

Coexisting with Coyotes

An advocate's guide for preventing coyote
killing programs in your community



**THE HUMANE SOCIETY
OF THE UNITED STATES**

How to use this toolkit

We fight the big fight for all animals, but we can't do it without your help. This toolkit is designed to add power to your passion, enabling you to be an effective advocate for coyotes in your community.



For more than a century, a war has been waged on coyotes: Poison, guns, hunting dogs and many other cruel killing methods have been used to try to eradicate the species. Yet thanks to the wary nature of coyotes—and their remarkable adaptability—they've expanded their range throughout North America, and they are now found in every state and major city in the U.S. (except Hawaii).

Most coyotes in urban and suburban areas do their best to avoid people. However, free buffets in the form of unsecured garbage and pet food left outside can encourage coyotes to come closer into neighborhoods, where conflicts with people and pets may ensue. Trapping and killing programs are often proposed in an attempt to solve these conflicts, but these programs are ineffective both at reducing coyote populations and at getting to the root cause of conflicts. The adoption of a humane coyote conflict management plan—focused on tools such as public education and coyote hazing—is a much more effective way to solve conflicts among coyotes, people and pets.

This toolkit is designed to empower advocates like you to take action to help the coyotes in your community. Many people believe that the voice of a large, national animal welfare organization is enough to protect animals, but the voice of a constituent—yours!—is an incredibly powerful tool in the fight to protect coyotes. Local decision-makers want to hear from *you*, not an outsider. A groundswell of local opposition to a coyote killing program—or support of a humane coyote management plan—as the greatest impact. This toolkit teaches you how best to voice your opinion and how to inspire others to do the same. The toolkit includes the following sections:

- **Learn the issue:** Knowing more about the types of conflicts your community might have with coyotes can help you better understand how to address them humanely.
- **Gather information:** Asking key questions of the community and its leaders will equip you with the details needed to develop your strategy.
- **Take action:** What should you do? Here you'll find steps you can take to oppose lethal management and to encourage the adoption of a humane coyote management plan.
- **Helpful tools:** Communicating effectively is paramount to success. We've included sample language for everything from social media posts to testimony, as well as fact sheets you can distribute to your community.

Don't have much time? We recognize that life is filled with competing priorities, and we applaud you for making the coyotes in your community one of them! Following this toolkit from beginning to end will enable you to make the greatest possible impact, but if you only have a few moments to spare, skip straight to the Take Action section on page 9. There you will find tips for actions that require less time yet still make a big impact, such as posting on social media or writing a letter to the editor. The Helpful Tools section (page 13) makes these actions easy by providing sample language.

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Learn the issue

GENERAL BIOLOGY, REPRODUCTION AND BEHAVIOR

Appearance: Most coyotes weigh approximately 25-35 pounds, although their long legs and thick fur make them appear larger. Coyote fur varies in color from gray-brown to yellow-gray. They have a black-tipped tail, which helps to distinguish them from other canids such as red foxes. Coyotes also have yellow/amber eyes (which help to distinguish them from domestic dogs), large ears and narrow, pointed muzzles (which help to distinguish them from wolves).

Diet: Coyotes are opportunistic omnivores with great flexibility in their diet. They generally hunt small mammals such as mice, rats, voles, rabbits and prairie dogs, but will also eat fruit and berries and will even scavenge road-killed animals. In urban areas, coyotes sometimes eat pet food, unsecured garbage and compost.

Habitat: Due to their intelligence and adaptability—in addition to extensive urbanization and the subsequent decline of larger predators—coyotes have successfully expanded their range across North America. Coyotes are now found in all states in the U.S. except Hawaii and have become well established in nearly every ecosystem. They live in deserts, swamps, tundra and grasslands, brush, dense forests, cities and suburbs.

Social structure: Most coyotes (called resident coyotes) live in family groups with one breeding pair and three to four other related individuals. Coyotes do not hunt in packs, but they work together to defend their territory from other coyote family groups. Other coyotes (called transient coyotes) live alone or as an isolated mated pair.

Coyotes mate once per year during their breeding season (which occurs from January through March). During the pup season (April through August), the breeding pair gives birth to pups (typically in April or May). Litter size depends on available resources and the number of coyotes in the area. The average litter size is four to seven pups. Coyotes place their pups in a den for the first 6 weeks, after which the pups learn to hunt with their parents. Coyote dens are found in steep

banks, rock crevices and underbrush, as well as in open areas. During dispersal season (September through December), the pups from the previous year (yearlings) leave the family group and become transient coyotes in search of a new home range.

ECOLOGICAL IMPORTANCE

Coyotes are curious, smart and adaptable creatures, and our urban areas provide the perfect balance of food, shelter and water for them. What you may not know is that even in fragmented and urbanized landscapes, coyotes can play an integral role in their environment by providing ecosystem services and helping to maintain species diversity. Coyotes in urban areas not only provide free rodent control by feeding on mice and rats, but they also help regulate the population size of other species that may cause conflicts with people in urban areas (such as voles, wild turkeys, white-tailed deer and Canada geese).



COYOTE ATTRACTANTS IN URBAN AREAS

Food: Urban areas provide a bounty of natural food choices for coyotes, who primarily eat rodents such as mice and rats. Human-associated food such as pet food, unsecured compost or trash, and fallen fruit in yards, can attract coyotes to suburban neighborhoods.

Intentional and unintentional feeding can lead coyotes to associate humans with sources of food, which can result in negative interactions among coyotes, people and pets. Not feeding pets outside, removing fallen fruit and bird seed from the ground, keeping trash in high-quality containers with tight-fitting lids, and never

deliberately feeding a coyote are some ways to reduce food attractants in urban and suburban areas.

Water: Urban areas provide a year-round supply of water—in the form of storm water impoundments and channels, artificial lakes, irrigation, pet water dishes, etc.—which support both coyotes and their prey. In dry conditions, water can be as alluring as food, so remove water bowls set outside for pets and make watering cans unavailable.

Access to shelter: Parks, greenbelts, open spaces, golf courses, buildings, sheds, decks, crawl spaces and other shelters increase the amount and variability of cover for coyotes. They allow coyotes to safely and easily remain close to people, pets, homes and businesses without detection.

Unattended pets and feral cats: Pets are a normal part of urban and suburban landscapes. Within their territory, coyotes may consider pets as potential prey or potential competitors. Free-roaming pets, especially cats and sometimes small dogs, may attract coyotes into neighborhoods. It is important to note that attacks on cats are normal coyote behavior and do not indicate a danger for people.

