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June 24, 2016

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The Honorable City Council
c/o Office of the City Clerk
200 North Spring Street
Room 395, City Hall
Los Angeles, CA 90012

REPORT BACK ON THE COYOTE MANAGEMENT PROGRAM

RECOMMENDATION

- NOTE AND FILE this report back relative to the Coyote Management Program.

SUMMARY

A motion dated May 24, 2016 (Buscaino - Koretz) directed Los Angeles Animal Services (LAAS) to report back to the Personnel and Animal Welfare (PAW) Committee on or before July 1, 2016 with the following items:

1. A detailed plan on the Department's Coyote Management Program (Program);
2. Resources that are currently deployed to implement that Program;
3. Recommendations for improvements to that Program that will further control the coyote population in the City's residential neighborhoods;
4. Including any ordinance or City policy that will support this effort.

BACKGROUND

The Wildlife Program currently consists of one Animal Control Officer (ACO). The team operated with two ACOs several years ago. Although one officer is assigned to Wildlife, all of our ACOs may be called to assist with any wildlife and they are trained to do so.

Over a decade ago, the Department trapped Coyotes. Trapped Coyotes were then put to death by firearm. Due to a public outcry over the deaths of healthy coyotes, and realizing that lethal methods are not an effective solution, the Department changed its practice of trapping and killing coyotes and began to offer education to address coyotes concerns.

ABOUT COYOTES

Coyotes do not want to make contact with or attack humans. Coyotes may be seen in family groups, but often travel alone. Coyotes are known as the "Song Dog" and make 11 distinct vocalizations. So what might sound like eight or more coyotes may only be one or two sending out a greeting or calling to its young. Although people not familiar with coyotes sometimes assume the vocalizations are in celebration of a kill, which is a misnomer. Coyotes could live until 14 years, but in actuality they rarely live to be two or three years old as a result of being hit by cars, killed by large dogs, debilitated by parasites or weather events.

Coyotes contribute to a balance in nature by eating small mammals like rodents, squirrels and sometimes even eat rattlesnakes and scorpions. They also help remove deceased animals from our roadways and hillsides. Coyotes and other wildlife even help by distributing seeds of plants, fruits and trees by passing them in their scats. The Saguaro Cactus, which is endangered, is one such plant that coyotes have a paw in helping. So the next time you eat some fruit from a local tree in your yard, it may be there courtesy of the "Song Dog".

Unfortunately we humans have done the coyotes a disservice by making our small pets, garbage cans, outdoor feeders for pets and children's' swimming pools easily accessible for hungry coyotes.

Below are excerpts from the National Wildlife Federation website about Coyotes in an article called, "Coyotes living large in the City - Coyotes are cozying up to humans in cities across the Nation":

- From coast to coast they've become a fact of life in American cities. They howl in downtown Chicago, trot across Wilshire Boulevard in Beverly Hills and dig dens in and around Tucson, St. Louis, Boston, Detroit and Washington, D.C. Coyotes born and raised in cities prefer cities, says wildlife ecologist Stan Gehrt of Ohio State University, who has radio-collared nearly 200 coyotes in Chicago. "It's not a matter of coyotes being pushed out of better habitat and into a city. For the majority of these animals, they're home. They're where they want to be."

- While these four-footed neighbors are bound to make some city dwellers nervous, Gehrt and other wildlife experts say there's no reason to be afraid. "At this point, all cities have them," says Matthew Gompper, a wildlife biologist at the University of Missouri. "Urban coyotes are probably much more common than people realize." Most coyotes stay away from people; it's something every pup learns to do.

- A modern city might at first seem like a pretty bizarre place for a coyote to live in. Not so, says Paul Krausman, a University of Arizona wildlife biologist who is studying two groups of coyotes in downtown Tucson. "Coyotes are one of the most adaptable species on the face of the Earth," he says. "In urban areas, they've got everything they need. There are no

wolves or mountain lions, so they're at the top of the heap. People are throwing out garbage for them to eat, and they're watering their lawns, which attracts prey species. It's a perfect setup."

- The key to getting along with coyotes is: Don't undo what coyotes have learned so well. Feeding them, for example, can make them unafraid of people, and then the problems begin.

Wikipedia provides the following descriptive information about Coyotes (edited for this report):

- Coyotes average 15–44 pounds in weight and their body length ranges on average from 3-5 feet. Their tail can be 16 inches in length.

- The hair's predominant color is light gray and red or fulvous, interspersed around the body with black and white. The coyote's fur consists of short, soft under fur and long, coarse guard hairs.

- The Coyote is typically smaller than the gray wolf, but has longer ears and a larger braincase as well as a thinner frame, face, and muzzle. The coyote also carries its tail downwards when running or walking, rather than horizontally as the wolf does. Coyote tracks can be distinguished from those of dogs by their more elongated, less rounded shape.

Photos of Coyotes:

Coyotes are not considered or regulated as "Game animals" according to the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW). According to CDFW coyotes cannot be relocated. If trapped they must be immediately released in the same area or killed.

The L.A. Animal Services Wildlife Officer, along with CDFW and the National Park Service (NPS) respond to community calls and provide personal service and information to many area residents such as not leaving food outdoors for their pets which has the effect of inviting the coyotes looking for food into the neighborhoods. Often, trash and food is left available on the ground in community parks and parking lots which then has the same effect.

