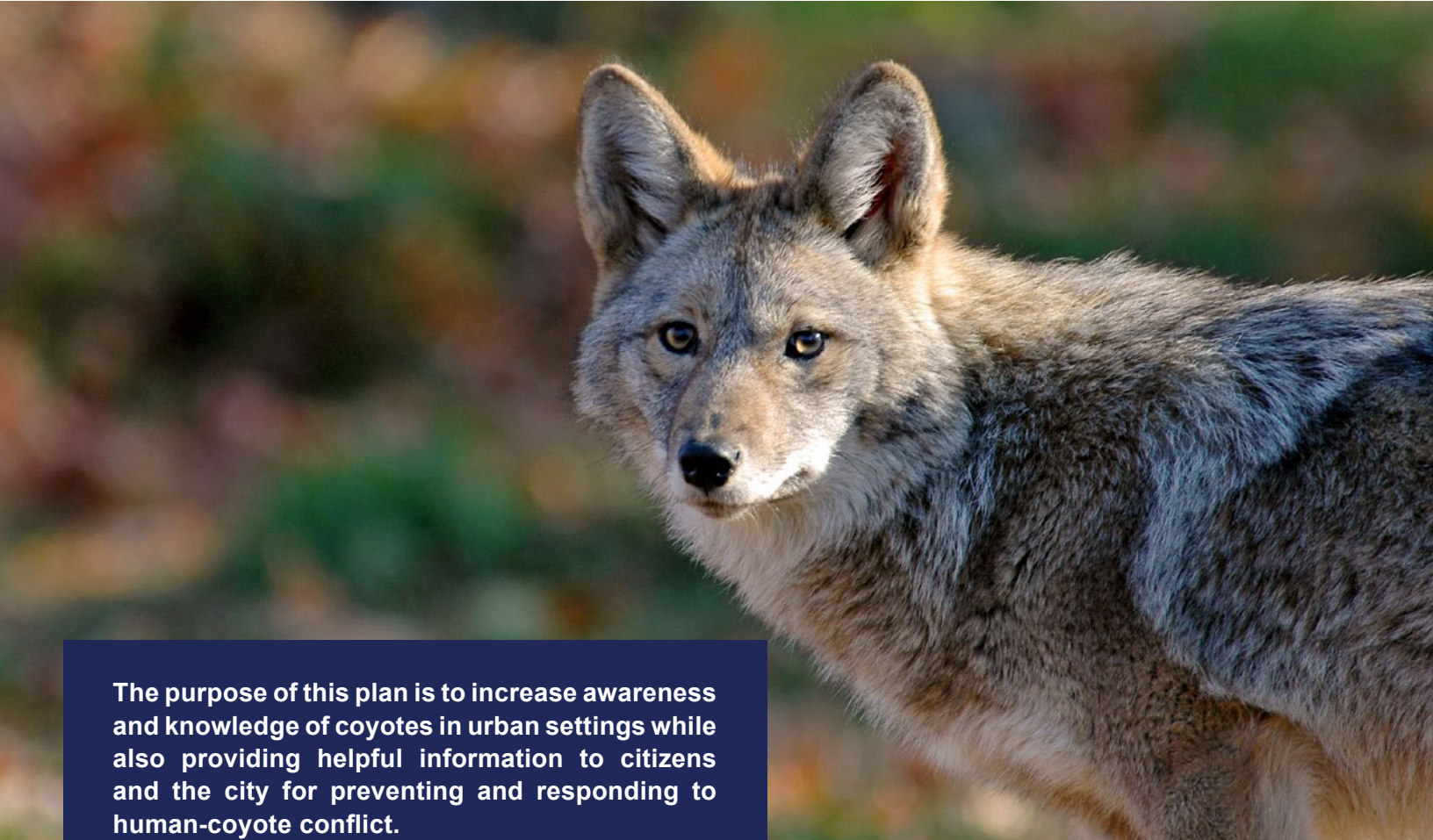


# CITY OF URBANDALE

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## Coyote Management Plan



**The purpose of this plan is to increase awareness and knowledge of coyotes in urban settings while also providing helpful information to citizens and the city for preventing and responding to human-coyote conflict.**

Coyotes are extremely adaptable and intelligent animals capable of living successfully in urban environments. Thanks to various rural and urban wildlife research projects done over the past 30 years throughout North America, we now collectively understand much more about coyote behavior, reproduction, diet, home range, social structure, and various other aspects of coyote biology. This knowledge informs how humans and domestic animals can safely coexist with coyotes in urban environments. The reason for this plan is to provide guidance on expectations of coyote presence in urban areas, best practices to reduce the potential of conflict with coyotes, advice on handling conflict with coyotes, and background information on why these strategies are effective.

**OCTOBER 2023**

**Iowa Department of Natural Resources**  
Wildlife Bureau

**City of Urbandale**  
Parks and Recreation

**City of Urbandale**  
Police Department



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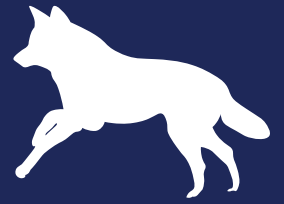
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images from this project collab)

# COYOTE NATURAL HISTORY/ECOLOGY

Coyotes are a natural and valuable part of the Iowa landscape.