The only way to protect cats from coyotes (and the other dangers of outdoor life, such as cars, disease, dogs and other wildlife) is to keep cats indoors or only let them outside in a secure enclosure or when accompanied by a person and under the control of a leash and harness. (See humansociety.org/indoorcats for tips on making the transition to indoors!) Although there is no sure way to protect community cats from coyotes, it can be helpful to feed cats during the day and at a set time—and to pick up any leftovers immediately.

Small, unattended dogs may be seen as potential prey for coyotes. It is important to either keep dogs on a leash 6 feet long or shorter when outdoors or to stay within 6 feet of them when outside. (Coyotes may view a dog on a leash longer than 6 feet as an unattended pet.)

Although attacks on larger dogs are rare, coyotes will sometimes go after a large dog when they feel that their territory is threatened. This generally occurs during the coyote breeding season, which takes place from January through March. During this time, it is especially important not to let dogs outside unattended and to keep them on leashes (6 feet long or shorter) when in public areas.

Fences can be used to keep coyotes out of residential yards, but they must be “coyote-proof.” Coyote-proof fences are at least 8 feet tall and made of a material that coyotes cannot climb or at least 6 feet tall with a protective device on top such as a “coyote roller” (coyoteroller.com) that rolls off any coyotes (and dogs) who try to scramble over the fence. To prevent coyotes from digging under a fence, it should extend underground at least twelve inches or include an L-shaped mesh apron that extends outward at least 18 inches and is secured with landscape staples.

Other domestic animals: Animals kept outside, such as chickens and rabbits, may also be viewed as prey by coyotes. Protect poultry or other outdoor animals from coyotes (and other predators) by using protective fencing (both structural and electric), by ensuring that they are confined in sturdy cages or pens each evening, and by using livestock-guarding animals where possible.



HUMAN-COYOTE ENCOUNTERS

Coyote attacks on people: Coyote attacks on people are very rare. More people are killed by errant golf balls and flying champagne corks each year than are bitten by coyotes.

Often, coyote attacks are preventable by modifying human behavior and educating people about ways to prevent habituation. In many human attack incidents, it turns out that the offending coyote was being fed by people. In many other instances, people were bitten while trying to rescue their free-roaming pet from a coyote attack. Less often, people are bitten by injured coyotes, or even more rarely, rabid coyotes.

Public health concerns: Coyotes, like all warm-blooded animals, may contract rabies. Their close kinship to dogs places coyotes at greater risk where there are populations of unvaccinated domestic dogs. Recent advances in rabies control using oral bait to immunize wild animals without having to capture them have made controlling the spread of rabies in coyotes much more effective.

SOLVING HUMAN-COYOTE CONFLICTS

Education and outreach: A critical element of successful human-coyote coexistence is education and awareness. Education helps local people make appropriate decisions to keep their property and pets safe. Precautions include decreasing food attractants, being careful with pets and tolerating normal coyote behavior. An education campaign should focus on how to coexist with coyotes. Outreach opportunities include:

- Educational materials: These can include brochures, informational postcards mailed or hand-delivered to specific neighborhoods with a high number of coyote sightings and interactions, detailed information and appropriate links made available on local websites, e-newsletters, development of various public service announcements to run on public access channels, or signage posted in appropriate parks and open spaces.
- Trainings: Incorporate coyote education in schools and make educational seminars and trainings available to the public.
- An outreach and education team: Composed of trained community volunteers, a team can help with community outreach by tabling at community events, presenting in classrooms and/or following up directly with individuals and neighborhoods who may have concerns.

Hazing: An intervention technique: Generally, coyotes are reclusive animals who avoid human contact. Coyotes in urban and suburban environments, however, may learn that neighborhoods provide easy sources of human-associated food while presenting few real threats. These coyotes, having lost their fear of humans, may visit yards and public areas even when people are present and may cause conflicts with people and pets. Humans have contributed to this habituation of coyotes by not reacting when they see a coyote. We have a

tendency to either ignore them due to fear or to be enamored by them because they are wild and it is “cool” to see one. To coexist safely, it’s important to modify this behavior and attitude in resident coyote populations.

The best solution for addressing problematic coyote behavior is by instituting a community-based hazing program. Hazing is an activity or series of activities that attempts to change behaviors of habituated coyotes and/or to re-instill a healthy fear of people in the local coyote population. Hazing techniques include generating loud noises, spraying water, shining bright lights, throwing objects, shouting, etc. Hazing can help maintain coyotes’ fear of humans and deter them from neighborhood spaces such as backyards, greenbelts and play spaces.

A hazing program encourages the use of harassing actions without employing weapons or causing bodily harm to the coyote. The more often an individual animal is hazed, the more effective hazing is in changing coyote behavior. Being highly intelligent animals, coyotes who are hazed quickly learn to avoid neighborhoods, people and pets.



Humane coyote management plan: The Humane Society of the United States has prepared a template coyote management plan for use by communities (including, but not limited to, cities, villages, towns,

counties, homeowners associations, etc.) in humanely and effectively preventing and solving conflicts among coyotes, people and companion animals. The suggested actions outlined in the plan help increase citizens' knowledge and understanding of how coyotes behave and share how to manage such behavior to reduce or eliminate conflicts with coyotes. The plan is based on scientific research, a thorough understanding of coyote ecology and biology in urban settings, and the best-known management practices and management tools. Find the plan at humanesociety.org/coyotes.

Why killing coyotes doesn't work: Lethal control programs may seem a like a quick fix to problems among coyotes, people and pets. However, removal programs are not effective in reducing coyote populations or addressing the root causes of conflicts. Coyote removal programs are costly (due to the difficulty of catching coyotes) and controversial.

When implementing lethal control, it is extremely difficult to ensure that problem-causing coyote(s) will be the ones located and killed. Since firearms are usually unsafe to use in urban and suburban areas, traps (which are by design non-selective for particular coyotes) are generally the method used. Because coyotes are so intelligent and wary of human scent, it is very difficult to catch any coyote in a trap, never mind the problem-causing coyote.

Research shows that when lethally controlled, coyotes exhibit a "rebound effect" (a surge in their reproductive rates), allowing for quick regeneration of their population numbers. The disruption of their family group structure leads to an increase in the number of females breeding in the population, and the increase in available resources leads to larger litter sizes, earlier breeding ages among females and higher survival rates among pups. This allows coyote populations to bounce back quickly, even when as much as 70% of their numbers are removed through lethal control efforts.

