

Living With Coyotes In Greenwich



Coyotes were first reported in Connecticut in the mid-1950's. Since then, they have expanded their range and are now an integral part of Connecticut's ecosystem. They are well established throughout the state, including lower Fairfield County, and thrive in urban and suburban areas close to people.

People and coyotes can co-exist. Just as coyotes have adapted to living in close proximity to humans, we can adapt our behavior to ensure that the natural fear coyotes have of humans is maintained. An understanding of coyote behavior is important to our successful co-existence.

Coyotes eat many different foods including rodents, rabbits, birds, deer, snakes, frogs, insects, fruit, vegetables, garbage and pet food. In residential areas, coyotes can lose their fear of people because they associate food supply with us. Coyotes may also become bold if they are attracted to natural food sources near people and have no negative experiences when being close to people and houses. They readily prey on rodents, which is a benefit to people.

Coyotes do not live in packs. They live in family units consisting of an adult pair and their young, which may stay with the parents for up to two years. They protect their territory from other canids, including coyotes and foxes.

Coyotes may view dogs as competition. They become most territorial during spring and early summer when they are raising young. Both the coyote and your dog believe that your yard is their territory. Older and small dogs are more likely to be attacked, as the coyote knows it is physically superior. Coyotes can view cats and very small dogs as prey. Homeowners need to supervise these small pets at all times when they are outside.

Conflicts with coyotes are common and may occur at anytime of year, but attacks on humans are extremely rare. However, coyotes that have lost their natural fear of humans may exhibit unpredictable behavior. Preventative measures and an improved understanding of coyote behavior by the public will reduce unwanted fears and increase the likelihood that we can co-exist.

For more information on coyotes, check out these web sites:
www.dep.state.ct.us/burnatr/wildlife/factshts/covote.htm
www.dec.state.ny.us/website/dfwmr/wildlife/wildgame/covconfl.htm
www.state.ma.us/dfwele/dfw/dfwcoy.htm
www.greenwichct.org – go to Conservation Commission

Tips for Preventing and Resolving Coyote Conflicts

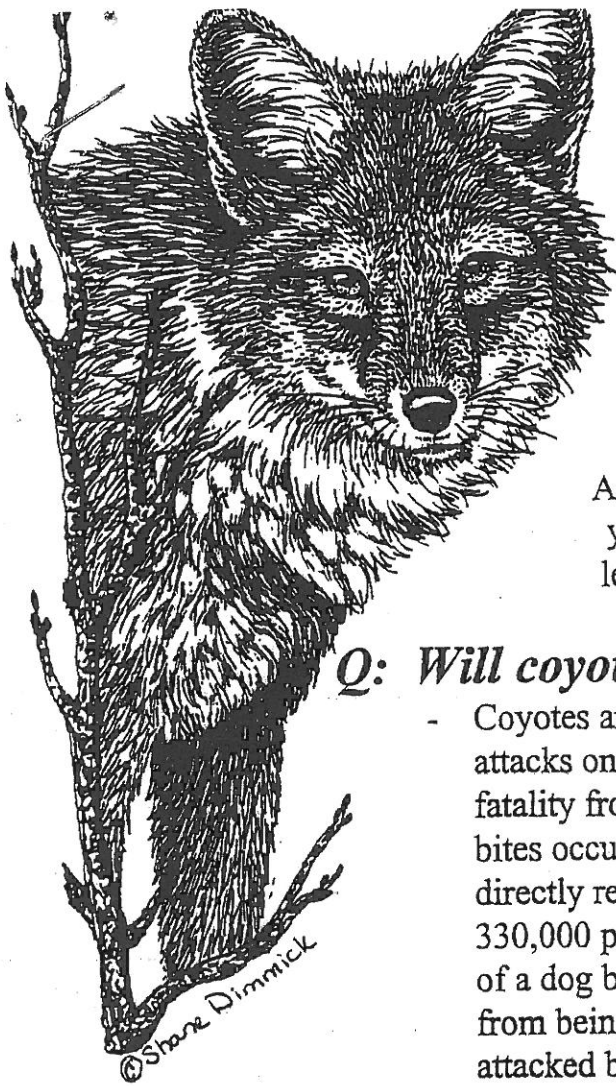
- ❖ **Treat coyotes as wild animals, with respect and from a distance!**
- ❖ **Do not feed or pet coyotes!**
- ❖ **Do not let the coyote intimidate you!** If you see a coyote, be aggressive in your behavior – make loud noises (shout or bang pots), wave your arms, throw sticks and stones, or spray with garden hose.
- ❖ Do not allow pets to run free. Supervise small pets at all times.
- ❖ Do not feed pets outside.
- ❖ Secure garbage from coyotes and other animals.
- ❖ Eliminate availability of bird seed. Use feeders that keep seed off of the ground. Coyotes are attracted to the concentration of birds and rodents that come to feeders. Remove feeders if necessary.
- ❖ Compost in closed containers that are well vented.
- ❖ Clear fallen fruit from under trees.
- ❖ Teach children to appreciate coyotes from a distance.
- ❖ Close off crawl space under porches and sheds that coyotes or other animals may use.
- ❖ **Regulated** hunting and trapping may be used to remove problem coyotes in combination with prevention measures.
- ❖ Fencing may deter coyotes. Proper and well-maintained fencing can keep coyotes away from pets and people.
- ❖ **Educate your neighbors.** Ask them to follow these steps.

For information and to report coyote problems in Greenwich:

Conservation Director – 622-6461
Animal Control Division – 622-8299

CT Dept of Environmental Protection
Wildlife Division – 860-424-3011

For emergency response only: 911



HOW DO I PROTECT MYSELF FROM COYOTES?

Although it is frightening the first time you see a coyote in your yard or neighborhood, people are often surprised to learn that coyotes are not considered a human safety risk!

Q: Will coyotes attack my children or family?

- Coyotes are not considered a human safety risk because coyote attacks on humans are *extremely* rare. The last reported human fatality from a coyote attack was in 1980, and only a handful of bites occur nationwide each year. Also, just about all bites are directly related to people feeding coyotes. In contrast, over 330,000 people visit the emergency room each year for treatment of a dog bite related injury. You have a much greater risk of death from being struck by lightning or a falling brick than being attacked by a coyote!

Q: Will coyotes attack my cat/dog?

- Coyotes *sometimes* prey on free-roaming cats and small dogs, but millions more companion animals are run over by cars each year. You can greatly increase the lifespan of your companion animals by keeping cats indoors and dogs on a leash.

Q: Is a coyote rabid if seen outside during the day?

- Not necessarily. Coyotes are opportunistic – they will venture out during the day in search of daytime food sources, such as squirrels, dog food, or trash. Call your local animal control officer if an adult coyote is seen by day **AND** is showing abnormal behaviors such as partial paralysis, circling, staggering as if drunk or disoriented, self-mutilating, or exhibiting unprovoked aggression.

FOR MORE INFORMATION CALL:

Connecticut Department of Environmental Protection: 860-675-8130
The Fund For Animals' Wildlife Advisory Line: 203-389-4411