## NATURAL HISTORY

### Where were coyotes historically?

Prior to European colonization during the 1800s, coyotes were most abundant in the plains and semi-arid areas of the central and western U.S. Coyotes were present in Iowa, but likely not in high numbers. Large apex predators such as gray wolves, mountain lions, and black bears were also present and likely kept coyote numbers low naturally. Throughout the 1800s, as European settlement advanced westward across the Midwest, most of the large apex predators were eliminated from the landscape due to unregulated killing. Throughout the late 1800s and early 1900s, ranchers raised herds of grazing livestock, mainly cattle and sheep throughout the Midwest, Plains, and Western Rocky Mountain Regions. By the early to mid-1900s, federal government programs were implemented in an attempt to eliminate the coyote using poison, bounty shooting, and trapping due to real and perceived conflicts between coyotes, people, and livestock. These programs were carried out with vigor for at least three decades and temporarily reduced coyote numbers. However, unlike other predators which were functionally eradicated during this time period, coyotes were extremely resilient and adaptable. Their population quickly increased soon after the funding for these programs was reduced or eliminated.

In Iowa, coyotes were found statewide during European colonization, but were most common in the open prairies of central and western Iowa. Like other predator species, coyotes were often killed whenever possible by colonizers. Historical accounts indicate coyote bounties and circle hunts added further incentive for early Iowans to attempt to eliminate coyotes in Iowa. It is believed their numbers reached a low point during the 1920s, but were never fully extirpated like species such as black bears, cougars, and gray wolves had been.



## DIET

### What do Coyotes Eat?

Coyotes are classified as carnivores. Research on coyote diets shows they primarily feed on small mammals, including mice, voles, and rabbits, which can collectively comprise up to 90% of their prey intake. Coyotes will also feed on deer and their fawns at certain times of the year. However, coyotes actually have quite omnivorous diets that vary throughout the year with the seasonal availability of different food items, such as berries, wild grapes, and plums. Hundreds of different plants and animals have been documented in coyote diets. At some times of the year fruits, insects, birds, deer fawns, or plant matter can comprise large portions of a coyote's diet. In cities, diet studies have also found coyotes will scavenge in garbage, eat pet food, or occasionally capture and eat free-roaming cats. Around farms, coyotes may prey on chickens, calves, sheep, or goats. Coyotes will also scavenge wild animals or livestock killed by other means, such as vehicle collisions, hunters, or disease. The variety of foods coyotes take advantage of throughout the year illustrates their adaptability to living in different types of areas whether it's urban or rural habitat.



## A YEAR IN THE LIFE OF A COYOTE

### HABITS

#### How do coyotes typically behave?

Coyotes are generally most active at night, especially in cities or other areas where humans are active during the day. In areas with fewer people, coyotes tend to have peaks of activity around dawn and dusk. These contrasting activity patterns are one way coyotes have adapted to coexist with people.

Coyotes have a social structure revolving around a territorial pair and their offspring that form a 'pack'. Both the male and female of the pair participate in defending the territory, establishing a den, and raising the young to maturity. Other coyotes in the social group are subdominant to the alpha pair and most often related to (i.e. offspring) the dominant pair. A pair typically has one litter per year, born around April or early May. The typical litter size in Iowa is six young, however the litter sizes can vary depending upon prey availability and the density of other coyotes. The young are nursed by their mother around the den and then fed prey captured by both parents. They abandon the den around six weeks as the young start to feed more on their own. Non-breeding coyotes are often solitary during summer when food is abundant and then form groups during the winter when food is scarcer. Eventually, young coyotes will disperse to establish new territories or replace their parents when one or both die or can no longer defend their territory.

Coyotes use many different tactics to defend their territory, including direct interactions with other coyotes, vocalizations, and scent marking. Among these behaviors, the most conspicuous behavior for humans to observe is the vocalizations coyotes make to announce their presence to other family groups or in strengthening social bonds within their family group. A common time of the day to hear this is at dusk, or the first hour of darkness. High pitched yips, barks, and howls are most common; however, coyotes make a wide range of vocalizations that can be heard from great distances. Often, their cacophonous sounds can lead to overestimations of the density or abundance of coyotes in any one place which can add to misconceptions about the risks coyotes pose to humans, pets, game, or livestock.

**JANUARY – MARCH**  
Breeding season

**SEPTEMBER –  
DECEMBER**  
Dispersal season

**APRIL – AUGUST**  
Pup-rearing season

### HABITAT

#### Where do coyotes live?

Coyotes are considered to be a 'habitat generalist'. This means coyotes can be found almost anywhere, but are generally most abundant in landscapes with large natural areas where prey is abundant and people are relatively rare. In rural areas, this means coyotes are most abundant in landscapes with interspersed grasslands, pastures, forests, or other natural areas not in row crops. In cities, this means that coyotes are most common around green space areas. This includes parks, preserves, walking/biking trails, golf courses, or neighborhoods with more landscaping or other natural features.