In addition, coyotes removed from an area are quickly replaced by transient coyotes looking for a vacant home range. If the root causes of human-coyote conflicts have not been addressed, incoming coyotes may become nuisance coyotes as well. It is far better to have well-behaved resident coyotes who will hold territories and

keep transients at bay then to risk having to deal with newcomers who do not know the "rules."

Lethal responses (coyote removal) should be considered only in the event of an unprovoked, confirmed attack on a human. If implemented, lethal control efforts should focus on the offending coyote(s) only, rather than the coyote population at large. This requires significant surveillance efforts to make sure that the correct animal(s) is targeted and removed. For other conflicts, a combination of hazing and public education (focusing on the elimination of food attractants) is a much more effective way to addressing problematic coyote behavior.

Gather information

Whether you're trying to stop proposed lethal control or proactively encourage the adoption of a humane management plan, asking some key questions of your community leaders will help you develop your strategy.

KEY QUESTIONS:

- What are the complaints about, specifically (e.g., coyote seen in yard, coyote-pet conflict, livestock depredation, etc.)? How many complaints have there been and from whom?
- What resources are attracting the coyote to that location (e.g., intentional feeding, a nearby water source, unsecured compost, etc.)?
- What actions have been taken so far to address the situation? Have education materials been distributed? Has hazing been tried?
- Are there any local ordinances or laws prohibiting the feeding of coyotes and/or laws requiring pets to be kept on a 6-foot leash?
- Does the county, city or town have an existing coyote policy? Have any nearby counties, cities or towns adopted a successful humane coyote management plan that you can point to?



Take action

Having learned about the issue and gathered information, you're ready to take action. This section is divided into actions you can take to engage your local officials, your community and the media, as well as actions to influence policy. Be sure to see the Helpful tools section on page 13 for sample language and materials, making taking action that much easier!

ENGAGING LEADERS

Contact your officials

Public officials take constituents' interests seriously; they prioritize responding to constituents over non-constituents. Writing letters, sending emails and making phone calls to your leaders is perhaps the most important step you can take to help the coyotes in your community. Make your voice heard! Be cordial and factual, and stick to two or three key points that will most interest the official (e.g., coyote killing programs don't work, are inhumane, and are unnecessary). See a sample letter to officials on page 13.



Request a meeting with your officials

Politely request to meet with your officials (see page 14 for sample language). You can attend the meeting by yourself or invite other constituents (e.g., your friends, family, neighbors) to participate. Plan for the meeting to last about 15 minutes (be sure to be on time!) and be aware that you may actually meet with a staff member rather than your elected official. Call or email to confirm the meeting two or three days before the scheduled meeting time.

Prepare your materials:

- Bring a concise fact sheet with you highlighting the problems with coyote killing programs and the benefits of adopting a humane coyote management plan (see the fact sheets at the end of this toolkit for an example).

Helpful tips for your meeting:

- Before any meeting with an official, research the person you'll be meeting with as much as you can, develop an agenda and prepare a packet of the materials to leave with the official.
- Dress professionally, be cordial and listen to and address their concerns. Practice your presentation ahead of time. If you do not know the answer to a question, tell the official you will find out and get back to them. Do not be discouraged if the official agrees with only a portion of your proposal. Compromise is often necessary in advocacy. Be candid about which entities will likely oppose your proposal.

Follow up:

- Promptly follow up on your meeting by sending a letter or email thanking the official for their time, briefly restating your position, and responding to any unanswered questions that came up during the meeting.

Testify at a town hall meeting

Perhaps the most important action you can take is to attend a town hall meeting where your local elected official(s) will be present. These meetings typically

include time for public comments or questions, but it is important that only those involved (e.g., residents) do so, as officials don't always respond well to "outsiders." This is an ideal opportunity to discuss why a humane coyote management plan is a good alternative to a cull and put the issue right before the decision-makers for comment.

There is normally a time limit of about three minutes for oral testimony in meetings of commissions and councils, so please keep your remarks brief and concise (see sample testimony on page 15). You might also coordinate with other advocates to ensure that you don't duplicate each other's testimony and instead each focus on a specific topic. For example, one person can talk about why coyote killing programs don't work and another can briefly explain the different ways to solve conflicts with coyotes humanely (e.g., hazing). Having all residents who support humane coyote management—the coalition you've worked so hard to build!—wear the same color shirt, or even a button, helps make the weight of your collective voice clear to officials.

ENGAGING THE COMMUNITY

Build a coalition

Getting your community to voice opposition to a coyote killing program takes significant effort. You'll need to reach out to officials and while engaging others in your community. Even in big cities, it can be common for very few people to get involved in local issues—which means a small group of people are often the ones changing policies. Getting active support from diverse groups in the community can make or break the adoption of a humane coyote management plan and/or the stopping of a coyote killing program. Let them know about your efforts and secure letters of support, along with commitments to meet with their elected officials, attend and/or testify at hearings, and provide outreach to other community residents.

Spread the word on social media

Engage your local network on social media, asking only those directly involved (i.e., constituents) to contact their officials to voice their opinion. Inform them of scheduled community meetings and ask them to get involved by submitting op-eds or letters to the editor, and by contacting their elected officials. Social media is a great way to find like-minded individuals who will help you in your mission! Our toolkit includes a sample share

graphic, tweets and Facebook posts (see page 16). You may also find it helpful to create a Facebook group of like-minded neighbors. You can use it to advocate for coyotes now, and you can reach back out again in the future if other animal welfare issues come up..

Organize a public education event in your community

If you have a strong grasp of the issue and how it impacts your community, consider hosting a public event to educate fellow citizens about preventing conflicts with coyotes. You can encourage attendees to take action to stop lethal management and to support a humane management plan. (See the fact sheets at the end of this toolkit for use at such an event). You'll want to invite key stakeholders to co-host, speak at or attend the event.

Prepare for opposition

While every community is different, the odds are that someone in your area will support killing coyotes and oppose the adoption of a humane coyote management plan. Be sure to prepare sympathetic officials with information about the opponent's concerns and the data, facts and talking points to address them (see the fact sheets at the end of this toolkit for helpful material).

ENGAGING THE MEDIA

Submit a letter to the editor of your local paper

Letters to the editor are an important tool for influencing public opinion, as they are typically the most widely read section of the newspaper. Lawmakers frequently read the opinion section to gauge the interest of their constituents on a variety of matters. The more letters submitted to the same publication that express similar viewpoints, the greater the likelihood that one or more letters will be published, so encourage others to write as well. It can also help shape news coverage if editors recognize this as an issue that's important to readers.

