THE HUMANE SOCIETY OF THE UNITED STATES

PREVENTING Coyote Conflicts

How to Keep Coyotes out of Your Yard and Keep Your Pets Safe

Coyotes generally avoid humans, even when their home range encompasses largely urban or suburban habitat. However, the presence of a free buffet in the form of pet food, compost, or trash can lure coyotes into yards and create the impression that these places are bountiful feeding areas. Without the lure of food or other attractants, their visits will be brief and rare. But a coyote who finds food in one yard may learn to search for food in others.

WHAT ATTRACTS COYOTES TO URBAN AND RESIDENTIAL AREAS?

Food

PATRICK JOYCE / LOS ANGELES PARKS

Deliberately feeding coyotes is a mistake. You may enjoy hand-feeding animals, but this is a surefire way to get them accustomed to people, and it will ultimately lead to their demise. Here are some general rules:

- Avoid feeding pets outside. If you must, feed them only once per day and remove the food bowl as soon as your pet has finished her meal.
- If you compost, use enclosed bins and never compost meat or fish scraps.
- Clean up spilled bird seed around feeders.
- Remove fallen fruit from the ground.
- Keep trash in high-quality containers with tight-fitting lids and place the cans curbside the morning of collection (instead of the night before).

Shelter

Coyotes are secretive animals, and studies have shown they can live for a long time in close proximity to dense human settlements without ever being noticed. These coyotes are abiding by the rules we set for minimal conflicts and should be left alone.

In the spring, when coyotes give birth and begin to raise litters, they

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HOW TO PROTECT DOGS

Dogs (especially small dogs) are also vulnerable to coyote confrontations. These incidents generally involve coyotes who are either accustomed (habituated) to people (usually due to wildlife feeding), or coyotes who are protecting their territory, their mate (during breeding season, January–March), or their pups (during pup season, April–August).

Dogs should not be left outside unattended and should always be kept on a leash in public areas. Never let your dog interact or play with a coyote. Keep pet food and water indoors to avoid attracting coyotes to your yard.

Although attacks on larger dogs are rarer, coyotes sometimes go after a large dog when they feel that their territory is threatened. This generally occurs during coyote breeding season, which takes place from January through March. During this

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concentrate their activities around dens or burrows in which the young are sheltered. At these times, they may become defensive and territorial and challenge any other coyote or dog that comes close to the pups. People walking their dogs in parks and wooded areas may run into these situations and be followed or confronted by a parent coyote. Fights rarely occur, most often when dogs are off leash. It's important to recognize such incidents for what they are—a defense of space, not a random attack. If you encounter a coyote when walking your pet, do NOT run away. Instead, haze the coyote with the techniques described in our Coyote Hazing Guidelines fact sheet.

Free-roaming pets

Free-roaming pets, especially cats (and sometimes small dogs), may attract coyotes into neighborhoods. The best way to minimize risk to pets is never to leave them outside unattended. For cats, this means either always keeping them indoors at all times or letting them outside only under your supervision wearing a harness and leash or in a secure enclosure (such as a catio). Always walk dogs on a leash, and attend to them when they're outside unless you have a coyote-proof fence (see below).

Feral cat colonies

People who feed feral cats are often concerned that coyotes might prey on the cats. These concerns are well–founded, as coyotes are attracted to both the outdoor pet food and the cats themselves as prey. Here are some general suggestions for keeping such cats safer:

- Feed cats only once per day and at a set time. Pick up any leftovers immediately.
- Elevate feeding stations beyond coyotes'—but not the cats'—reach.
- Give barn and feral cats escape routes (in the form of "cat posts") in places where trees and other climbing opportunities are scarce. These can be wooden posts (four inches by four inches or corner posts) that stand out of the ground at least ten to twelve feet and can be climbed by cats but not by coyotes.
- Discourage/harass coyotes seen on the property. Go after them aggressively, using the techniques described in our Coyote Hazing Guidelines. Making them feel uncomfortable encourages them to stay out of the area.

For more information and tips, visit our website at *humanesociety.org/coyotes.*

time, it is especially important not to leave dogs outside unattended and to keep them on leashes in public areas.

Don't leave dogs of any size alone in a fenced yard unless the fence is "coyote-proof." Coyote-proof fences are either at least eight feet tall and made of a material that coyotes cannot climb or at least six feet tall with a protective device on top, such as a "coyote roller," (*coyoteroller.com*) that rolls off any coyotes that try to scramble over the fence. Do-it-yourself alternatives include adding PVC piping or chicken wire to the top of your fence to prevent coyotes from getting the foothold they need to make it over. To prevent coyotes from digging under a fence, make sure the fence extends at least 12 inches underground or includes an L-shaped mesh apron that extends outward at least 18 inches and is secured with landscaping staples.

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