### WHAT IS HABITAT

Habitat is home to wildlife: a place to sleep, a place to eat and drink, a place to escape predators, a place to stay safe in inclement weather, a place to raise young. Every species of wildlife has a distinct set of characteristics that match up with specific types and qualities of habitat. Some habitat generalist species are more adaptable and can make use of more types of habitats. Some species have a narrower set of requirements. For all wildlife, habitat is the utmost determining factor in whether they will use an area, not use an area, or if they will survive.



## ECOLOGY

### What role do coyotes play in nature?

Coyotes have been adapting to modern day urban areas over the past 100 years, but even more so over the past 50 years as urban sprawl expands its footprint on the landscape that was once habitat for wildlife. In today's world, coyotes often live in urban areas and are seldom seen, but they are often heard in the evening, giving away their presence in the form of loud vocal yips and howls.

Ecologically, coyotes in Iowa are at the top of the food chain as carnivores and also play an important role as scavengers. Coyotes often provide free rodent control in urban areas by preying upon mice, rabbits, squirrels, groundhogs, rats, and other species of rodents. They'll often readily eat carrion they find such as roadkill or other animals that died from disease. In some way, they can be thought of as a "clean-up crew" in urban areas.

Besides their role as both a predator and a scavenger, there is inherent value in having coyotes around. Although they may take advantage of food scraps and abundant prey in urban areas, they are still wild and live on their own. While coyotes can become a nuisance in certain situations, many carry out their lives inconspicuously without often being seen. This can remind folks to appreciate their presence as something wild that has adapted to our modern landscape using their innate intelligence.

### Coyote numbers are increasing and adapting with human development.

During the 1970s and 1980s, surveys and research showed that coyote numbers began to rise dramatically throughout Iowa. Because gray wolves were extirpated from Iowa, coyotes had become the 'top dog' or top predator in Iowa. Annual coyote harvest numbers from regulated hunting and trapping have been documented in Iowa from 1930 to the present day. These harvest records also show an increase in the coyote population.

Whether loved or hated, over time coyotes have displayed remarkable resilience and intelligence in adapting to a growing human population. That's why, in today's modern world, some coyotes adapt to living in urban areas successfully.

# GUIDANCE FOR CITIZENS

## Tactics for Preventing Conflict with Coyotes



Despite instinctual curiosities, coyotes tend to be shy around humans or other potential threats. This avoidance is a natural dynamic that should be encouraged. Reducing the number of interactions between people and their pets with coyotes is the first step to avoiding conflict. Furthermore, educating citizens so the interactions that do occur are handled correctly will reinforce the proper dynamic between people and coyotes. While sightings or coyote observations are to be expected, a long-term goal of this management plan is to limit the number of encounters and incidents. This section will focus on things that residents can do to reduce human-coyote interactions: reducing close contact with coyotes and training coyotes to remain wild through aversive conditioning.

The first category of actions to maintain a healthy dynamic between people and coyotes in urban areas is reducing close contact with coyotes. Recognizing that coyotes are

utilizing the urban environment and will continue to do so, does not limit the ability to reduce close contact with coyotes. By limiting easy access to food items, practicing simple steps to maintain pet safety, and using barriers to separate pets from coyotes, a healthy long-distance relationship can be maintained.

Additionally, actions that build on the natural fear that coyotes have of humans will help reduce negative interactions. While curious, coyotes naturally maintain a distance from people due to wariness and fear. Coyotes evolved into the middle of the food chain and historically had several natural enemies. This condition should be reinforced continually by anyone that interacts with a coyote in urban settings. Aversive conditioning is a method of training behavior with hazing and scare tactics. Humans are scarier than coyotes: reminding people and coyotes of this fact will help rebalance the dynamic.

**The following sections detail common practices that are successful and can be implemented in urban areas to achieve coyote management goals.**

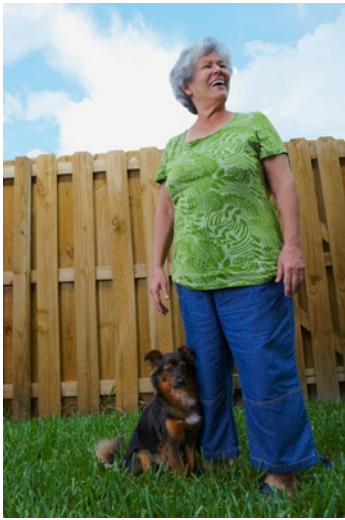
## REDUCE CLOSE CONTACT WITH COYOTES

### Limit available food sources tied to human activity or pets



While largely categorized as a carnivore with most of their diet consisting of rodents and small mammals, coyotes consume a wide range of food items. Much like other canines, coyotes will often take advantage of easy food sources. Examples include spilled trash, items from compost bins, spilled bird seed, and pet food. Taking steps to minimize these items will decrease the draw of coyotes to humans.