The average letter to the editor is only about five or six sentences—keep it short and direct. Some papers list their word count limit in the letters section. State your main point (i.e., coyote killing programs don't work) in the beginning of the letter to grab the reader's attention. Don't forget to include an "ask" (i.e., the action you want readers to take after reading your

letter). Timing is also important, so submit your letter before a killing program or vote on the adoption of a humane management plan is scheduled to occur. This toolkit contains a few examples of letters to the editor that you can adapt for your needs (see page 17).

Submit an opinion piece to your local paper

Opinion editorial pieces (commonly known as “op-eds”) are similar to letters to the editor, but they are longer and provide more context regarding a particular issue. While letters to the editor may be around 250 words or fewer, op-eds may be 500 to 800 words. Media outlets are more likely to publish op-eds written by individuals who have authority on a particular issue or are seen as a leader in their community. Outline your stake in the issue: Are you a veterinarian, wildlife rehabilitator, animal shelter/rescue worker or volunteer, scientist, member of academia, hunter, hiker, wildlife watcher, or parent, school or community association concerned with animal welfare or public safety? Say so! State your main point (i.e., coyote killing programs don’t work) in the beginning of the op-ed to grab the reader’s attention. Don’t forget to include an “ask” (i.e., the action you want readers to take after reading your op-ed). Timing is also important, so submit your op-ed before a killing program or vote on the adoption of a humane management plan is scheduled to occur. See page 18 for a sample op-ed.



Use the media to influence public opinion

After you submit letters to the editor and opinion pieces (“op-eds”), request to meet with the newspaper’s editorial board to encourage them to weigh in supporting your position. Cultivate a relationship with local reporters and keep them updated on developments.

INFLUENCE POLICY

Below are actions you can take to encourage the adoption of a humane coyote management plan.

Learn the process

The process for adopting local policies varies around the country and among HOAs, so take the time to become familiar with how things work in your community. Another member of your HOA or an official or employee in your local government may be able to help you. Attend a few meetings of the governing body you hope to influence. Listen to the kinds of questions they ask and the issues they take most seriously. By understanding their general concerns, you will be able to craft persuasive and targeted arguments.

Find a friend in office

Public officials take constituents’ interests seriously, so try talking to your own councilmember, county commissioner, alderman or HOA board of directors first. As much as we would like the people we elect to agree with us, this may not always be the case. If your own official is not interested, do not despair. Try to find other official(s) with an interest in animal issues and pitch your idea to them. Often, your local animal control bureau or nonprofit humane society can point you toward a sympathetic decision-maker.

Provide sample policy

Providing a sample policy that your community leaders can adopt makes it easier for them to do so. Our template coyote conflict management plan (available at humanesociety.org/coyote) can serve as a resource.

You can also encourage your officials to adopt a leash law (monetary fine for off-leash dogs) and a wildlife feeding ban like the one found at the end of this toolkit.

Lobby elected officials

If a public hearing has been scheduled regarding your proposal, make every effort to ensure that you have the votes you need for it to pass. Ensure that you have met with every official, provided your information packets and responded to their concerns. Don't be afraid to ask whether you have their vote. Encourage as many residents as possible to write to and call their officials. Reach out to your coalition partners to help publicize the issue and issue a call to action through alerts and letters. The key is to convince a majority of the officials to vote in your favor.

Public hearing

Once your elected officials call a public meeting to discuss your proposal, you will need to determine who will testify at the hearing and get others to attend. Work closely with your supportive officials on how best to present your case to other officials. They may recommend limiting the number of speakers.

Plan ahead to make sure that everyone does not speak on the exact same points (a common problem at public hearings). You most likely will have very limited time (probably only three to five minutes per person), so dividing talking points among a handful of speakers can ensure that all of your key arguments are heard. It is especially influential if you can get those who will be enforcing the humane management plan to testify in support. Professionals in uniform add an additional air of importance and mainstream acceptance to an issue.

Also, it is a good idea to make sure the elected officials can readily identify those in attendance who are in support of your proposal. Create and distribute stickers, buttons or matching T-shirts with the a relevant message (e.g., "[city] citizens for humane coyote management").

Follow up after the hearing

Oftentimes, an issue is not voted on during a public hearing. During the hearing, take careful notes on who speaks in opposition, what their arguments are and how the officials respond to them. Also note what questions the officials ask. This will help you provide information to officials following the hearing to help alleviate any specific concerns. Check in with your sympathetic officials to debrief about the public hearing and decide on what steps to take next.

After the vote

If a vote is taken and you win, celebrate! If you lose, take all that you have learned during the campaign and put it to good use when you try again. It can often take several attempts before a community adopts a humane management plan, so do not be discouraged if your first effort fails. Talk to the officials who opposed the plan and discuss what changes could be made to garner their support in the future. Remember that regardless of the outcome, you educated many people with your message. Public education is critical to the success of any animal welfare campaign and, over time, an educated public can push for positive changes in their community.



Sample letters to officials

LETTER IN SUPPORT OF A HUMANE COYOTE MANAGEMENT PLAN

[DATE]
[OFFICIAL'S ADDRESS]

Dear [OFFICIAL],

As a resident, I'm writing to ask that [city] adopt a humane coyote management and coexistence plan.

The Humane Society of the United States has prepared a template coyote management plan (available at humanesociety.org/coyote) designed for use in communities like ours to prevent and solve conflicts among coyotes, people and companion animals. The information in the plan has been gathered from scientific and peer-reviewed articles, from experts in the field of human-coyote conflict resolution, and from successful coyote management plans across the U.S., including in nearby [nearby city].

I urge you to adopt this ready-to-implement, humane and effective management plan. Let's send a powerful message that [city] cares about the responsible management of our state's natural resources. Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

[NAME]
[ADDRESS & CONTACT INFORMATION]

LETTER IN OPPOSITION TO COYOTE KILLING PROGRAM

[DATE]
[OFFICIAL'S ADDRESS]

Dear [OFFICIAL],

As a resident of [city], I—along with many other citizens and community leaders—ask that the proposed coyote killing program be cancelled.

Killing coyotes doesn't work. For more than a century, we've waged a war on coyotes, killing them with poison, guns, hunting dogs and a variety of other cruel killing methods. Nonetheless, the wary nature of coyotes and their remarkable adaptability has allowed them to expand their range throughout North America. Coyotes are here to stay; we must learn to coexist!

