

Coyote Country



Quick and comprehensive coyote coexistence education for urban and suburban residents.

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Ripped from the headlines...

02/08: A coyote that was nipping at the ski boots and parkas of skiers was killed by a Colorado Parks and Wildlife Officer at Copper Mountain Resort.



Ripped from the headlines...



Too bad they won't shoot the [darn] things in Bible Park. People ought to be able to walk their pets without worrying about the coyotes.

There are places [coyotes] just don't belong.

*02/08 Denver Post Website
Comment Section*



Ripped from the headlines...



Here we have the spoiled rich air headed concrete dwellers wetting themselves over one coyote and the Division of Wildlife responds as if a ravaging pack of wild dingoes were on the loose.

These limp-wristed girly men skiers should [do something creative with their ski poles].

If you can't live with wildlife get your tired [self] out.

Wildlife is wonderful, the problem is there are too many people.

*02/08 Denver Post Website
Comment Section*



Who is correct?



Mitigating Conflict



Research demonstrates: Successful coexistence with coyotes requires an understanding of coyote behavior, as well as an understanding of how humans can shape coyote behavior.



Presentation Goals



Gain a basic understanding of coyote natural history and behavior.

Understand the human role in shaping urban coyote behavior.

Learn essential predator and predator coexistence vocabulary.



But first, a quiz...



Coyote
Country
Myth vs.
Fact



Coyotes are easy to identify.



Myth and Fact.

Coyotes are mistaken for wolves, foxes and domestic dogs.

Actual weight and size is often overstated.

*(average
22 – 33 lbs)*



Coyotes were here first.



Myth and Fact. Removal of wolves, deforestation, and the suburban landscape have contributed to a coyote range expansion.

“[Urban coyotes] live lives of ease and luxury beyond the wildest dreams of their hardscrabbling ancestors.”



Coyotes are carnivores.



Myth and Fact.
Dentition defines them as carnivores. In practice, coyotes are opportunistic omnivores; the ultimate flexitarian.



Coyote diets are often misrepresented.

- 70.3% of diet beneficial to humans (Murie, 1940)
- Human food sources present 1.9% to 25% of the time
- Domestic cat may be present in up to 13.6% (Wirtz *et al* 1982)



(2006 Urban Chicago)

Small rodents 42%

White-tailed deer 22%

Fruit 23%

Cottontail 18%

Birds 13%

Raccoon 8%

Grass 6%

Invertebrates 4%

Human-associated 2%

Domestic cat 1%

Muskrat 1%

Unknown 1%

~1400 scats from urban Chicago coyotes.



Coyotes are naturally wary of humans.



Good question.

Is wariness of humans natural or learned?

There is a notable behavior difference between rural and urban coyotes, but is it learned or innate?



Coyotes do not attack people.



Myth.

It is rare, but under certain circumstances coyotes do attack humans.

Two human fatalities have been attributed to coyotes.



You are more likely to be injured or killed by a vending machine than by a coyote.



It is rare, but under certain circumstances vending machines do harm or kill humans.

Vending machines kill an average of two humans per year in the United States.



If I see a coyote in my neighborhood, I should leave it alone.

Myth.

You should have a coyote that is in your yard or roaming the streets of your neighborhood.

Coyotes should not feel welcome in your neighborhood.



Coyotes are passive creatures.



Myth. Coyotes defend territories and food resources from each other and from other species. Coyotes do not tolerate competition from other mesocarnivores such as foxes, raccoons, skunks, feral cats, and domestic pets.



We can get rid of the coyotes.

Myth.

There will always be a replacement coyote.

“Following removals, populations return to pre-control levels, which are largely controlled by food resources.”(Knowlton et al. 1999)

“While trapping programs allow public officials to tell the public that they are doing something about the situation, their effectiveness is questionable because of the coyote’s ability to rebound and recolonize vacant territories.” (Knowlton et al. 1999; Sacks et al. 1999; Gompper 2002)

Simple Coyote Math:

$$1 - 1 = 1$$



In general, people love coyotes.



Myth.



How did you do?



Exactly what kind of interaction did you have with the coyote?

Observation: The act of noticing or taking note of tracks, scat, or vocalizations.

Sighting: A visual observation of a coyote(s).

Encounter: An unexpected direct meeting between a human and a coyote that is without incident .

Incident: A conflict between a HUMAN and a coyote where a coyote exhibited behavior creating an unsafe situation for the HUMAN. Includes growling, baring teeth or lunging at a HUMAN.

Attack: A conflict that involves physical contact between a HUMAN and a coyote. A HUMAN is bodily injured by a coyote.

Dangerous coyote: A coyote that has attacked a person, exhibits unprovoked aggressive behavior towards a human and/or poses a significant threat to HUMAN safety.



Use coyote country vocabulary to define the following scenarios:

“There were coyotes running through the neighborhood at night howling up a storm.”

“I was sitting at the kitchen table one morning drinking coffee and two coyotes looked into my yard, in broad daylight.”

“A coyote ran through the parking area this morning with a cat in its mouth.”

“The coyote was about 30 feet behind a group of school kids, just trotting along...”

“A coyote followed me and my dog along the High Line Canal trail.”

“I was walking my dog in an area where I think the coyotes have a den. One of the coyotes stopped about 25 feet away, looked at my dog, and bared its teeth.”

Question & Answer

