

Urban Wildlife Factsheet

COYOTES



Coyotes are naturally secretive animals. But if food is available in your neighborhood, you may see them during day or night. Coyotes eat mostly small rodents and rabbits. This makes them an important member of the food chain. Although their presence tends to concern people who are unfamiliar with coyotes, they are usually more afraid of humans than we are of them. In some cases, coyotes may attack and kill small pets. But coyote attacks on humans are exceptionally rare.

DO NOT FEED WILDLIFE

- Do not store pet food outside or leave it out overnight. Keep pet food bowls inside when not in use.
- Avoid keeping trash outside. If you must, make sure to cover it with tight-fitting lids.
- Do not provide food and water for other wildlife, including birds. Rodents, which are a coyote's natural prey, are attracted to birdseed. Coyotes will also eat birdseed, fruit and compost.

PROTECT PETS

- Keep cats indoors. Keep an eye on dogs when outdoors. The only pets that should be left unattended are those kept in a kennel with a covered top.

DISCOURAGE COYOTES

- Remove brush and undergrowth from your yard. It can provide cover for coyotes or the small animals they like to eat.
- If you see a coyote in your yard or while out walking, use scare tactics. Yell. Make loud noises. Shake or throw a soda pop can filled with coins. Throw a ball, shoe, sticks or other object at the coyote. Spray it with water. If you want to get more modern, try ultrasonic dog repellents or pocket-sized air horns.
- To keep out all but the most determined coyotes, install a 6–7 foot high fence, buried approximately 1 foot deep.
- Pick up all fruit that has fallen from trees. Keep compost secure. Make sure trash cans are tightly lidded and secure. Never leave loose trash outside.

NUISANCE WILDLIFE

Landowners and leasees may remove a nuisance coyote by hunting or trapping. No permit from the Indiana DNR is needed; however, many municipalities have regulations about discharging firearms. Check with your local government about local ordinances.

The Indiana DNR does not remove nuisance wildlife. A list of those licensed to assist landowners with removing nuisance wildlife, known as Nuisance Wildlife Control Operators, is available at wildlife.IN.gov/2351.htm.

COYOTE FACTS

- ▶ **DIET:** Coyotes will eat anything they can find. They mainly consume small rodents and rabbits but are known to eat fruits, vegetables and insects as well.
- ▶ **HABITAT:** Urban coyotes tend to use what natural green space is available, including parks and cemeteries.
- ▶ **ACTIVITY:** Urban coyotes are usually more active at night than rural coyotes, but also may be active during the day. Seeing one during the day does not necessarily mean it is sick or that something is wrong.
- ▶ **APPEARANCE:** Coyotes have a fur coat in shades of oranges, grays and tans. They typically weigh between 25-40 pounds on average and are about the size of a medium-sized dog. Their bushy, black-tipped, downward tails can help distinguish them from other animals of similar stature.



To learn more, visit wildlife.IN.gov/5688.htm

DNR Indiana Department
of Natural Resources