



COYOTE ACTIVITY BULLETIN

This bulletin is to advise residents about coyote activity in Newport Beach. Several residents have lost their pets to these skilled predators because they were not aware of coyote activity in the area. Others are concerned about recent sightings and the potential consequences of predatory animals in the urban environment.

Coyotes are found in all areas of Orange County. They are a native animal and a critical component of the ecosystem. In areas like Newport Beach where mountain lions are not common, coyotes serve as the top-level predator and are the primary component keeping populations of smaller, prey animals in check. Contrary to popular belief, these animals do not require open space or wild areas to survive.

HUMAN SAFETY AND HAZING

Though they are far from domesticated, coyotes are comfortable living alongside humans. They are naturally afraid of people; however, as they age, they tend to lose their fear of people if consistent hazing efforts are not performed. While not normally a danger to human beings, coyotes will display defensive behaviors if cornered; therefore, it is important to leave a comfortable distance between you and a coyote.

If coyotes begin frequenting your neighborhood, let them know they're not welcome through a process known as hazing. Hazing should only be done by adults. Make loud noises, throw rocks, or spray them with garden hoses. Do not stop until the coyote backs down and retreats. This may take some time if the coyote is not used to being hazed. For everyone's safety, it is essential that coyotes retain their natural wariness of humans.

All children should be taught from a very early age to avoid unknown animals, whether domestic or not. Children should never attempt to approach a wild animal and they should be instructed on coyote safety, such as discussed here.

PROTECTING YOUR PETS

Some pets can easily become coyote prey. Small dogs, elderly or frail larger dogs, cats, and other small animals should not be allowed outside alone, even in a fenced yard. It is highly recommended that these pets are always accompanied by their owner. Dogs should always be walked on a standard, non-retractable, six-foot leash. Though coyotes generally hunt between sunset and sunrise, they can be observed at all hours of the day and will not pass up the opportunity for an easy meal.

STEPS YOU CAN TAKE

- Fence off animal enclosures (fully enclosed if possible)
- Feed pets indoors
- Store trash in covered heavy-duty containers
- Keep yards free from potential shelter such as thick brush and weeds
- Enclose the bottoms of porches and decks
- Eliminate potential food and water sources such as fallen fruit and standing water.
- Form community hazing groups to encourage consistent hazing efforts

ERADICATION AND RELOCATION

Relocation of coyotes is a violation of state law; any captured coyotes must be euthanized. General eradication of coyotes is not effective. Female coyotes have larger litters when there is less competition for resources. As a result, these types of programs can ultimately increase the coyote population. Additionally, in the short term, coyotes from surrounding areas will move into the vacuum created by the vacant territory. Lethal removal is best reserved for individual problem coyotes that have demonstrated a pattern of abnormal behavior.

Communities that have hired trappers to lethally remove coyotes often experience more problems later, because their residents begin feeling a false sense of security and fail to continue taking necessary precautions. If trapping is done, it is critically important that residents continue to follow coyote safety guidelines, or they risk having their pets harmed by the new coyotes that inevitably move into the vacant territory.

NEVER FEED WILDLIFE

Feeding wildlife is a violation of both State law and City ordinances. Directly feeding coyotes causes them to associate people with food and is the leading cause behind nearly all coyote-human bite incidents in California. Additionally, feeding other wildlife lower in the food chain causes an abnormally high concentration of prey animals that, in turn, attracts coyotes.

To protect the safety of your neighborhood, report illegal wildlife feeding to the Newport Beach Police Department immediately.

IF YOU NEED HELP

- Newport Beach Police Non-Emergency Dispatch: (949) 644-3717
(General police and animal control matters, including wildlife feeding violations)
- Newport Beach Code Enforcement: (949) 644-3215
(Property maintenance violations that attract coyotes, e.g. pest infestations/overgrown vegetation)
- California Department of Fish & Wildlife – Cal-Tip: (888) 334-2258
(Violations of state wildlife laws)
- California Department of Fish & Wildlife – Regional Office: (562) 598-1032
(General information on wildlife, trapping regulations, etc.)