Rather than engaging in the endless cycle of trapping and killing coyotes, residents of [city] should focus on long-term solutions, such as removing food attractants that lure coyotes into communities, properly protecting pets, and hazing coyotes.

Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

[NAME]
[ADDRESS & CONTACT INFORMATION]

Sample request for meeting

LETTER OR EMAIL REQUESTING TO MEET

[DATE]

[COMMUNITY LEADER ADDRESS]

Dear [COMMUNITY LEADER],

My name is [name]. I am a constituent and would like to schedule a meeting with you or an appropriate staff person to discuss a humane option for managing conflicts with coyotes in our community. Would you be available on any of the following dates [list dates]?

[If others are attending] I expect several other constituents to attend the meeting and will forward their names prior to the meeting date.

I have attached a copy of the template coyote management plan I will be proposing and will bring a copy to our meeting.

Thank you for your time. I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

[NAME]

[ADDRESS & CONTACT INFORMATION]

Sample testimony

My name is [name] and I've been a resident of [town] for [number] years. What has traditionally been a welcoming community has since become divisive over the subject of coyotes. It has been proposed by some that we trap and kill coyotes, but there is a better, more humane and effective way to address our conflicts with them.

Killing coyotes doesn't work. It's nearly impossible to completely eradicate coyotes from an area. Despite bounties and large-scale efforts to kill coyotes over the last 100 years, coyotes have, in fact, expanded their range throughout the U.S. and Canada tremendously. One study even found that killing 75% of a coyote population every year for seven years would still not exterminate the population.

Rather than engage in an endless and expensive cycle of trapping and killing coyotes, we should focus on long-term solutions, such as removing food attractants that lure coyotes into communities, properly protecting pets, and hazing coyotes. The Humane Society of the United States has created a ready-to-adopt template coyote conflict management plan which outlines these and other humane and effective steps we can take as a community to prevent and solve conflicts among coyotes, people and companion animals. I urge [town] to adopt this plan instead of wasting resources on that which doesn't work.

Thank you for your time and the opportunity to address this important issue.



Sample social media items

SAMPLE FACEBOOK POSTS

Facebook can be a great way to mobilize your coalition to take action. But remember, community leaders only want to hear from those in their community, not “outsiders,” so be sure to target your post to those directly involved in the issue—and ask others to do the same.

1. [City] has proposed killing coyotes in the area. But killing coyotes won't solve our conflicts with them! Instead, we must address the root causes of the conflicts, such as unsecured trash and pet food left outside. Please join me in urging Mayor [Name] to cancel the proposed lethal management of coyotes, and to instead adopt a humane and effective coyote management plan. If you are a resident of [city], call [phone number] to voice your opinion. Please call only if you are a resident!
2. Coexisting with coyotes is possible! An effective, humane coyote management plan exists and has been implemented in communities across the country. Urge your local officials (find out who represents you at the link below) to adopt humane conflict resolution strategies.
3. Killing coyotes doesn't work! Research has shown that when lethally controlled, coyotes exhibit a “rebound effect” (a surge in their reproductive rates), allowing for quick regeneration of their population numbers. Write a letter to the editor of your local paper to voice your opposition to killing coyotes—it's a waste of time and resources!
4. Attention, all members of [town]! A meeting has been scheduled for [date and time] to vote on proposed lethal management of coyotes. Come voice your support for a humane alternative!

SAMPLE TWEETS

Tweets have a character limit and can include a photo, video, GIF and even a poll. Incorporate the use of a hashtag (#) in your postings. Be mindful that using too many hashtags can clutter a post and make it more difficult to read. Retweeting other tweets is also a great idea!

1. Killing coyotes is not the answer. Peaceful coexistence is possible! Say “no” to @city's lethal coyote management plan.
#noto[city]killingcoyotes #supportcoexistence
2. @Mayor, please cancel plans to trap and kill coyotes in @city. Killing coyotes doesn't solve conflicts with them. A humane alternative is available! #noto[city]killingcoyotes #supportcoexistence
3. @City needs a sustainable, humane coyote management plan, not a temporary fix. @official vote yes to support coexistence!
#supportcoexistence

SAMPLE GRAPHIC TO GO ALONG WITH SOCIAL MEDIA POSTS



Speak up for coyotes!

The city of Springfield is planning to trap and kill coyotes. Contact our city leaders now to urge them to cancel this killing program and to use humane solutions for solving conflicts with coyotes instead!

Sample letters to the editor

Use these samples for inspiration, but do not copy and submit them verbatim: Newspapers prefer to print letters that are unique submissions to their publication.

SAMPLE LETTER TO THE EDITOR: IN RESPONSE TO FEAR OF PET AND HUMAN ATTACKS

[City]’s impulse to trap and kill coyotes is based on false fears and misconceptions.

Neither the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) nor local and state health departments have classified coyotes as a human safety risk. Only a handful of people are bitten by coyotes *nationwide* each year, whereas over 330,000 people are bitten by domestic dogs annually. More people are killed by errant golf balls and flying champagne corks annually than are bitten by coyotes.

Although coyotes will *occasionally* prey on free-roaming cats and small dogs, the fear of coyotes eating pets is greatly exaggerated. Many more dogs and cats meet the unfortunate fate of being struck by an automobile than being killed by a coyote. Taking precautions such as keeping cats indoors and dogs on a 6-foot leash can help keep pets safe.

To help ease minds, [city] should empower its residents through public education. Equipped with tools to prevent and solve conflicts with coyotes, residents can learn to live in peace with coyotes, rather than to fear them.

SAMPLE LETTER TO THE EDITOR: IN SUPPORT OF A HUMANE COYOTE MANAGEMENT PLAN

Coyote sightings have been making the news in the [city] area, but there is no reason to be fearful. Coyotes live in every major city in the U.S. (including Los Angeles, Chicago, New York City, and Washington, D.C.) and their surrounding suburbs, but they mostly stay hidden from their human neighbors. An occasional glimpse of a coyote traversing through a park or neighborhood (even during the daytime) is nothing to be concerned about.

However, this isn’t to say that we should merely enjoy the presence of a coyote who passes through our front yard; allowing a coyote to lose a healthy fear of humans can lead to conflicts. A coyote should be “hazed,” or scared away from, any area where he or she is unwanted.

Hazing is simply one tool of many outlined in a coyote management plan like the one developed by the Humane Society of the United States (available at humanesociety.org/coyote). The plan prioritizes public education: teaching residents steps to take to prevent and solve conflicts with coyotes, such as securing garbage, not leaving pets unattended, and picking up fallen fruit from the ground. Cities across the country have adopted similar plans with great success. Let’s join them in efforts to better coexist with our wild neighbors.