The Department recently conferred with CDFW Staff and NPS staff and there is a consensus that there has not been an increase in the number of coyotes in the communities. What all of the agencies are experiencing is an increase to the number of calls attributed to an increase in social media and how new voices now have easier means to express concerns. In the past, where one coyote may have generated one call, today it may generate as many as 20 calls to Animal Services alone (this actually occurred in South Los Angeles in 2015). The agencies also find that multiple agencies are also getting the same report for the same coyote.

CDFW and NPS acknowledge that there is no scientific data that proves or disproves that there is an increase in coyote activity in urban communities. Their findings, as is the Department's, are purely on what staff are experiencing and have for decades

In July of 2015, the General Manager for the Department of Animal Services released a "Tips Sheet" for Angelenos titled, "How to Co-Exist with Coyotes". In this release, she states, "If accurate it may be reflective of the drought, but I'm starting to think that either people are making it easier for them to get food or the coyotes may have simply adapted to urban living and lost their traditional fear of people." CDFW and The Departments Wildlife Officer find that this is what the community is experiencing, and has for a decade or longer. It is nothing new. Again, it seems to be new voices in the community who are re-emphasizing a long-time trend that happens to be relatively new in their experience. With the expanded reach empowered by social media, more people are engaged even though the number of coyotes may not have increased at all.

On July 23, 2015, representatives from LAPD, Department of Recreation and Parks, CDFW and LAAS' Officers met with approximately a dozen community members to propose a community action plan called, "Wildlife Watch". More will be explained below.

The Department of Animal Services, CDFW and NPS share information about what lawful means can be taken to counter the wildlife concerns in their neighborhoods. Both Departments have also shared information with the residents about what lawful means can be taken by residents to remove coyotes. This includes, but is not limited to hiring private trappers with applicable permits. CDFW, LAAS and NPS agree that the removal of coyotes from their natural indigenous area will create a "vacuum effect". This means that other coyotes will move into the territory once occupied by their predecessors to fill in the ecological niche. With more space and a greater food source, the size of the litters will likely increase in this scenario.

The Humane Society of the United States offers the following information regarding the killing and removal of coyotes:

> **Why don't coyote-killing programs work? (Adapted from a book called "Wild Neighbors")**
>
> For more than a century, human beings have waged a war on coyotes, killing them with poison, traps, guns, hunting dogs, and a variety of other cruel coyote killing methods. Nonetheless, the wary nature of coyotes and their remarkable adaptability has allowed them to quadruple their range throughout North America.
>
> As a result, communities across the country are encountering coyotes and experiencing conflicts that they have never had to face before. The presence of coyotes in a community can be alarming to those who are not used to living with them.

Occasional attacks by coyotes on pets and coyote aggression toward people (although rare) can trigger alarm from people who fear for the safety of their pets and children. To allay this, communities may feel they need to initiate wide scale programs to trap and kill coyotes. These killing programs don't work and are inhumane.

They are ineffective.

- It is extremely difficult to ensure that the problem-causing coyote(s) will be the one(s) located and killed
- Coyotes removed from an area will quickly be replaced by others. Coyote pairs hold territories, which leaves single coyotes ("floaters") constantly looking for new places to call home.
- If attractants in a neighborhood are not removed (e.g., pet food, garbage, etc.) new coyotes in an area can quickly become "nuisance" coyotes.

They won't reduce coyote populations.

- Research suggests that when aggressively controlled, coyotes can increase their reproductive rate by breeding at an earlier age and having larger litters, with a higher survival rate among young. This allows coyote populations to quickly bounce back, even when as much as 70 percent of their numbers are removed.
- It is 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 percent of a coyote population every year for 50 years would still not exterminate the population.

Removal is costly.

- Coyotes are intelligent animals and are difficult to catch. Even a skilled trapper or sharpshooter, at a hefty price tag, will need many hours to catch a targeted coyote.

Trapping is inhumane.

- The most common devices used to capture coyotes are leg-hold traps and neck snares. Both can cause severe injuries, pain, and suffering.
- 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 the families affected.
- Non-target wild animals are also caught in traps, and many sustain injuries so severe that they die or must be killed.

What about diseased coyotes?

Some coyote trappers claim that diseased coyotes are to blame for pet attack incidents, and that removing such animals from the population is the answer. This is not the case.

- There is no evidence that coyotes with mange are more likely to attack people or pets. Mange-afflicted coyotes can simply appear threatening because they are weak, strange-looking (due to hair loss), and may be found resting in suburban areas during the daytime.

- Attacks on dogs during the months of April-December are probably caused by coyotes that have lost their fear of people. This occurs when coyotes are being fed in residential areas and are not chased away by people.
- A 10-year study of over 300 coyotes in the greater Chicago metropolitan area found only two coyotes that had attacked pets. Necropsies done on these coyotes showed that they had been eating pet food, but were otherwise healthy.

Can we relocate coyotes?

Although it may seem like a more humane alternative, relocating coyotes is not a good idea.

- Relocating a coyote is most often a death sentence for that animal.
- Coyotes are very territorial and occupy large home ranges up to 40 square miles.
- If relocated, they will do almost anything to get back home.
- Unfamiliar with their new terrain, they are often killed by cars.
- They can be injured or killed during territorial disputes with coyotes already established in the area that they are released in.