- Do not feed coyotes.
- Do not feed or water pets outside or only do it once a day and immediately clean up any leftover or spilled food.
  - » Do not leave out food for feral or stray animals.
- Contain garbage in a closed receptacle.
- Dispose of uneaten food from outdoor gatherings in garbage.
- Do not dump food in backyards.
- Composting care:
  - » Do not compost meat, poultry, fish, or dairy
  - » Turn compost often to speed up breakdown of food materials
  - » Contain compost in a manner that is not accessible to wildlife
- Cleanup spilled birdseed and make sure birdfeeders are high so coyotes cannot reach them.
- Cleanup any dropped fruit from fruit trees.
- Clean grills regularly and/or store them inside.



## PET INTERACTIONS

Predator species compete with other predator species indirectly by utilizing the same food and space.

They compete directly with aggression towards each other. Canine species are no different and are aggressive towards other canines as well as other predators.

This is true in urban and rural settings and includes dogs and cats. During the mating season and near den sites, aggression will be increased further. These conflicts can be physically harmful or fatal.

Additionally, cats and small dogs may be perceived as potential food sources by coyotes. Food left out for unattended pets is an even more attractive food source. Steps should be taken to keep pets separate from wildlife to reduce the chance of negative interactions.

### Keep your pets separate from coyotes

- Do not leave pets unattended outside.
  - » “Outdoor” cats and small dogs are potential prey for coyotes.
  - » Keep the yard well lit while pets are outside or consider installing motion sensor lights.
- Do not feed or water pets outside or only do it once a day and immediately clean up any leftover or spilled food.
  - » Do not leave out food for feral or stray animals.
  - » Cat feeding stations are a major attractant for coyotes and other wild animals.
- Particularly in the late winter breeding season and spring during the pup rearing season coyotes will be more aggressive towards dogs. Keep dogs supervised and on a leash.
- If a coyote is encountered while walking a dog do the following:
  - » Do not let the dog engage with the coyote.
  - » Keep the dog nearby or, if it is a small dog, pick it up.
  - » Haze the coyote according to steps in this plan.
  - » Slowly and calmly leave the site by the way you came.

## EXCLUSION

### Using fencing or barriers to keep coyotes separated from pets and people

Exclusion can come in many forms and can be very effective at keeping wildlife out of specific areas. This does not need to necessarily be a specific style. However, there are some things to consider.

If pets are kept inside a yard with an in ground electric fence or invisible fence, treat this as not having any fence for pet security. Invisible fences will have no bearing on wild animal movements despite being effective for the pet wearing the associated collar. Keep these pets under close observation in areas known to have coyotes.

Chain link or mesh wire fencing can be effective for keeping wildlife out, however, interactions between pets and coyotes can still occur “through” the fence. While the barrier should prevent any major injury, know that the interaction through the fence could lead to increased aggression and if the fence is not of sufficient height or has gaps in any location then the pet may get out or the coyote may get in. Maintain the fence and make sure there are no gaps. Additionally, make sure the fence extends under the ground 12 to 18 inches to prevent animals from digging under the fence.

Whether the fence is wire or wood, coyote rollers can be an effective solution to help keep coyotes out. Cats, dogs, coyotes, and other wildlife are able to leap, climb, and scramble impressive heights to get over fences. A coyote roller is a simple roller bar just a few inches in diameter that can be attached to the top of the fence. This takes away the ability for animals to use the top of the fence as leverage or to grab onto it. There are a number of different manufacturers for the product and most tout the product as easy to install by the customer.

- If pets are in a fenced yard be sure the fence is appropriate for keeping coyotes out
  - » 5 to 6 foot fence with a ‘coyote roller’ type structure on top or 8 foot fence of material that is not climbable
- Keep the yard lit while pets are present or install motion sensor lights.

## KEEP COYOTES WILD

The goal is to keep coyotes fearful of humans. Aversive conditioning or hazing the animals through scare tactics and sensory discomfort to create an uncomfortable atmosphere, will decrease close coyote activity, human-coyote interactions, and conflict. This tactic reinforces the natural fear factor that exists between most wildlife and humans. The opposite of this would be animals becoming habituated, or comfortable around, humans. Use myriad tactics to maintain and constantly stimulate the natural fear in coyotes.

Hazing activities are easy to incorporate with all other action steps and can be shared between neighbors to be used whenever coyotes are encountered. Use the fear connection with people to your advantage to make humans seem less friendly overall and then scarecrows might become useful as an option in the future.

