact local or state authorities immediately if you have a nuisance coyote preying on pets.

## **8.) How Can I Protect My Pets**

Many urban residents think all coyotes are out to eat their dog or cat at the first opportunity, or that they're dumpster divers. Urban coyotes stick mainly to a natural diet consisting of rodents, fruit, deer rabbits and other small animals. Pets are not a targeted source of food, but pets can be seen as food and large dogs can be seen as a threat to their territory. Keep your pet(s) current on vaccines. Keep your pet(s) leashed.

**Cat Owners:** The best way to guarantee your cat's safety is to keep it indoors. Cats allowed to roam face potential death from cars, diseases, coyotes, foxes, raccoons, dogs, and birds of prey (such as owls).

**Dog Owners:** Always supervise your pets outside, especially dusk through dawn. If you must leave your dog outside, secure it in a fully enclosed kennel. Keep your pets on a short leash and never let them interact or play with wildlife. Avoid known or potential den sites and thick vegetation where coyotes may seek cover. Do not keep pet food outside.

## **9.) How Do I Protect My Children?**

Educate your children about the presence of urban wildlife and teach them to NEVER approach wild animals or domestic animals they don't know. Teach them the steps mentioned under #5, What Should I Do If I am Approached By A Coyote? The mere presence of a coyote near a school does not equate to a human threat. However, if coyotes are exhibiting aggressive behavior towards humans, please notify your local authorities immediately.

## **10.) When Are Coyotes A Risk To Me?**

Coyotes are naturally curious but are usually timid animals and run away if confronted. If a coyote is too close or approaches you, scare/haze it away. Refer to #5, What Should I Do If I Am Approached By A Coyote? If a person is injured or attacked by a coyote, please call 911 immediately. Coyotes that exhibit dangerous behavior towards people (such as raising its hackles, baring its teeth, or growling) should be reported to the local authorities.

## **11.) Can Feeding Wildlife Attract Coyotes?**

The feeding of ALL wildlife is discouraged as it promotes dependency and may also create a nuisance by attracting unwelcomed animals. Coyotes that associate humans with food may become demanding, aggressive, and unpredictable. Coyotes that are fed in residential neighborhoods can lose their fear of people. Intentional feeding should be strictly avoided. Many people unintentionally feed coyotes by leaving pet food or garbage out at night or having large bird feeders. Coyotes are usually not interested in bird food, but bird feeders often attract rodents, especially squirrels, which then attract coyotes. If you are seeing an increase in coyotes, you should additionally review your own actions to ensure compost piles and trash bins are not allowed to be a source of food. Although coyotes seem to have a natural inclination to avoid human-related food, this can change when prey populations are low, or if the coyotes are young and haven't yet learned to hunt effectively. Please report individuals feeding coyotes to your local authorities.

## **12.) What Resources Are Available To Help Me And My Neighbors?**

Animal Control has educational/outreach products such as informational brochures, posters, signs, and other handouts. The Animal Control Manager may assist by meeting with Home Owners Associations and attending community meetings. Animal Control can provide information on the use of hazing and other non-lethal methods for deterring coyotes. Volunteers may assist with educating the public by distributing information and helping with educational booths. Please contact Animal Control if you want more information on how you can help disseminate coyote information in your neighborhood.

## **13.) I Have Observed Coyotes In My Neighborhood And Now I Am Afraid To Go Outside.**

### **What Can I Do?**

Having a general understanding of coyotes, and other urban wildlife, may help minimize some of the fears you may have. There is a lot of misinformation about coyotes. Being prepared and educating yourself about local wildlife may relieve some of the concerns you have. Refer to # 12. Some steps you can take to minimize a coyote encounter could include being aware of your surroundings and carrying a walking stick or other deterrent. Deterrents can include rocks, vinegar in a water gun, paintball guns, air horns or other repellents.