In addition, California State wildlife laws prohibit the relocation of coyotes, since they are a rabies-vector species (even though rabies is very rare in coyotes).

WILDLIFE PROGRAM INFORMATION (COYOTE MANAGEMENT PROGRAM)

The Department has "Wildlife Program Information" available to the public on the Department's Website along with informational brochures and contact information focusing on coyote management information (see attached copy or the LAAS' Website and Coyote brochure).

Staff researched other agency management plans which include: Long Beach, Culver City and Calabasas. The information these programs provide does appear to be comparable with the Department's Wildlife Program Information and current practices. The Department's program is also enhanced by having an ACO dedicated to Wildlife concerns. We have found that most agencies to not have a dedicated Wildlife Officer.
These are steps the Department takes when a Coyote is reported to be acting aggressively towards people or pets:

1. When the District receives a call for Coyote acting aggressively towards a person or animal, the call is treated like any other dangerous animal call. It is a priority #2 (out of 19) on our list. An ACO is dispatched immediately. If the attack was on a human, the CDFW is immediately notified along with the Los Angeles Police Department.
2. When the officer arrives, and the incident is over, the information is sent to the Department's ACO assigned to Wildlife for follow-up.
3. Once the ACO assigned to Wildlife receives the information, the call is set up for a follow-up call back to the person reporting the incident for more details about what occurred.
4. An investigation is conducted to determine why the attack took place and recommendations are made to prevent future incidents.
5. The officer logs this activity into our data management system and sets up random patrols to see if that coyote can be found. This would only occur if the coyote was not captured or killed at the time of the attack.

6. In most cases, the CDFW will conduct their own investigation. The Department's Wildlife officer will assist with the investigation. The Department follows State guidelines regarding Wildlife.

If a call comes in to the District for a Coyote sighting only, the person is referred to the Department's Wildlife phone number at 323-225-WILD. The ACOassigned to Wildlife contacts the person to obtain more information and conducts one or more of the following steps:

1. Advises them over the phone
2. Sends out printed information
3. Arranges a Community meeting to address Wildlife issues
4. Directs them to the Department's Web page on "Wildlife"
5. Sets up a meeting and conducts a personal visit and assessment
6. Sets up a patrol for that area
7. If a "feeder" of wildlife is observed, the officer issues a Citation which carries a minimum $100 fine.
8. If the animal(s) are observed by the officer to be injured or sick, arrangements to trap the coyote are put in place.
9. If the animal needs to be captured due to its injuries or medical condition the Department's Specialized Mobile Animal Rescue Team (SMART) can be deployed to assist with the capture.

The ACO assigned to Wildlife also works closely with CFWD, NPS, Los Angeles Recreation and Park Rangers and the Los Angeles Police Department Block Captains to share information and data that helps with understanding coyote behavior in an urban setting. Recently, NPS invited the Animal Control Officer assigned to Wildlife to attend a special "Stomach Content" study which demonstrated that the urban coyotes they studied had a majority of "man made" processed foods in their systems. The Department's Wildlife Officer continues to be involved and informed of research and data from these agencies that he shares with the public.

As stated earlier, the Department collaborated with CDFW and helped introduce CDFW's "Wildlife Watch" program to Los Angeles residents in 2015. The plan is very similar to the style and techniques used in Neighborhood Watch programs nationally. It involves the community to be additional eyes and ears and provides them hands on skills for identifying and addressing wildlife in their neighborhoods. It provides a direct working relationship with all of the departments involved. The program better prepares residents with realistic expectations and training. It builds community and trust while we all work towards developing a more informed community with regard to wildlife "Do's and don'ts" which will help keep wildlife from wanting to enter these residential neighborhoods.

RECOMMENDATION:

The Department strongly believes that the best approach to responsible coyote management or "control" is ongoing education on how to co-exist with indigenous wildlife. To that end, we would like to highlight our staffing shortage:

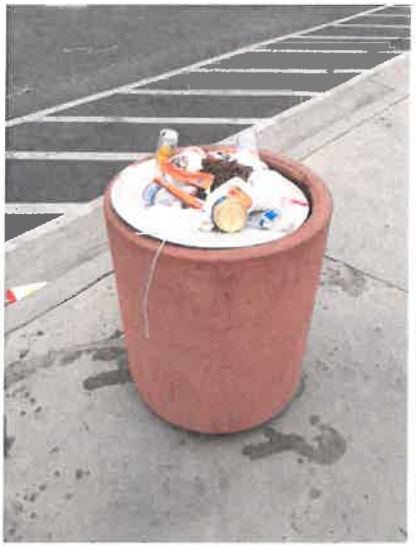
During the 2015-16 budget cycle, the Department was given authorization to hire 32 officers (filling 8 vacancies, 12 new positions and 12 unfunded authorities) and this year we were given the same 32 for 2016-17 with the 12 unfunded from last year being funded. Unfortunately, it has been a long time since the City Personnel has had to fill these positions so no list was available to hire from and other City Departments were also given positions that needed to be filled. Many departments have experienced long delays in hiring as a result. We do very much look forward to bringing these 32 new officers onboard, a few at a time and giving them the training they will need. We began a class of six new recruits this last Monday, on June 13th. They will complete their training, which includes a module on wildlife, within the next six month. As we are able to add new officers, the training is adapted to allow new recruits to begin training without delay.