Sample opinion piece (op-ed)

Use this sample for inspiration, but do not copy and submit it verbatim: Newspapers prefer to print letters that are unique submissions to their publication.

SAMPLE OP-ED

While coyotes may be increasingly unwelcome in [city], shooting, trapping or even relocating them will not solve the city's coyote problems.

Killing coyotes simply doesn't work. Coyote populations reduced by hunting or trapping will respond by having more pups and breeding at earlier ages, resulting in a quick bounce-back in numbers. Additionally, vacant habitats created by reduction programs are quickly filled by coyotes from neighboring areas. No matter how many coyotes are removed from [city], others will repopulate any vacant niches.

Although it may seem like a humane alternative to killing, relocating coyotes is often also a death sentence. Relocated coyotes can be injured or killed in territorial disputes with established coyotes, and most will do anything to get back home, often getting killed by cars in the process.

Coyotes aren't going anywhere, despite our best efforts. As such, we must learn to coexist, to do what we can to prevent and solve conflicts with them.

Conflicts tend to arise when coyotes become habituated—when they've lost their fear of people. This occurs when they learn that neighborhoods provide easy sources of food, such as pet food left outside and unsecured garbage, and that people don't pose a threat to them. Every time we see a coyote and merely stand and look, take a picture, or worse yet, run away, we teach the coyote that humans are harmless. Coyotes relay this information to their family members and become bolder the next time they come into yards looking for food.

The good news is we can train coyotes to fear us and stay out of our neighborhoods by “hazing” them. Hazing a coyote means scaring them away by yelling and waving your arms, blowing a whistle or air horn, or dousing them with a water gun or squirt gun. Hazing quickly sends the message to coyotes that

people should be feared, and they will learn to avoid people and neighborhoods (and will pass along this information to family members).

In addition to hazing coyotes, there are other steps we can take to prevent conflicts, such as cleaning up pet food, fallen fruit, unsecured garbage and spilled bird seed from yards, because this tempting buffet attracts coyotes in the first place. It's also essential to keep pets on leashes, keep cats inside and accompany dogs outside in the yard. Unattended small pets look very similar to the small mammals coyotes naturally eat and may be viewed as potential prey. Large dogs who are off-leash may also be viewed as a threat to a coyote's mate or territory.

Despite the panic coyotes have caused in [city], the thing to remember is that they shouldn't be feared. By making a few small changes to our behavior, we can shape theirs. Coexistence is possible!



Example ordinance

Below is an example of an ordinance, in this case one adopted by the city of Sterling, Illinois.

ORDINANCE NO. _____

ORDINANCE AMENDING CHAPTER 14 (ANIMALS) TO ADD A NEW SECTION 14-13 PROHIBITING THE FEEDING OF WILD ANIMALS WITHIN THE CITY LIMITS OF STERLING AND ADDING A NEW SECTION 14-14 PROVIDING FOR RULES APPLICABLE TO THE FEEDING OF CATS

WHEREAS, the Illinois Municipal Code, 65 ILCS 5/11-20-5, authorizes any municipality to enable all acts or make all regulations which are necessary to protect the health, safety, and welfare of the community; and

WHEREAS, the Illinois Municipal Code, 65 ILCS 5/11-60-2, authorizes any municipality to define, prevent, and abate nuisances; and

WHEREAS, the Mayor and City Council of the City of Sterling (the “City”) deem it advisable, necessary, and in the public interest that a prohibition on feeding wild animals, other than feral cats, within the municipal boundaries is required to prevent the attraction of wild animals unnaturally to the municipality, causing a public nuisance; and

WHEREAS, the increased influx of wild animals into the municipality increases the potential for damage to public parks and private property as well as elevating the potential for the spread of diseases found through contact with the wild animals, wild animal’s feces, and the unsanitary and unsafe conditions created by the presence of wild animals; and

WHEREAS, the City has been receiving complaints concerning citizens feeding wild animals, other than feral cats, within the municipality’s limits, leading to safety and health concerns; and

WHEREAS, pursuant to the provisions in the Illinois Municipal Code, it is necessary that the City adopt an ordinance prohibiting the feeding of wild animals and establishing penalties for the violation thereof.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT ORDAINED, by the Mayor and City Council of the City of Sterling, Whiteside County, Illinois as follows:

SECTION 1: The recitals as set forth in the preambles of this Ordinance, are true and correct and are hereby incorporated herein as if fully set forth in this Section 1.

SECTION 2: That Chapter 14 be amended to add a new Section 14-13 entitled Wild Animals which shall read as follows:

14-13 Wild Animals

A. Definitions. Wild animal is defined as any feral dog, raccoon, skunk, opossum, coyote, deer, fox, squirrel, wild turkey, ducks, geese, and any other animal that is deemed a nondomesticated animal according to Section 14-3 of this Chapter.

B. Nuisance Feeding Prohibited. The feeding of any wild animal by any means, including hand feeding or the placing or setting of food to be left attended or unattended outside of appropriate waste containers and in such a manner as to harbor or attract wild animals, which creates or has the potential to create a hazard to public health or safety is hereby declared to be a public nuisance and to be unlawful.

C. Presumption. If any person places or sets out food that is, in fact, consumed by a wild animal, that person shall be presumed to have fed a wild animal. This provision shall not apply to persons setting out refuse or garbage for collection in conformance with the City Code, or to persons growing crops or gardens in conformance with the city ordinance, or to the baiting

of traps.

D. Exceptions. Exceptions to this Section include:

(1) Above ground bird feeders and squirrel feeders, no more than four (4) per lot, that are designed for the specific purpose of feeding birds and squirrels. Above ground feeders shall be a minimum of four (4') feet off the ground. Feeders must be designed to minimize any nuisances, including but not limited to excessive spillage of feed. All feeders shall be located at least five (5') feet within property lines.

(2) The incidental, sporadic, or infrequent feeding of wild animals (e.g. attaching an ear of corn to a squirrel feeder)

E. Penalty. In addition to all other remedies, any person who violates, disobeys, omits, neglects or refuses to comply with any provision of this section shall be subject to a penalty of \$150.00 for each offense.

SECTION 3: That Chapter 14 be amended to add a new Section 14-14 entitled Feeding of Cats which shall read as follows:

14-14. Feeding of Cats.

