

Living with Illinois' coyotes



Photo courtesy of Bob Gress. Illinois Department of Natural Resources Image Library.

For children

Coyotes look like pet dogs, but they are wild animals. Do not try to pet or feed a coyote.

If you see a coyote you are probably just in the same place that the coyote is looking for food like mice, rabbits and birds. Coyotes usually avoid people, and do not bite except when they are cornered and afraid, or being hand-fed. Coyotes are interesting to watch when they hunt.

If a coyote comes toward you, do not run. Yell, stand up straight and wave your arms. You want to make yourself look large and be loud. Yell something like "go away coyote" or "look a coyote" to attract an adult's attention.

If the coyote gets closer, throw something like small stones or sticks at the coyote to scare it away. Once the coyote goes away it is important to tell an adult when and where you saw the coyote. Play somewhere else for a week or more.

For adults and homeowners

To help protect small children and pets, all possible food for coyotes should be removed from around the homes in your neighborhood.

Coyotes are always on the lookout for food. Coyotes are looking for the mice, rabbits, and birds that bird feeders and pet food left outside attracts. If you do not want the coyotes near your home, stop feeding other wildlife and leaving pet food outside. Make sure ripe fruit is picked and garbage is secured in containers.

Keep a close eye on small children and pets whenever they are outside and a coyote is in your neighborhood. Consider using a dog run or fence to protect small pets.

From a distance, try to scare the coyote away by being loud and throwing something, spraying water, or shooting paintballs towards the coyote.

Alert your neighborhood and the local municipality (e.g., police, public safety officer) as soon as a problem develops with a coyote.

Coyotes are a permanent fixture in Illinois' rural, suburban and urban areas. Seeing a coyote(s) cross a field, backyard, golf course, road, etc. does not necessarily constitute a problem or a dangerous situation for humans or domestic animals. Target the responsible coyote(s) when a pattern of "undesirable" behavior develops. Usually it will be easier to change human and domestic animal use of an area than to capture a coyote.

Coyote population reduction (removing some or all of the coyotes in an area) is usually unrealistic and always temporary. Removal of coyotes requires time, effort and funding. If removal of a coyote is deemed necessary, hire a person with coyote removal experience who is licensed by the IDNR. Coyote removals approved by the IDNR usually involve the use of cage (live) traps or padded foot-hold traps.

For more information visit: http://web.extension.uiuc.edu/wildlife/directory_show.cfm?species=coyote.

Prepared by the Illinois Department of Natural Resources, Division of Wildlife Resources - November 14, 2008