## Aversive Conditioning Techniques

- Do NOT haze a coyote if it appears sick, injured, is cornered, or is with pups.
- Loud noises such as yelling, whistles, pots and pans clanging, air horns, homemade noisemaker, etc... directed specifically at the coyote from you.
- Make yourself look big by raising your arms in the air or waving an object in your hands.
- Throw objects towards the coyote such as sticks, rocks, or other objects closely available.
- Use a garden hose or squirt gun to spray water at the coyote.
  - » If you live in an area with more greenspace and increased coyote activity, consider investing in motion sensor sprinkler systems.
- Haze loudly and aggressively. Let it know that you are serious and give it 100% effort.
  - » As with training dogs: Don't ask it—tell it!
- Do NOT hide behind something when hazing: make sure the coyote knows it is a human that is hazing.
- Do NOT run away, but also do NOT chase the coyote.
- Continue to haze until the coyote leaves.
  - » If the coyote does not leave the area with increased hazing efforts, remove yourself from the situation and report it to the city.
- Haze anytime a coyote is seen in an area that it should not be.

# ACTION STEPS

for Citizens to take after a Coyote Interaction.



Different encounters will call for different action steps depending on the action of the coyote, time of day and number of encounters. Below is a framework for Citizen Steps for following up on a coyote encounter.

## OBSERVATION

Signs of coyotes including security camera picture/video, vocalizations, tracks, or scat. Coyotes live in urban areas and signs of that will occur. This is normal and does not warrant any special response.

**Citizen action:** No action is required.

## SIGHTING

In person visual observation of a coyote, not including remote camera pictures or video.

With increased coyote activity in the area, including mating season and denning, some coyotes will be seen. This can be at night or during the day. Occasional sightings are not out of the ordinary.

**Citizen action:** No action is required.

## ENCOUNTER

A close sighting (eg. less than 30 yards or throwing distance) between a human and coyote with no physical contact.

Proximity, the comfort level of the coyote, and their behavior are key components in differentiating between an encounter and other events. An encounter occurs at close proximity but with no aggressive behavior presented. This can be a confusing distinction for people with less wildlife experience. Watching, perked ears, sniffing the ground or air, and some movement are typical behaviors that may be noticed when the coyote is close. These are non-aggressive, but still show a higher level of habituation and comfort near humans.

**Citizen action:** Report encounters to the City of Urbandale by emailing [police@urbandale.org](mailto:police@urbandale.org) or by calling the 24-hr Non-Emergency Dispatch at 515.222.3321

## What to report to the city after an encounter

- Time and date of the encounter
- Behavior of the coyote
- Description of what happened
- Location of event

## INCIDENT

An encounter with a coyote where the coyote displays any of the following behaviors: growling, baring teeth, lunging, or making physical contact. A human or domestic animal is not bit.

Aggressive behavior towards people or attended pets, demonstrates a concerning lack of fear and atypical behavior. Either the animal is sick/injured, in close proximity to a den, or has habituated to human activity. Things to look for include laid back ears, approaching people, curled lips showing teeth, snapping motions with mouth, raised fur, prolonged eye contact, and not leaving the area despite hazing efforts. Direct removals of the specific habituated animal should be strongly considered if denning activity and provocative human actions are ruled out.

**Citizen action:** Report all incidents to the City of Urbandale by emailing [police@urbandale.org](mailto:police@urbandale.org) or by calling the 24-hr Non-Emergency Dispatch at 515.222.3321

## What to report to the city after an incident

- Time and date of the encounter
- Behavior of the coyote
- Description of what happened
- Location of event

## PET ATTACK

A domestic pet is killed or injured by a coyote. Includes dogs, cats, chickens, ducks...

**Attended Pet:** Pet is on a leash less than six feet in length or is in the presence of a person less than six feet away.

**Unattended Pet:** Pet is free-roaming, walking off-leash more than six feet from a person. This includes pets in a fenced in yard that are unsupervised.

Direct contact between a pet and a coyote can happen due to territoriality, competition of resources, or protection of denning sites. Responses to this situation depend on the circumstances of the event such as if the pet was attended or unattended. Include education on the importance of supervising pets, particularly during the coyote mating season.

**Citizen action:** Report attacks to the City of Urbandale by emailing [police@urbandale.org](mailto:police@urbandale.org) or by calling the 24-hr Non-Emergency Dispatch at 515.222.3321

### What to report to the city

- Time and date of the encounter
- Behavior of the coyote
- Description of what happened
- Location of event

## HUMAN ATTACK

Coyote bites a human.

Bites or attacks from coyotes on humans are incredibly rare. If this occurs, the details of the situation should be recorded including whether there was feeding, petting, provocative human actions, or denning activity involved. Report the specifics of the incident to the DNR so that it may be included in national reports. If the attack was unprovoked the animal should be considered sick or dangerous and direct removal efforts initiated immediately. Coyotes removed in the case of a bite should be submitted to a veterinarian for disease testing if at all possible.

**Citizen action:** Any person bit should seek immediate first aid and follow-up with a medical professional and follow-up by contacting City of Urbandale by emailing [police@urbandale.org](mailto:police@urbandale.org) or by calling the 24-hr Non-Emergency Dispatch at 515.222.3321

### What to report to the city

- Time and date of the encounter
- Behavior of the coyote
- Description of what happened
- Location of event

# ACTION STEPS

## for the City of Urbandale after a Citizen Report

### CONSISTENCY IS IMPORTANT

The following section contains guidance and action steps for city officials to take regarding urban coyotes.