A. Rules applicable to cats, excluding managed community cats covered in subsection B below, are as follows:

(1) The feeding of cats outdoors shall take place primarily during daylight hours to minimize the risk of domestic-wildlife interactions that have increased potential of rabies exposure for cats. Any food provided after daylight hours shall only be provided for such time required for feeding, and no longer than 30 minutes, after which it shall be removed.

(2) Feeding outdoors is only allowed when an appropriate amount of food for daily consumption of the cat being cared for is provided. Food must be appropriately placed in a sanitary container sufficient for the cat being fed. Automatic feeders that are properly maintained and secured may be used to dispense daily food rations and may be present during night hours.

(3) Dumping excess quantities of food on the ground, placing excess quantities in bowls or other containers, and leaving open food packages is prohibited.

(4) Feeding outdoors must take place on the property owned by the person placing the food or be done with the consent of the property owner. Feeding on public property, road right-of-ways, parks, common land of a multifamily housing unit or any property without consent of the owner is prohibited.

B. Community Cat Management Initiatives: The City of Sterling recognizes the need for innovation in addressing the issues presented by feral, free-roaming and other community cats. To that end it recognizes that there are community care givers of cats, and acknowledges that properly managed community cats may be part of the solution to the continuing euthanasia of cats; and establishes the following requirements:

(1) All managed community cat groups must be maintained on private property of the caregiver, or with permission on the private property of another landowner (including city, state, and federal public property).

(2) All cats that are part of community cat management programs (TNR) must be sterilized, vaccinated against the threat of rabies, and ear-tipped for easy identification; if these requirements are met the community cat is exempt from licensing, stray, at-large and

possibly other provisions of this ordinance that apply to owned animals.

(3) If a person is providing care for the community cats, he or she is required to provide certain necessities on a regular/ongoing basis, including, but not limited to, proper nutrition and medical care as needed. If medical care is unavailable or too expensive, the caregiver must not allow the cat to suffer.

(i) Food must be provided in the proper quantity for the number of cats being managed and is to be supplied no less than once per day. Food must be maintained in proper feeding containers.

(ii) Water, if supplied, must be clean, potable and free from debris and algae.

(iii) If shelter is provided, it shall be unobtrusive, safe, and of the proper size for the cat(s).

SECTION 4: In all other respects, Chapter 14 shall remain in full force and effect.

SECTION 5: The additions to Chapter 14 shall be deemed to be separable and the invalidity of any portion of the Ordinance shall not effect the remainder.

SECTION 6: All ordinances or parts of ordinances in conflict herewith are, to the extent of such conflict, hereby repealed.

SECTION 7: The City Clerk is directed to publish this ordinance in pamphlet form.

SECTION 8: This Ordinance shall be in full force and effect from and after its passage, publication, and approval as provided by law.

Approved this ____ day of _____, 2019.



THE HUMANE SOCIETY
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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

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).



PHOTOS, FROM LEFT TO RIGHT, BY: PAT JOYCE; DILULLO/ISTOCK.COM

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 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 who try to scramble over the fence. 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.



PHOTO BY: CHARLES WOOD

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 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 who 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, and when they do, they happen 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 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 (6 ft long or less), and attend to them when they're outside unless you have a coyote-proof fence (see above).

Community cat colonies

People who feed community 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 community 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 10 to 12 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.



PHOTO BY: JAMES EVANS

For more information and tips, visit [humanesociety.org/coyotes](https://www.humanesociety.org/coyotes).



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Coyote hazing guidelines

How to haze for effective reshaping of coyote behavior



PHOTO BY: CHARLES WOOD

Generally, coyotes are reclusive animals who avoid human contact. Coyotes who've adapted to urban and suburban environments, however, may realize there are few real threats and approach people or feel safe visiting yards even when people are present. These coyotes have become habituated (lost their fear of humans), likely due to the ready availability of food in our neighborhoods. Sometimes, this food is deliberately provided by people who like to watch wild animals or misguidedly feel they are helping them by offering food. These bold coyotes should not be tolerated or enticed. Instead, they should be given the message that they should not be so brazen.

Hazing is a method that uses deterrents to move an animal out of an area or discourages an undesirable behavior or activity. Hazing can help maintain coyotes' fear of humans and deter them from neighborhood spaces such as backyards and playgrounds.

"GO AWAY, COYOTE!"

- The simplest method of hazing a coyote involves being loud and large. Watch this fun video for a demonstration: bit.ly/19hkRB2
- If a coyote has not been hazed before, he might not immediately run away when you yell at him. If this happens, you might need to walk toward the coyote and increase the intensity of your hazing. If the coyote does run away, he might stop after a distance and look back at you. It's important to continue to haze the coyote until he leaves the area completely. You might

Remember:

- NEVER run away from a coyote!
- If the coyote doesn't leave at first, continue approaching him and/or increase the intensity of your hazing until he runs away. If he runs a short distance away and then stops and looks at you, continue hazing him until he leaves the area completely.
- If a coyote returns after you've successfully hazed him or her, continue to haze the coyote as you did before. It typically takes only one or two times to haze a coyote away for good.
- Contact authorities and do not interact with a coyote whom you suspect of being sick or injured. Although coyotes are skittish by nature and generally aren't aggressive toward people, engaging animals who are sick or injured can result in unpredictable behavior.



PHOTO BY: SPONDYLOLITHESIS/ISTOCK.COM

need to use multiple tactics, such as shaking noisemakers, stomping your feet and spraying him with a hose to get him to leave.

Dog-walking tools

There are several tools for repelling coyotes that you can carry with you while walking your dog. Of course, remember that you should always walk your dog on a leash (6 ft. in length or less). If you see a coyote, either pick up your dog (if possible) or place him or her behind you before hazing the coyote. Then:

- Blow a whistle or air horn at the coyote.
- Squirt a squirt gun at the coyote.
- Yell and wave your arms.
- Use a homemade noisemaker, such as pennies in a sippy cup or soda can (sealed with duct tape).
- Pick up sticks or rocks and throw them toward the coyote.

In your yard

Keeping pets and pet food inside is the best way to keep coyotes out of your yard. If you do encounter coyotes, all of the above methods can be used in your yard. First, try the “Go Away, Coyote!” method (yell and wave your arms as you approach the coyote). You can also squirt the coyote with your garden hose or a squirt gun or bang pots and pans together.