The Wildlife program operates without clerical support relying on one Wildlife Officer to answer phones, respond to emails, mail out information (for those without internet access) and enter and collect data. Between 15 and 20 calls are received on the Wildlife Phone line daily, 24 hrs a day, and 365 days a year. With clerical support, the officer would be freed up to respond to more field calls, conduct more Community outreach and patrol areas.

The Department also recommends that the City purchase wildlife proof trash containers for parks and public areas where coyotes frequent. NPS advised the Department that although this would help, the larger concern is food or trash left on the ground and in places like parking lots. Below are sample pictures of what a wildlife proof trash container would look like compared to current public trash containers used in Los Angeles.

Wildlife Proof Trash Container examples used in Yosemite:

Common Public Trash Containers photographed in Los Angeles:



Other recommendations include increased signage warning people not to feed Coyotes:

The Department does not recommend any changes to City ordinances or policies at this time.

FISCAL IMPACT

None for the Department.

Cost to purchase, distribute and maintain wildlife proof trash cans and do not feed wildlife signage for City will involve City Departments other than LAAS.

Brenda F. Barnette

Brenda F. Barnette
General Manager

Attachments
- LAAS Website/coyotes
- LAAS Brochure: coyotes
- LAAS recent Press Release

City of Los Angeles
Animal Services

How to Co-Exist with Coyotes
TIPS from Los Angeles Animal Services

Dear Angelenos,

Some neighborhoods feel they are seeing more coyote visitors this year.If accurate it may be reflective of the drought, but I'm starting to think that either people are making it easier for them to get food or the coyotes may have simply adapted to urban living and lost the fear of people. At this time we are recommending the use of humane "hazing techniques" designed to re-instill the fear of people for the coyotes.

I'd like to offer you a few tips and suggestions to keep your two and four-legged family members safe.

Four Quick Tips:

1. Do not feed Wildlife, even indirectly.

- If you feed your companion animals outdoors, give them ten or fifteen minutes to eat and then remove the food bowls.Partially eaten food or even odiferous empty food bowls attract hungry wildlife.
- Keep trash cans tightly closed with tamper proof tops.
- Empty water containers such as outside water for companion animals or children's pools. Keep the cover on the spa and keep the gate to the pool closed.

2. Supervise your pets and small children when outside.

3. Remove unnecessary undergrowth that creates hiding places.

- Generally coyotes are reclusive and like to hide in brush or thickets. Thinning or clearing the undergrowth removes hiding places.

4. Safely haze without harming them, instilling their natural fear of Humans.

- Coyotes who have adapted to urban living may realize there are few real threats and may approach people or visit yards when people are present. Safe and humane hazing can re-instill the fear of people.
- NOTE:It is critical to use a variety of different hazing tools so the coyotes don't get used to a single device, sound, or action.

Methods of Hazing

Using a variety of different hazing tools is critical so that coyotes don't get used to redundant or single stimulus devices, sounds, and actions. Here are a few methods of hazing that I found on the Humane Society of the United States (HSUS) website.

- Yelling and waving your arms while approaching the coyote
- Noisemakers: Voice, whistles, air horns, bells, "shaker" cans full of marbles or pennies, pots, lid or pie pans banged together
- Projectiles: sticks, small rocks, cans, tennis balls or rubber balls
- Other: hoses, water guns with vinegar water, spray bottles with vinegar water, pepper spray or bear repellent

"Go Away Coyote!"

The simplest method of hazing a coyote involves being loud and large. Stand tall, wave your arms, and yell at the coyote, approaching him if necessary, until he runs away. If a coyote has not been hazed before, he may not immediately run away when you yell at him. If this happens, walk towards the coyote and increase the intensity of your hazing.

The coyote may run away, but then stop after a distance and look at you. It is important to continue to go after the coyote until he completely leaves the area. You may need to use different tactics, such as noisemakers, stomping your feet, or spraying the coyote with a hose to get him to leave.

Dog-Walking Tools

There are several tools that you can carry with you while walking your dog that can be used to repel coyotes. These include:

- Homemade noisemakers
- Whistle or small air horn (you can purchase small air horn "necklaces")
- Squirt guns
- Pepper spray
- Sticks or other objects to throw towards (but not at) the coyote

In Your Yard

Remember, 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 at home. First, try the "Go away coyote!" method (yell and wave your arms as you approach the coyote). Here are some additional methods you can also use:

- Squirt the coyote with your garden hose
- Spray the coyote with vinegar water
- Bang pots and pans together

Important things to remember

NEVER run away from a coyote! The coyote may not leave at first, but if you approach him closer and/or increase the intensity of your hazing, he will run away. If the coyote runs away a short distance and then stops and looks at you, continue hazing until he leaves the area entirely.

After you have successfully hazed a coyote, he or she may return. Continue to haze the coyote as you did before; it usually takes only one or two times to haze a coyote away for good.

If you continue to experience unusual Wildlife behaviors, please contact the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (http://www.dfg.ca.gov). For more information regarding how to co-exist with our local Wildlife, search on or call our LA Animal Services NON EMERGENCY Wildlife phone line 323-225-WILD (9453). For any urgent animal related EMERGENCY calls (injured, orphaned (alone >24 hours), distressed, or sick animals) call your local shelter at 888-452-7381 and follow the prompts. For any Human life threatening situations call 9-1-1.

