



Urban Coyotes in Dallas/Fort Worth

Coyotes live with and among people in all urban areas in Texas. Dallas/Fort Worth is no exception. Coyotes typically avoid people. In fact, people are often surprised to learn that coyotes are important predators in urban areas and keep other wildlife populations in check (especially rodents and rabbits but also skunks and raccoons).

Responsible precautions allow people and coyotes to safely co-exist within our cities. The items below are most effective when implemented community-wide:

- **Never intentionally feed wildlife!** Feeding coyotes can directly result in aggression towards people and other dangerous behaviors.
- **Don't feed wildlife accidentally.** Coyotes are opportunistic omnivores and will readily exploit any potential source of food. Because coyotes frequently eat rodents, anything that attracts rodents can also attract coyotes. The following actions can prevent coyotes from being attracted to your yard:
 - Keep pet food indoors
 - Sweep up fallen seed under bird feeders
 - Pick up fallen fruit from trees
 - Remove firewood or brush piles to avoid attracting rodents
 - Secure trash
- **To keep pets safe, it is imperative that pet-owners do not allow their pets to roam freely.** Pets that roam freely face many threats and may wind up missing, injured, sick, or killed. Pets are often injured or killed by cars or other domestic animals. Lastly, they may encounter a hungry wild animal that doesn't discern a domestic pet from prey. Texas Parks and Wildlife Department (TPWD) joins other organizations in recommending that pets are kept indoors or on a leash where they are safest.
- **Do not panic if you see a coyote.** As mentioned before, they occur in our cities. A sighting of a coyote acting appropriately and non-aggressively does not require a response.
- **If a coyote frequents an area, show them that they are not welcome.** "Hazing" a coyote, or showing it signs of aggression each time it is seen, will usually discourage its presence and helps to re-establish its fear of humans. Coyotes follow predictable patterns, and negative behavior can often be corrected. Examples of hazing include:
 - Making loud noises such as yelling, clapping, blowing a whistle, hitting noisy objects together, or using an air horn
 - Waving hands, stomping feet, or jumping
 - Spraying water
 - Throwing small objects at the animal with the intent to hit
- **Notify authorities if you encounter an aggressive coyote.** Aggressive behavior is not normal and could be a sign of an unhealthy or habituated animal. Notify city authorities and TPWD to document the incident and attempt to notify others living in the area so that they can take appropriate precautions.



Coyotes have been well studied in urban environments. Research shows that coyotes have predictable patterns of behavior that can sometimes be adjusted when they advance to more aggressive behaviors. Below are seven warning behaviors that can progress in coyotes that have become habituated:

1. An increase in observing coyotes on streets and in yards at night
2. Coyotes approaching adults and/or taking pets at night
3. Early morning and late afternoon daylight observance of coyotes on streets and in parks and yards
4. Daylight observance of coyotes chasing or taking pets
5. Attacking and taking pets on leash or in close proximity to their owners, chasing joggers, bicyclists, and other adults
6. Seen at mid-day around children's play area, school grounds, or parks
7. Coyotes acting aggressively towards adults in mid-day

The habituation of coyotes toward people should be documented by community leaders. Local leaders provide a central location that can ensure all observations are recorded. They are familiar with local issues, opinions of residents, and are best equipped to implement solutions and management strategies. A well-structured coyote reporting program will allow community leaders to determine the coyote's level of habituation and make informed management decisions.

If there is a concern about coyote habituation, residents should be encouraged to report aggressive coyote behavior to community leaders. A good report should include:

- What was the time and date?
- Where did the sighting occur?
- What was the coyote doing?
- How far were you from the coyote?
- Did the coyote see you? If so, how did the coyote respond?
- Did you take any actions? If so, how did the coyote respond?
- Were there any pets or other wildlife nearby?

Coyote attacks on people are extremely rare and coyotes usually don't cause conflict. Targeted lethal control is an option in some circumstances when recommended by wildlife professionals. TPWD strongly recommends the use of trained wildlife professionals to trap the individuals responsible for the aggression.

Texas Parks and Wildlife Department biologists are available to consult with community leaders, provide technical guidance, and develop appropriate management strategies. Contact the TPWD DFW Urban Wildlife Program with any questions or concerns:

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