Response to situations, information flow to the public, and the descriptive language used to categorize activity should all be consistent. This is an opportunity to make sure that what citizens are hearing matches what is being discussed with internal staff, at city council meetings, and public events.

### OBSERVATION

A report of signs of coyotes including security camera picture/video, vocalizations, tracks, or scat.

**City Response:** Coyotes live in urban areas and signs of that will occur. This is normal and does not warrant any special response.

### SIGHTING

In person visual observation of a coyote, not including remote camera pictures or video.

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### ENCOUNTER

A close sighting (eg. less than 30 yards or throwing distance) between a human and coyote with no physical contact.

#### City Response:

- Police Department will log the call.
- Emails sent to non-Police Department emails should be forwarded to the Police Department
- If a park or trail area has a high number of encounters, the Parks Department will post warning signs in areas of concern (see attachment A).

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#### City Response:

- Police Department will log the call.
- Emails sent to non-Police Department emails should be forwarded to the Police Department
- Police Department will take a report of the incident
- If a park area or a neighborhood has an attack, the City will post information on Next Door for specific neighborhoods of aggressive coyotes.
- If a City Park or trails are in proximity of the incident, the Parks Department will post signs (see item A).
- If City Property is available for trapping, the Police Department and Parks Department will coordinate contacting a Nuisance Wildlife Control Operators (NWCOs) for direct removal and post signs in the area (see attachment B). The City will send Direct mail to adjacent property owners and those in close proximity and post signs if trapping is used. (see attachment C)
- The Parks Department will contact DNR to report any attack or trapping.
- If the trapping NWCO's is successful in trapping a coyote, they should call 911 Dispatch to notify them prior to discharging a firearm to euthanize the coyote.

## HUMAN ATTACK

Coyote bites a human.

Bites or attacks from coyotes on humans are incredibly rare. If this occurs, the details of the situation should be recorded including whether there was feeding, petting, provocative human actions, or denning activity involved. Report the specifics of the incident to the DNR so that it may be included in national reports. If the attack was unprovoked the animal should be considered sick or dangerous and direct removal efforts initiated immediately. Coyotes removed in the case of a bite should be submitted to a veterinarian for disease testing if at all possible. Any person bit should seek immediate first aid and follow-up with a medical professional.

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## Understanding Direct Removal Options

Lethal removal of animals too early in the process could lead to more problems in the future. Coyotes keep coyotes in check. Removing animals that are not causing any true problems will leave space open for other coyotes to move in, could lead to higher reproduction rates, and could lead to young coyotes learning on their own instead of following the lead of an adult coyote that is behaving. Direct removal of coyotes should be considered as a tool only for the correct situations after other strategies have been put into place.

The urban nature of these situations limits the options for lethal removal. Statewide, as regulated by the Iowa DNR, coyote hunting is open year-round allowing the use of firearms. Additionally, there is a trapping season in the fall and winter. Toxicants or poisons are not supported nor advised by the Iowa DNR. Relocation of coyotes is not recommended nor is it supported by the Iowa DNR.

Nuisance Wildlife Control Operators (NWCOS) are private businesses that are licensed through the Iowa DNR to remove wildlife outside of standard seasons. NWCOS can be contracted to conduct trapping efforts in specific areas. NWCOS have experience with trapping and removal techniques for a number of wildlife species. NWCOS work closely with and report activities back to the Iowa DNR. Trapping will not necessarily catch the specific intended coyote. However, it will target coyotes active in the specific area including the coyote involved with any incident. Foothold traps are safe in case of accidental dog capture. However, Cable restraint devices (aka snares) maybe needed in circumstances such as frozen ground and other unique situations. Snares can be effective but pose a higher risk of injury or death to dogs, cats, or other non-target animals in the area. Walk-in style traps are typically not effective with coyotes.

City of Urbandale ordinance requires permission from the Chief of Police to trap on private property.

## MONITORING

### Tracking coyotes and complaints to respond more effectively

Citizens need to have a simple and readily accessible place to report concerns, encounters, or incidents with coyotes. Information from these reports can help the city track where coyotes are active, gauge the level of the issue, and respond in an effective manner.

## COYOTE REPORTING SYSTEM

- Urbandale Police Department will provide a quarterly report of log calls concerning Coyotes for review with the Parks and Recreation office to determine if there is an increased number of calls in any particular area or time frame.
  - » Urbandale Parks Department will communicate with the Iowa DNR regarding any changes in sightings, observations or encounters along with reporting any incidents.
- Continue to use bowhunter surveys from urban deer hunters to monitor larger scale trends. (Coyotes are one of the wildlife species reported in that survey.)
- Summarize annual coyote inquiries and actions to provide to partnering entities.
  - » City Staff will work with partnering agencies and nearby cities to watch trends in coyote numbers and activity will help the metropolitan area respond more consistently to incidents. Coyotes will move across city limit lines—plans should, too.