Enjoy the rest of your summer,

Brenda F Barnette

Brenda F. Barnette
General Manager
Los Angeles Animal Services

ANIMAL SERVICES

WILDLIFE PROGRAM INFORMATION

If you have concerns about wildlife in and around your neighborhood or you live in an area where there are some wildlife issues. Here you will find information that may help you better understand wildlife behavior and ways to help prevent further wildlife conflicts. The Los Angeles Department of Animal Services has a Wildlife Division to aid residents in rectifying problems and some of the uneasiness that many people are now facing with wildlife. This program allows for a department representative to provide on-site evaluations, education on methods of exclusion, deterrents and discouragement of wildlife forays into our city neighborhoods. It is not the intention of the Department of Animal Services to remove wildlife from residential areas. Rather, the Department is hoping to rectify most problems through neighborhood education and individual homeowner attention. This is a multi-tiered program designed to help neighborhoods better deal with wildlife issues, and further lessen contact with these animals by investigating changes in both human and wildlife behavior.

Regarding Coyotes

Prior to 1994, the Department of Animal Services did routinely trap and euthanize coyotes. The focus at that time was simply to remove problem animals. Due to changes in thinking within and outside the department, studies in coyote behavior and new laws pertaining to trapping, the practice was stopped. The removal of coyotes temporarily resolved problems but failed to address the real issues.

Change in Thinking

In spite of the destruction of large numbers of wild animals throughout the United States the problem remains today and in many instances worsened dramatically. After speaking with many experts we discovered some of the reasons why. The source of the problem is not the presence of wildlife, it is the environment that humans provide for them just by the simple manner in how we are the provider of food, water and cover for them. Many people are encouraging wild animals to live near their homes inadvertently or by design. Unfortunately, urban sprawl is something that remains a constant. If we are going to push further and further into the habitat of wild animals we need to be responsible for our behavior. Change in wildlife behavior through negative interactions with humans by using deterrents is one way to alter the types of encounters we have with them. In many cases this will teach further generations to avoid habitats where deterrent measures have been implemented. The opposite is also true as well; if we do nothing and allow things to remain unchecked then the wildlife behavior remains the same.

The following Q&A section was designed to help with many common myths and facts regarding natural history of predatory urban wildlife.

Questions & Answers

Q: What is the function of predatory wildlife, what are they good for?

A: Many Environmentalists firmly believe that predatory wildlife exists to preserve the balance of nature. Bears, bobcats, coyotes, foxes, mountain lions, opossums, raccoons & skunks are some of the most successful species on the planet. These animals are classified as Carnivores and Omnivores; they will eat just about anything and to some degree they do help keep rodent and insect populations in check. In some areas around the United States where there has been attempts to eradicate wild predators, there has been increases in rodent vermin and related disease. The circle of life can seem cruel by human standards but many prey and rodent species would overrun urban areas damaging crops and vegetation if the populations of predator species did not keep them in check. It is also predatory wildlife, which serves as natureâ€™s vacuum since they eat dead rodents around our homes as well.

Q: Why canâ€™t predatory wildlife be trapped and relocated to another area or the forest?

A: The California Department of Fish and Game, the United States Department of Fish and Wildlife and the National Park Services Department prohibit the relocation of most predatory wildlife. Some wild animals are considered to be vermin by Agriculture Departments throughout the United States. Sadly, euthanasia has been something many local animal authority agencies have had to use for lack of a better system. There are several reasons why relocation has not been a viable alternative; a problem predator that is relocated into another community will continue with the same behavior. Another problem is if you take that urban wild animal and move it to the "forest" or what may be deemed a truly wild area far from a community, it would most likely be attacked and injured if not killed by other predators, which may have already established territory. A wild animal that lives within the boundaries of a city and lived its life mainly as a scavenger may not have honed itâ€™s hunting skills well enough and therefore die as it was used to more opportunistic foraging of outdoor pet food, water, rodents, back yard fruit and vegetables, trash, etc. Vector disease is another factor. Wild predators in urban settings may have been exposed to diseases associated with domestic pets, which could be transmitted to other wildlife that normally never would have been exposed. Trapping and removing animals has done nothing to correct the human equation. The cycle will repeat itself as long as people fail to change own their habits. Trapping is indiscriminate process and may catch any animal and we may even be removing an animal that has never participated in any of the negative behaviors you are experiencing. The possibility also exists that you may catch a parent animal foraging for food that has immature young that will now die a cruel and lingering death by exposure and starvation. The belief that removing the animal from its territory will solve the problem is like believing that no one will move into your home if you moved out. The Department has discontinued the trapping of wildlife within the City of Los Angeles. It is your right as a citizen to contact a pest control company that has permits to remove wild mammals. The wildlife trapped by pest control companies would be euthanized as State law prohibits the relocation of predatory mammals. The Department of Animal Services is not giving permits for the public to use their own, rented or borrowed traps. The Wildlife Division recommends the use of deterrents, exclusionary methods and adjustments around the exterior of your home to make it less inviting to wildlife. If you are having a problem with wildlife making forays into your property, you may contact the Departments Wildlife Division for further advice.

Q: Why canâ€™t we create watering holes for wild predators so they will return or stay in their normal environment?

