



Wildlife in the City: Coyotes

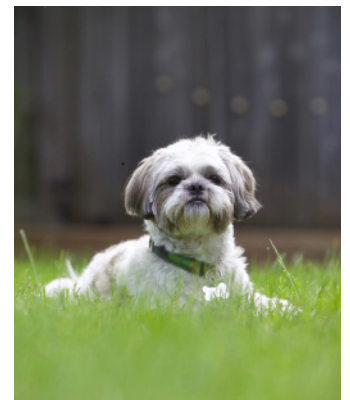
Coyotes in your Park or Neighbourhood

Coyotes live in cities throughout North America. It is typical to see a coyote in a park, ravine, other green space and even on your street, at any time of the day or night during all the seasons. Coyotes have adapted very well to life in the city. Food and shelter are plentiful and natural predators are limited, so these animals will continue to live near us. For an interactive information module on coyotes, visit toronto.ca/coyotes.

Coyote behaviour and your dog

Most interactions with coyotes in Toronto are the result of a nearby, regular food source (especially when there is intentional feeding by people) or the presence of a dog.

Coyotes can behave in a defensive manner around dogs which is often interpreted as aggression. These negative interactions between dogs and coyotes are usually caused by bold behaviour from the dog. Coyotes are naturally timid, but they will defend their territory and their family group, including their pups.





For this reason, interactions between your dog and a coyote can be scary, but there are simple ways to avoid any real conflict:

- **NEVER feed coyotes, either deliberately or inadvertently.** Ensure all food you may have with you (human snacks or dog treats) are packed away securely.
- Keep your dog close to you and on a leash, especially in areas where coyotes are known to live. In an off-leash area, ensure your dog will come to you when called and stand or walk with other people who also have dogs.
- Be aware of your surroundings and what your dog is doing.
- Don't let your dog chase or play with a coyote.
- Don't walk your dog in ravine habitats, especially in the spring when coyotes have pups.

When coyotes come too close

- Maintain eye contact with the coyote.
- Ensure your dog is leashed and behind you. Pick up your small dog.
- Do not run; use aversion techniques to scare the coyote away.
- If the coyote doesn't leave, you may be near its den or food source. Do not run; back away slowly while maintaining eye contact and leave the area.

Aversion techniques

- Assertively open and close an umbrella or snap open a large plastic garbage bag – these sights and sounds can be scary to a coyote. (Garbage bags are light weight and easy to carry with you on your walks.)
- Wave your arms above your head, maintain eye contact and loudly say "Go away coyote!"

Keep doing this until the coyote leaves.

- Carry and use a whistle or other noise maker and throw objects in the coyote's direction to scare it away. **NEVER hit or injure a coyote with an object.**

Coyotes around your house

Coyotes may be near or at your house because there is a nearby food source – maybe even on your own property.

- **NEVER feed a coyote.** Deliberate feeding of coyotes is an irresponsible activity that causes coyotes to adapt more easily to living and foraging for food around houses and yards. There are many different natural food sources for coyotes in the city such as rats and other small rodents, fruit and insects. Coyotes do not require that food be provided to them by people.
- Keep your cat indoors or supervise your cat closely while outside. You can do this by using a harness and leash or a fully enclosed outdoor area for your cat.
- Do not feed your pets outside.
- Keep your garbage bin, blue bin and green bin in a secure location where wild animals cannot access them. Move them to the curb on the morning of pick up.
- Clean up seeds that may have fallen from your bird feeder. Seeds attract small rodents, which in turn attract coyotes.
- If coyotes continue to visit your property, use the same aversion techniques that you would use in a park.
- Talk to your neighbours and share this fact sheet with them.

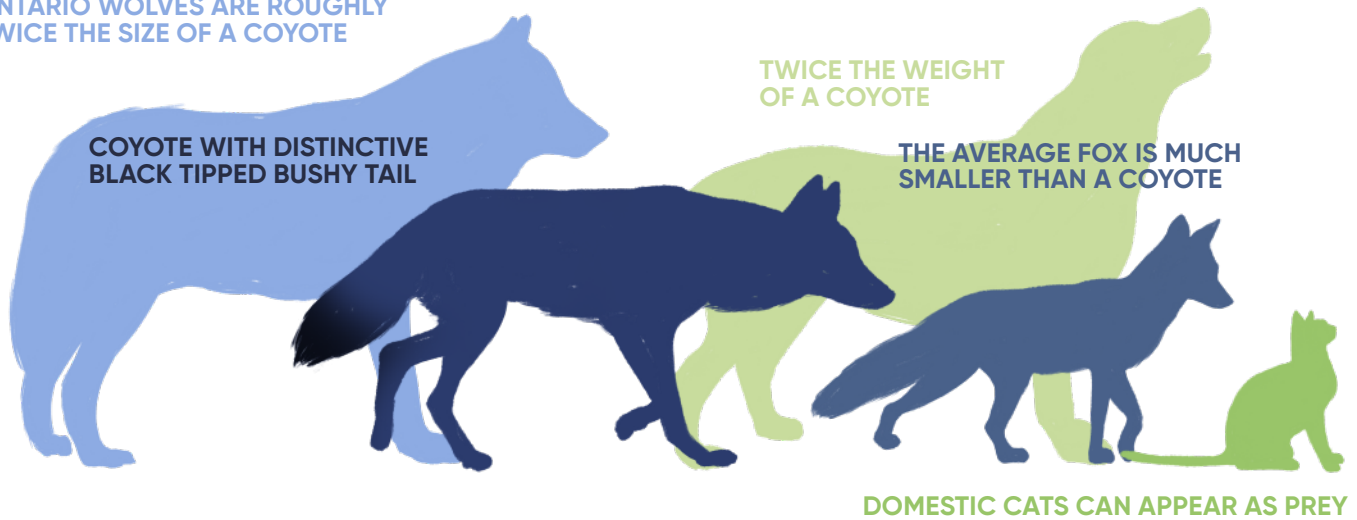
Normal Urban Coyote Behaviour:

- Active during all four seasons and during the day and night.
- Watching or following you and your dog from a comfortable distance – coyotes are very curious.
- Sitting somewhere in plain view or relaxing or playing in a field or park, either alone or with other coyotes.
- Walking and ignoring you. It's natural to see coyotes walking on a road or sidewalk in a neighbourhood.
- Hunting.
- Yipping and howling.
- Hesitating and looking back when you're trying to scare it away. (Keep scaring the coyote until it leaves.)



Coyote Size Comparison

ONTARIO WOLVES ARE ROUGHLY TWICE THE SIZE OF A COYOTE



Myth Busters:

Truth: Statistically, coyotes are not a significant threat to the safety of humans. Coyote bites to humans are very rare.

Truth: Coyotes are not a significant predator of cats. Urban coyote diet studies show that they generally eat small rodents, fruit, insects and animals that were already dead (carrion). However, they occasionally hunt cats, so keep your cat safe.

Truth: Coyotes in Eastern Canada have some wolf DNA and this has been the case for many decades. There isn't a new animal called "Coywolf" – this is a nickname. Coyotes in Toronto are the same coyotes that have always been here. They act like coyotes, not wolves.

When to Call 311:

- If a coyote has bitten you or your dog or there is a bona fide threat from a coyote.
- If you see a coyote that appears sick, injured or orphaned.
- If you see someone feeding a coyote.

If you'd like to report a sighting of a coyote, you can do so using the City's online reporting form.

Visit toronto.ca/coyotes.