PHOTO BY: DAWN MACHECA

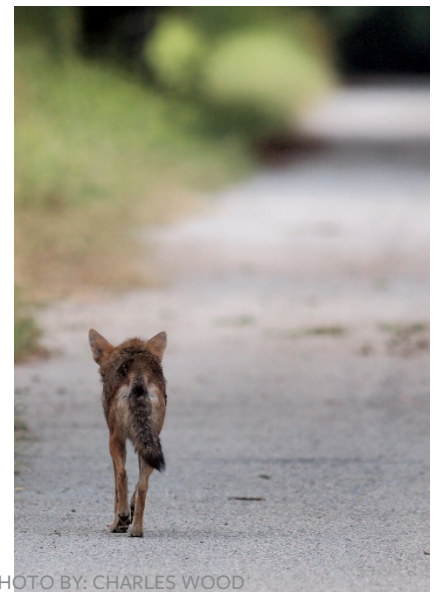


PHOTO BY: CHARLES WOOD

Tips for success

- Hazing is most effective when an individual coyote is hazed by a variety of people using a variety of tools and techniques.
- A coyote who is being hazed must be able to recognize that the potential threat is coming from a person. Therefore, hiding behind a bush and throwing rocks or hazing from inside your car isn't effective.
- You can use hazing techniques and tools for one animal or multiple animals. There is usually a dominant animal in the group who will respond, and others will follow her lead.
- Don't stop hazing after it's been successful. Coyotes or their pups could return to their unacceptable habits or behaviors if you stop.
- Share this information by teaching your family, friends and neighbors how to haze coyotes too! The more people that get involved in hazing, the more quickly you will see results.

For more information and tips, visit humanesociety.org/coyotes.



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Solutions for Coyote Conflicts

Why killing doesn't solve conflicts with coyotes

As coyotes have expanded their range across North America, encounters with people have increased. These encounters alarm people who fear for the safety of their pets and children. To allay this fear, communities might feel that they need to pay for wide-scale programs to remove coyotes from the population. However, these killing programs are inhumane—and they don't work. Better solutions exist.

Why don't coyote killing programs work?

They're ineffective.

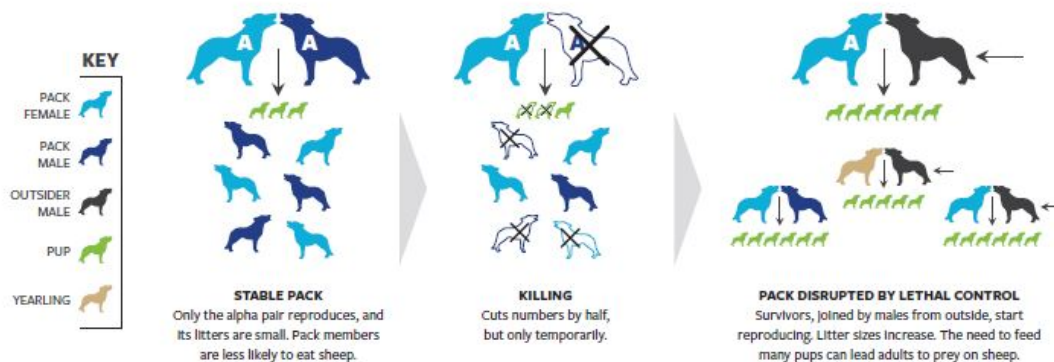
- It's extremely difficult to ensure that the problem-causing coyote(s) will be the one(s) located and killed.
- New coyotes will quickly replace coyotes removed from an area. Coyote pairs hold territories, which leave single coyotes ("floaters") constantly looking for new places to call homeⁱ.
- New coyotes can quickly become "nuisance" coyotes if attractants (e.g., pet food and garbage) aren't removed from a neighborhood.

They won't reduce coyote populations.

- Research suggests that when coyote populations are controlled aggressively, the remaining coyotes often experience a reproductive boom by breeding at earlier ages, having larger litters and experiencing a higher survival rate among the youngⁱⁱ. Therefore, coyote populations bounce back quickly, even when up to 70% of their numbers are removedⁱⁱⁱ.
- It's nearly impossible to completely eradicate coyotes from an area. Despite bounties and large-scale efforts to kill coyotes over the last 100 years, coyotes have in fact expanded their range throughout the U.S. and Canada tremendously. One study even found that killing 75% of a coyote population every year for 50 years would still not exterminate the population^{iv}.

Why killing doesn't work

Shoot or poison coyotes and you will have just as many again within a year or two. Kill one or both members of the alpha pair (A)—the only one that normally reproduces—and other pairs will form and reproduce. At the same time, lone coyotes will move in to mate, young coyotes will start having offspring sooner, and litter sizes will grow.



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Removal is costly.

- Coyotes are very intelligent animals, and they're difficult to catch. Even a very skilled trapper or sharpshooter—who works for a hefty price—needs many hours to catch a targeted coyote.

Trapping is inhumane.

- The most common devices used to capture coyotes are leghold traps and neck snares. Both can cause severe injuries, pain and suffering^v.
- Pets become unintended victims of traps set for coyotes. An informal search of media reports suggests thousands of unintended incidents have occurred, causing heartbreak for affected families.
- Non-target wildlife is also caught, and many sustain injuries so severe that they die or must be killed.



PHOTO BY: RICHARD SEELEY

What about relocation?

Although it may seem like a more humane alternative, in most cases relocating a coyote is a death sentence for that animal^{vi}. Coyotes are very territorial and occupy large home ranges, in some cases up to 40 square miles. After being relocated, they will do just about anything to get back home and will undoubtedly face many challenges along the way. Unfamiliar with their new terrain, they are often killed while crossing roads and highways. They may also be injured or killed during territorial disputes with coyotes who are already established in the area where they're released. In addition, state wildlife laws usually prohibit the relocation of coyotes, since they are a rabies-vector species (although rabies is rare in coyotes).

The bottom line is that killing is not a solution for managing conflicts between people and coyotes.

Instead, a two-part program that combines education and hazing is emerging as the most humane way to resolve conflicts with coyotes^{vii}. Education involves teaching residents of your community how to remove food attractants that lure coyotes into communities and how to properly protect pets. Hazing changes the behavior of problem coyotes by teaching them to avoid people and pets.

For more information and tips, visit humanesociety.org/coyotes.



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Our Promise

We fight the big fights to end suffering for all animals.

Together with millions of supporters, we take on puppy mills, factory farms, trophy hunts, animal testing and other cruel industries. With our affiliates, we rescue and care for thousands of animals every year through our animal rescue team's work and other hands-on animal care services.

We fight all forms of animal cruelty to achieve the vision behind our name: a humane society.
And we can't do it without you.



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