A: The majority of the wildlife you see in your neighborhood were born nearby. No amount of water would cause an urban predator to stay in one place. The water would certainly benefit the wildlife but they would still venture to find food. Some studies have shown the use of water "Guzzlers" that have been instituted in arid regions have been helpful in supporting wildlife, but in the urban setting it is not much help. An ambitious water source program provided better management of water guzzlers in Southern California for quail and larger animals between the 1940â€™s and 1960â€™s. The California Department of Fish and Game constructed 2,000 artificial water sources in the state. Unfortunately, over time, the locations of these guzzlers had been lost due to decay, budget cuts and personnel changes. Some other studies show that the use of drinkers and guzzlers may create a situation where predatory wildlife would learn to lay in wait for prey species visiting the man made water source, which again upsets natureâ€™s delicate balance.

Q: I am worried about my children; do predators such as bobcats, coyotes, foxes and mountain lions attack, injure or kill people?

A: Can it happen? Yes. What are the chances? Wild animal attacks on people are extremely rare. In regards to coyotes, there is an estimate from the Department of Fish and Game that 1 to 5 people per year, per state that are injured due to a coyote. In Southern California from 1978 to 2009 it is estimated from reports that there have been 92 coyote attacks on people with 59 of these coyote attacks resulting in injury. Many of have been linked to feeding coyotes, defending a family pet , or attempting to touch a coyote. There is 1 human fatality known to be caused by a coyote in Glendale in 1981 which was linked to direct feeding of the animal. In California, from 1890 through 2006 there were 13 verified Mountain lion attacks on people and 6 of those attacks resulted in human deaths. Bobcat, Fox, Raccoon, Skunk and Opossum attacks are virtually unknown with bites usually being incidental as a result someone attempting to handle the animal. Many people worry about coyotes causing the death of a human yet there are over 300 people that have been killed by domestic dogs in the U.S. between the 1970â€™s and the late 1990â€™s. In the United States there are approximately 3 to 5 million people that are attacked by dogs every year, with 20 deaths on average per year so a child is more likely to get hurt by a domestic dog than by a coyote. This means that your family dog or your neighbor's dog is ten times more likely kill someone than a mountain lion and hundreds of times more likely than a coyote. Most attacks occur when wild animals lose their fear of humans often because people are feeding or encouraging them. Statistically the chances of wildlife attacks on humans causing fatality are low when compared to 43,000 people killed by auto accidents, 13,000 people killed by falls, and on the obscure side 13 people that are killed by vending machine's falling on them every year. Practice animal safety at all times. Show children how to react when in the presence of any animal. If you are not sure of what the appropriate response is to the appearance of a particular wild animal, you may contact the Departments Wildlife Division or the Department of Fish & Game for further advice.

Q: I am worried for the safety of my pets, how can I protect them?

A: Bears, bobcats, coyotes, foxes and mountain lions are the animals that most people worry about for their pets. The main concern of the aforementioned animals would be the coyote. Wild animals are opportunistic and coyotes fit this mold very well. Coyote attacks tend to be on pets that are less than 20 pounds and more often on pets less than 10 pounds. Always walk your dog on a leash at all times and stay close to high pedestrian traffic areas. Try not to establish a regular routine and route to avoid setting up a pattern for the coyote to detect. Avoid bushy areas or paths near abandoned properties. If you notice a coyote when walking your dog, keep your dog as close to you as possible and move towards an active area. Never let that coyote go by without scaring it. Carry something with you to scare wildlife away such as an air horn, walking stick, umbrella and something to throw such as baseballs or golf balls. Never encourage or allow your pet to interact or "play" with coyotes. If you are seeing these animals around your home, make sure that you fence is in a good condition, do not leave pets unattended outdoors if possible. If your cat or dog must be outside, consider constructing an outdoor 6-sided enclosure that is made of heavy gauge wire or chain-link with an enclosed access way to the house. Remove food sources such as fallen fruit and food refuse, Remove pet food when your pet is not outside. Small mammals such as opossums, raccoons and skunks are not usually a threat for domestic pets and quite often it is the other way around as they are victims of dog attacks. For further information contact the Departments Wildlife Division for a brochure about specific wildlife.

Q: I know someone that puts out food for wildlife, is that all right?

A: No, as a matter of fact it is against the law. Deliberately feeding wild predators puts you, your pets and your neighbors at risk. Observing wild animals is one of the many benefits of living in or near wildlife habitat. The experience can turn unpleasant or even dangerous, however, when well-meaning people feed wildlife. When people feed predatory animals, they can become unnaturally bold and this usually results in conflict that often ends in serious harm, or even death to the animal or in some rare cases to a person. One example is people that throw food to wild animals from their automobiles, this trains the animals to stay close to the road where the wildlife is often killed or seriously wounded. There are coyotes that have been observed begging food in some areas as a result of feeding too. In cases where a person holds out the food to a coyote then withholds it in order to draw them closer or tries to play keep away, the wild animal often becomes "Food Aggressive" and nips at the person to get them to release the food item. Coyotes for example may dance about and look playful prior to this happening giving the impression that it is friendly. It is a matter of time before feeding them does more harm than good. Wild animals that associate people as a provider of food invariably end up having to be destroyed for displaying aggressive behavior.

Q: We've always had wildlife around here, why are the coyotes and other wild animals acting differently now?

