

Coyotes FAQs

What is a coyote?

Coyotes are medium sized animals that are in the same family as dogs, wolves, and foxes. They are extremely adaptable mammals. They are generally salt and pepper gray or brown with a thick, bushy tail; long, pointy nose and pointy ears. They weigh between 20 and 35 pounds. When running they carry their tails low.

Where are coyotes found?

In the past 100 years, the range of the coyote has expanded throughout the United States as their natural predators, the panther and the wolf, have been virtually eradicated. As their competitors were removed, populations of prey, such as deer and rabbits, have increased.

Coyote sightings are becoming a common occurrence throughout urban and suburban landscapes.

Coyotes may expand their range to meet additional needs due to large litter sizes and a short gestation time (approximately 60 days), and decreased competition across its range from other predators.

How do coyotes affect the human population?

Increased encounters between humans and coyotes are inevitable in an area that converges with wild land urban interface. Several reported attacks on dogs and cats by coyotes have occurred over the past few years in areas of Orange County. There have been several reports of coyote sightings in various parts of the state in 2009. To date no humans have been attacked in Yorba Linda to the knowledge of the City.

How can people best protect themselves and wildlife from negative encounters with coyotes?

Exercising common sense around coyotes is the best protection against encounters. Pet owners should always keep their pets on a leash, especially when on the trail systems or even in backyards near a wild land urban interface. Humans should never feed wild animals. Coyotes in particular look for easy sources of food and will/ have become comfortable in urban settings if they are provided with food.

Use negative reinforcement! If coyotes begin frequenting your neighborhood, let them know they are not welcome. Make loud noises, throw rocks, or spray them with water. For everyone's safety, it is essential that coyotes retain their natural wariness of humans.

Are there any benefits to the coyotes' presence in California?

Coyotes may provide an ecological benefit by controlling populations of small predators, such as rabbits, snakes, and opossums. They also prey on wild life that eat gardens, horse feed, bird seed and fruit trees, many of which are common in Yorba Linda.

What are the eating habits of coyotes?

Coyotes are known to feed on small mammals, lizards, snakes, insects, grasses, fruit, seeds and grains, pet food, fish, garbage and carrion.

What are some specific behavioral habits of coyotes?

Coyotes are elusive. They are more active between dusk and dawn (crepuscular), but can be seen anytime during the day or night. They shy away from humans, unless food is a factor.

Coyotes can occur singly, pairs, or in small family groups, depending on habitat quality and food supply. Home ranges typically average 8-10 square miles.

They breed once per year during winter months, denning in thickets, brush piles, hollow logs or burrows. Litters can average as many as six pups.

How can I protect pets and livestock?

Keep small pets, such as cats, rabbits and small dogs, indoors. Don't allow them to run free at any time. They are easy, favored prey. Some coyotes will seek cats in residential areas.

Large dogs should be brought inside after dark, and never be allowed to run loose as they may be considered competition to the coyote.

Rabbit hutches should have a solid bottom. A hutch standing above ground, with only a wire bottom, makes your rabbit an easy mark.

When building a chicken coop, dig a one-foot trench around its perimeter. Extend the chicken wire fence well into the trench, and then bury it.

Where can I find more information on the coyotes?

For the most up to date information residents can contact OC Animal Care Services at: <http://egov.ocgov.com/portal/site/ocgov/menuitem.4981dc715fc6e27bdadd603d10000f7/?vgnextoid=7db759205bbca110VgnVCM1000005b00610aRCRD&vgnnextfmt=default/>

OR

The Department of Fish and Game Commission Website:
<http://www.dfg.ca.gov/>

How do I keep coyotes out of my yard and away from my pets?

You may be inadvertently feeding coyotes by leaving pet food or water or garbage where a coyote can access it. Feed pets indoors or promptly remove outdoor dishes when pets finish their meals. Please store bags of pet food indoors.

Use trash cans with lids that clamp shut, which will prevent spilling if the cans tip over. If you leave garbage outside, don't use trash bags as garbage containers; coyotes can easily rip them open and scatter the contents. Put trash containers out in the morning of the scheduled pick up, rather than the night before. This will give coyotes less time to scavenge.

Residents should clear brush and dense weeds from around yards and dwellings to reduce protective cover for coyotes and make the area less attractive to rodents. Coyotes and other predators may be attracted to areas where rodents are concentrated, such as wood and brush piles and seed/ feed storage areas.

What else can I do?

The City of Yorba Linda cannot recommend products or services however, there are several products on the market that residents can look into purchasing for on their own if they wish.

The Coyote Roller

<http://www.coyoteroller.com/home>

Phantom Deterrents

<http://www.nightpests.com/coyote.htm>

What if the coyote is sick, injured, or behaving aggressively?

If you see a coyote behaving aggressively or attacking people call 911 and contact the nearest office of the California Department of Fish and Game (310) 590-5132 during regular business hours: Monday through Friday, 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. if an encounter or attack occurs after business hours call the Department of Fish and Game's 240hour dispatch center at (916) 445-0045. The Department will take the appropriate action.