## EDUCATION AND OUTREACH Summary for City Staff

### December of Each Year (Start of mating season)

- Post information on social media about understanding coyotes
  - » Post this contact information (app, phone number, and/or email address) on all coyote related materials, press releases, and the website.
- Review with internal city staff on responses to phone calls/where to direct questions.
- Partner with Polk County Conservation and Iowa DNR to coordinate messages at certain times of the year

### If a park area has a high number of encounters

- Post warning signs in areas of concern (see item A)
- If park area or neighborhood has incident or higher level of concern
- Post on Next Door for specific neighborhoods of aggressive coyotes
- If a City Park or trails are in proximity of the incident, post signs (see item B)
- If City Property is available for trapping contact a Nuisance Wildlife Control Operators (NWCOs) for direct removal
- Direct mail and post signs if trapping is used

## OVERVIEW OF WHAT YOU DO WHEN YOU ENCOUNTER COYOTE (for Website Page)

### Here is what to do if you encounter a coyote:

- Face the coyote and look directly at them.
  - » Do not turn your back on a coyote or run away.
- Keep yourself between a coyote and your pet or child.
- Be loud and intimidating
  - » Make loud noises: yell, clap, use noisemakers, blow a whistle, or use anything to make loud noises.
  - » Tell the coyote, “Go away coyote!”—don’t ask it to leave. Be firm, loud, and aggressive.
  - » Make yourself look larger: raise or wave your arms, flap loose clothing, stand up tall, wave any objects in your hand.
  - » If you have pepper spray or bear spray use it if the coyote approaches within 30 feet.
- Note the location and time when the encounter occurred and report it to city officials.
- Work with neighbors to ensure proper steps are being taken to reduce food availability and to keep pets safe.

**ATTACHMENT A**  
**Park Sign for Coyote Sighting**

**ATTACHMENT B**  
**Park Sign for Aggressive Coyote Trapping**

**ATTENTION PARK USERS**

**Coyotes have been spotted near this park.**

Coyotes are common across Iowa's landscape including urban park areas as they make use of river systems, greenways, and parks.

A sighting of a coyote by itself is not reason for alarm. Coyotes do live in cities, and sometimes in close proximity to humans as they make use of the urban environments.

The Iowa DNR has recommended several techniques to help reduce the risk of conflict with coyotes.

- Do not feed coyotes or any wildlife
- Keeping pets safe
  - Do not leave pets unattended outside and keep dogs on a leash
  - Do not let the dog engage with the coyote
  - Keep the dog nearby or if it is a small dog, pick it up
- Report aggressive behavior to the [police@urbandale.org](mailto:police@urbandale.org) or by calling the 24 hour Non-Emergency Dispatch at 515.222.3321
  - A sighting of a coyote by itself is not reason for alarm/coyotes do live in cities
  - Sightings near dawn/dusk are to be expected & do not need to be reported
  - A coyote approaching people or pets should be reported
  - Report any sick or injured coyotes



<http://www.urbandale.org/Coyotes>

Please visit [www.urbandale.org](http://www.urbandale.org) for more information and a list of hazing techniques.

Report encounters, incidents and attacks to the City of Urbandale by emailing [police@urbandale.org](mailto:police@urbandale.org) or by calling the 24 hour Non-Emergency Dispatch at 515.222.3321



**ATTENTION**

**KEEP CHILDREN AND PETS AWAY**

**DUE TO RECENT AGGRESSIVE COYOTE ACTIVITY IN THE NEARBY WOODED AREA, THE CITY OF URBANDALE HAS CONTRACTED TRAPPING AND REMOVAL OF THE COYOTES FREQUENTING THIS AREA.**

**PLEASE KEEP SMALL CHILDREN AND UNLEASHED PETS OUT OF THE AREA WHERE SIGNS ARE POSTED.**

**PLEASE CALL THE URBANDALE PARKS AND RECREATION DEPARTMENT AT 515.331.6799 WITH ANY QUESTIONS**

**FOR MORE INFORMATION PLEASE CONTACT THE CITY OF URBANDALE PARKS AND RECREATION DEPARTMENT 515.331.6799**



## ATTACHMENT C

### Sample Letter for Trapping

Dear Resident,

Coyotes are common across Iowa's landscapes including urban park areas as they make use of river systems, greenways, and parks. A sighting of a coyote by itself is not a reason for alarm. Coyotes do live in our City, and sometimes in close proximity to humans as they make use of the urban environments.

The City of Urbandale regularly communicates with the Iowa DNR in regards to coyote and wildlife issues and, under normal circumstances, the sighting of a coyote does not warrant any action. The removal of a non-aggressive coyote could lead to opportunity for other, more aggressive coyotes to move into the territory.

However, we have had a recent report of an aggressive coyote in your neighborhood, and we will be implementing trapping procedures in Hallbrook Park, with the hope of removing this coyote from the area. Traps will be placed inside the areas marked in yellow on the enclosed map. Signs will be posted at all the park entrances and along the trail near the trapping area. During this time, we ask that you keep all pets and children on the trail and outside of the trapping area. We will be using a certified wildlife specialist to set these traps sometime in the next 7 days. Once the trapping is over, we will remove the signs from the park.