A: You are not alone in your concern about the presence of predatory wildlife in their neighborhoods. Predators such as coyotes have adapted to human presence and behavior. We as humans go for walks or hikes in parks, recreation areas and mountain ranges. We see coyotes and they see us, the reaction when most of us see predatory wildlife is to take no action at all or run away, so the coyotes have no reason to fear human presence and therefore become bolder in behavior. Homes are being built further into natural habitat and certain types of landscaping make it more inviting to these animals. If we do not change our ways, the behavior will continue. Progressive deterrent and exclusion measures should be used before problems start.

Department Function & Policy

The City of Los Angeles does not own or have any control of wild animals found within its boundaries, nor is the city responsible for the actions or damage caused by them. There are no laws, policies or mandates requiring the department to remove native wildlife. These animals are a common and important integral part of our ecosystem, biosphere and the circle of life. The Department of Animal Services was originally created to deal with problems arising from stray dogs and to enforce laws pertaining to them. Wildlife to a small degree has been included in the scope of the services that the department provides as need has arisen due to encroachment on wild habitat which has resulted in wild animals being involved in distress situations in which they required rescue. Awareness through education is key in resolving conflicts with wildlife.

For further information, please contact:
Los Angeles Wildlife Program
North Central Animal Shelter
3201 Lacy Street Los Angeles, Ca. 90031
(323) 225-WILD (9453)
or email hoang.dinh@lacity.org

AN EQUAL EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY AFFIRMATIVE ACTION EMPLOYER

Visit our website at www.LAAnimalServices.com Wildlife Brochures on the Internet at:
http://www.laanimalservices.com/about-animals/wildlife

Deterrents & Scare Tactics

- Sprinkle cayenne pepper or chili powder in areas where coyotes sleep to deter them from staying. These types of deterrents do not last & will need to be repeated if they become wet. Do not use these methods where children have access & do not use near air ducts.
- Use motion activated strobe lights, sprinklers, or radios that are set to talk or news stations to help deter the coyotes. Use caution as strobe lights can trigger seizures in people or pets with epilepsy.
- Use a coyote shaker can. This is a can containing a few coins which can be shaken & thrown towards a coyote. Throw tennis balls, open & close an umbrella towards the coyote, bang two pans together, blow a whistle, use an air horn, or use a high pressure water sprayer. Alternate the deterrents to prevent coyotes from getting used to one method.

Frequently Asked Questions

- **What should I do if a coyote approaches me?** Wave your arms. Shout in a low, loud tone. Throw objects at the coyote while maintaining eye contact. Make yourself look as big as possible. If you are wearing a jacket , take it off & swing around over your head. If possible go towards active or populated areas but do not turn your back & run from the coyote as that could trigger a chase.
- **How can I keep my dog safe?** Closely supervise your dog. Do not leave small dogs unattended in your yard. Walk your dog on a leash at all times & stay close to high pedestrian traffic areas. Try not to establish a regular routine & route to avoid setting up a pattern for the coyote to detect. Avoid dense brushy areas or paths near abandoned properties. If you notice a coyote when walking your dog, keep your dog as close to you as possible & move towards an active area. Never encourage or allow your dog to interact or "play" with coyotes.
- **How can I keep my cat safe?** Keep your cat indoors at all times. If your cat must be outside, consider constructing an outdoor 6 sided enclosure that is made of heavy gauge wire or chain-link with an enclosed access way to the house.
- **How can I keep my children safe?** Make sure that your children never play outside in the same clothes they just ate food in. Wildlife may be attracted to food odors in clothing. Make sure children wash thoroughly after eating. Provide children with a whistle & breakaway necklace they can blow it if an animal approaches. Never let them approach any stray animal. If a coyote approaches, they should face the animal, move slowly to another person or dwelling entrance, raise their arms over their head, clap their hands, stomp their feet, blow a whistle, & call out in a stern loud voice "There is a coyote here." The best thing to do is avoid leaving children unattended.
- **Final Thought:** Keep in mind that coyote attacks on humans are rare with most attacks taking place as result of people feeding them. Coyotes should be frightened off when the chance presents itself to keep them fearful of humans, which benefits coyotes & people. Coyotes will always be around, trapping throughout history has not changed that. If trapping worked, there would be no more coyotes since it has been done over 200 years.

City of Los Angeles

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221 N Figueroa Street 5th Floor
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(888) 452-7381 Fax: (213) 482-9511

http://www.laanimalservices.com/About_Animals/Wildlife.htm

North Central Shelter
3201 Lacy Street
Los Angeles, CA 90031

Harbor Shelter
957 N Gaffey Street
San Pedro, CA 90731

East Valley Shelter
14409 Vanowen Street
Los Angeles, CA 91405

West Valley Shelter
20655 Plummer Street
Chatsworth, CA 91311

South LA Shelter
1850 W 60th Street
Los Angeles. CA 90047

West LA Shelter
11361 W Pico Boulevard
Los Angeles, CA 90064

ENCOUNTERS WITH...

COYOTES

Courtesy of the Los Angeles Zoo
Photo by Greg Randall, LA Animal Services Wildlife Division

City of Los Angeles
Department of
Animal Services
Wildlife Division

LA ANIMAL SERVICES

Coyote (Canis Latrans)

The California Department of Fish and Game surveys an estimated population range of 250,000 to 750,000 coyotes throughout California. The coyote weighs an average of 18 to 40 lbs. They can run at speeds of 25 mph and sprint up to 40 mph.

Coyote Breeding & Lifespan

Coyotes in captivity and in the wild may generally live to be 14 years old, however urban coyotes rarely live to ages beyond 2 or 3 years as a result of being hit by cars, killed by large dogs, disease and parasite affliction, rodent poison ingestion, and extreme weather events.

LA Animal Services Wildlife Division

Coyote Sightings

Coyotes may be seen in a family group, yet urban coyote's are often seen traveling alone or in pairs. Coyotes are very clever indigenous predators that have conformed to living in close proximity to humans. They are seen in residential areas, vacant lots, hillsides, parks, city streets, freeways, landscaped areas, abandoned properties, horse trails, fire roads, flood channels, storm drains, and aqueducts.

Photo by Troy Boswell, LA Animal Services Wildlife Division

Coyote Food Habits

Coyotes find food & water from a variety of sources and their diet consists primarily of rodents, small mammals and insects. When hunting in a pack, they can go for larger prey such as deer. Coyotes are opportunistic and may also go after cats, small dogs, poultry, sheep, and goats when given the chance. Coyotes are also scavengers and will eat fruit, vegetable matter, and food refuse.

Coyote Sounds

Coyotes are also known as the "song dog" and make *11 distinct vocalizations; growl, huff, woof, bark, bark-howl, whine, woo-oo-wow, yelp, lone howl, group howl, and group yip-howl, *(*Gier 1975, Bekoff 1978*) so what may sound like 8 or more coyotes may only be 1 or 2 sending out a greeting or calling to young, not celebrating a kill, which is a misnomer.

Trapping Wildlife in the City of Los Angeles

The City of Los Angeles Department of Animal Services is not providing traps or issuing trapping permits for the public to use their own, rented, or borrowed traps to remove nuisance wildlife. The trapping or relocation of wildlife by the public is prohibited. The Department of Animal Services suggests trying property alteration, deterrents, & exclusionary methods. The option exists for L.A. City residents to contract with a Nuisance or Pest Control company that has permits to trap and remove some types of mammals. Wildlife trapped by these agencies would be released on site or immediately euthanized. ***California State law prohibits the relocation of predatory mammals (CCR Title 14 sec. 465.5).***

Regarding Fences

Studies have shown coyotes are capable of scaling various types of fences upwards of 6 feet in height and often able to clear jump over fences of 5 feet with angles of adjacent hillside playing a factor. Increasing fence height to at least 6 feet and add an angle at the top facing outward at 45 degrees that is 16 to 18 inches wide, or use a device known as the coyote roller® available through the Internet. Fences over 6 feet in height may require a variance so check local laws beforehand. The bottom of the fence should be at least 12 to 18 inches underground and line the trench with rock or have a stone footing; alternatively an apron at the base of the fence extending an additional 18 to 24 inches outward can be used. Wrought-iron bar gaps should be no wider than about 3 ½ inches.

Do's and Don'ts

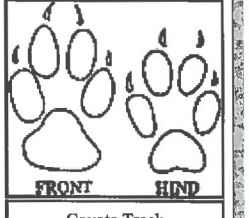
- Keep your pets indoors if possible since coyotes may be active at any time of day or night. Confine very small pets that you cannot keep indoors to 6 sided covered enclosures constructed of a heavy gauge wire mesh. Coyotes can break through chicken wire.
- Walk your dog on a leash at all times. If your yard does not have a fence, keep your pet close to you while outside.
- Pick fruit from trees when ripened and remove all fallen fruit. Cut low hanging branches to prevent the coyotes feeding from trees. Trim and thin ground-level shrubbery. Create a 1 foot clearance of space below hedges and bushes to reduce animal hiding places.
- Vegetable gardens should be protected with heavy duty garden fences or greenhouse.
- Check with your local plant nursery to see what type of deterrent products are available. If you have access to the Internet, you may find some items on-line.
- Close off crawl spaces under your home, porches, decks, and sheds. Coyotes use such areas for resting and raising young.
- Clean and store barbecue grills after use.
- Avoid having open wood, brush, and compost piles.
- Do not allow pets to roam from home.
- Do not feed wildlife. It is illegal to feed predatory mammals in the City of Los Angeles (L.A.M.C. Sec. 53.06.5). Report violations of people observed to be feeding wild mammals.

Photo by Greg Randall, LA Animal Services Wildlife Division

- Do not leave pet food or water bowls outside if your pet is not outdoors.
- Put all trash bags inside the trash cans and keep lids securely fastened. Place trash cans and bins inside sheds, garages or other enclosed structures. Do not set your trash out until the day of pick-up to reduce attracting predators.
- Do not attempt to pet or otherwise make physical contact with wildlife. Coyotes are wild animals and should be treated as such.
- Never leave small children unattended outdoors.
- Share this information with your neighbors, as your efforts may be futile if someone is providing food or shelter for coyotes.

Coyotes, What are they good for?

Coyotes keep a balance in nature by eating rodents, small mammalian predators, and sometimes they may eat rattlesnakes and scorpions. They also help remove carrion from our roadways and hillsides. Coyotes and other wildlife help to proliferate our flora by distributing the seeds of plants, fruits, and trees by passing them in their scats. The saguaro cactus, which is endangered is one such plant that coyotes have had a paw in helping. So the next time you eat some fruit from a local tree in your yard, it may be there courtesy the song dog.



Coyote Track