The Iowa DNR has several recommendations and techniques to help reduce conflict with coyotes.

- Do not feed coyotes or any wildlife.
- To keep pets safe:
  - » Do not leave pets unattended outside and keep dogs on a leash.
  - » Do not let the dog engage with the coyote.
  - » Keep your dog nearby and if it is a small dog, pick it up if you see a coyote in the area.

We do ask that you report aggressive behavior to the Urbandale Parks and Recreation Department at 515-331-6799. Again, a single sighting of a coyote by itself is not a reason for alarm, however we do ask that you report coyotes that are being aggressive toward pets or people or if you believe a coyote is injured or sick.

Please feel free to contact me at [shock@urbandale.org](mailto:shock@urbandale.org) or 515-331-6799 at the Urbandale Parks and Recreation office if you have any additional questions.

## ATTACHMENT D

### Additional Information Sources

Iowa State University Extension and Outreach has information on coyotes on their website. This includes general information on coyote ecology as well as information on mitigating habituated coyote behaviors.

<https://naturalresources.extension.iastate.edu/encyclopedia/coyotes-damage-management>

Information from over 20 years of comprehensive coyote research in the Chicago metropolitan area involving several partnering groups: Ohio State University, Cook County Illinois, Forest Preserves of Cook County, and Max McGraw Wildlife Foundation. This website provides details on the study, information about urban coyotes, how to avoid conflicts, and a snapshot of the lives of some of the animals being tracked.

<https://urbancoyoteresearch.com/>

The Urban Canid Project is a University of Wisconsin - Madison study of urban foxes and coyotes in Madison, Wisconsin. The project aims to investigate the way canids are living in Madison and how we can coexist with these wild neighbors.

<http://uwurbancanidproject.weebly.com/>

A sound library of a variety of coyote vocalizations out of Yellowstone National Park is available through the National Park Service. The recordings on this website demonstrate the variety of noises that coyotes make when interacting with each other.

<https://www.nps.gov/yell/learn/photosmultimedia/sounds-coyote.htm>

All websites were last accessed on 5/31/2023.

## **ATTACHMENT E**

### **Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)**

#### **Why are coyotes in town?**

Coyotes are adapted to utilizing edge or marginal habitat features such as exist in urban areas. Rivers, railways, nature paths, and parks are usable space for coyotes. The addition of easily accessible food and protection from hunting activity makes the city good habitat for coyotes.

#### **I heard coyotes last night in the woods behind my house, and I think they killed something. What is the city going to do?**

Coyote vocalizations can vary greatly including howls, yips, squeals, and other noises. Some of these noises can sound alarming. Since you know there are coyotes in the area, please make sure to keep pets supervised at all times, make sure there are not available food sources, and haze any coyote that you see to keep them afraid of people. This report will be monitored closely.

#### **I saw a coyote yesterday morning in my backyard, what should I do?**

Thank you for reporting this to the city. Coyotes are known to live within city limits and typically keep to themselves. A sighting isn't something to be concerned about, but please keep an eye out for more activity. Make sure to keep pets supervised and that no food sources are being left outside that would attract coyotes closer to people. What did the coyote do when it noticed you? Has anyone else in the area witnessed coyote activity?

#### **I was walking my dog on the trail last night and two coyotes followed us for quite some time. It kind of scared me, and I wasn't sure what to do. Can we let other people know?**

I really appreciate you reporting this to the city. I have some questions about the event and then I will inform our park staff and they will make sure signage is up on the trail letting other park users know. How close did the coyotes get? Did they move closer to you or did they seem to keep a set distance? Did either of the animals show their teeth, growl, lunge or approach? Did you make any loud noises or attempt to scare the coyotes? How did they react? Coyotes use some of the green spaces along trails, rivers, and parks. Occasional sightings occur and sometimes they may want to make sure humans leave the area if there are pups or dens involved. Here are some tips for the next time you encounter a coyote...

#### **So, the City isn't going to do anything?**

The city has partnered with the Iowa DNR to develop a management plan for urban coyotes. In accordance with that plan, we are ensuring that the neighborhood is aware of the nearby coyote activity, providing strategies for hazing the coyotes to keep them away from people, and monitoring the situation for any concerning coyote behavior. Thank you for reporting your observation—it is being compiled with other reports that have come into the city and helps the city make informed decisions.

#### **Why don't you just trap and relocate the coyotes?**

The Iowa DNR will not approve any relocation efforts for coyotes for a number of reasons.

- Any trapping and relocation efforts have inherent risk to the trapped animal and field staff handling the animal – there is always a chance for capture injury or death of the animal from stress.
- Moving a habituated coyote to a new area merely moves the problem to somewhere and someone else.
- Relocating wildlife increases the risk of spreading disease.
- Coyotes are territorial and dropping off a foreign coyote in another pack's territory presents a dangerous situation for the transported animal.