



City of Port Washington

Comprehensive Coyote Management & Response Plan



Table of Contents

Introduction.....	3
Coyote Biology/Behavior	4
Unruly Coyotes?	5
Education/Public Information.....	6
Interactions Between Coyotes and Humans.....	7
Factors Leading to Conflicts	8
Monitoring and Data Collection	9
Coyote Response Plan	10
Helpful Contact Information.....	11
Department of Natural Resources Fact Sheet.....	12
Appendix A: Coyote Interaction Classification & Recommended Responses	13
Appendix B: Coyote Incident Report.....	14
Appendix C: Coyote Yard Audit Checklist.....	16
Appendix D: References	17

Introduction

The purpose of this policy is to provide strategic direction that increases the community's knowledge and understanding of how to live with coyotes and how to minimize human coyote conflicts and guides the City's responses when human-coyote conflicts exist or potentially exist. There can be enjoyment in coexisting with coyotes but also opportunities for conflict if the relationship is not managed carefully and appropriately.



The Coyote Policy for the City of Port Washington acknowledges that public safety is a primary concern. Given that concern, however, the City of Port Washington recognizes the environmental benefit of maintaining and encouraging natural wildlife populations and will make every effort to maintain natural ecosystems. That being said, it is not the intention of the City, nor is it an objective of this policy, to carry out a wholesale coyote culling program. The City's Coyote Policy will provide strategies as to the best known responses to live compatibly with coyotes while providing guidance for appropriate levels of response to varying types of coyote activity and/or interactions. Coyotes will always cohabit the environments we create and they will conflict with humans.

Biology/Behavior

The coyote is a member of the dog family that includes wolves and foxes. Coyotes are grayishbrown with reddish tinges behind the ears and around the face and often resemble a GermanShepherd or Collie. Their black-tipped tail helps to distinguish coyotes from other canids such as foxes. Their eyes are strikingly yellow with dark pupils. Adults weigh between 25 and 35 pounds, although their heavy coats make them appear larger. Coyotes produce a variety of sounds including howls, barks, whines, and yips to communicate with one another.

Food Habits

Coyote diets are diverse and adaptable and vary according to local or seasonal availability of food sources. Rodents or rabbits are a major portion of their diet when available; however, at times coyotes will rely on insects, fruits, berries, songbirds, and carrion. In some areas, coyotes feed on human refuse at dump sites, compost bins, and may possibly even prey upon pets. Coyotes are opportunistic and generally take prey that is the easiest to secure.

General Biology, Reproduction and Behavior

Coyotes are most active at night and during early morning hours. Coyotes largely avoid humans which has led to a shift to nocturnal activity in suburban areas (Gehrt 2007). Coyotes usually breed in February and March, producing litters nine weeks later. The average litter size is five to seven pups.

In urban and suburban areas, coyotes have adapted to residential neighborhoods, parks and open spaces. Coyotes living in these environments may come to associate humans with food and protection. Once within a suburban area, coyotes prey on abundant rabbits, rodents, birds, and possibly house cats and small dogs that live in residential habitats when natural food sources are scarce. They will also feed on household garbage, pet food

and the seeds and fruits contained in many garden and landscape plants.

Habituation towards Humans and Intentional/Unintentional Feeding

The habituation of coyotes towards humans is a phenomenon that is generally recognized. Habituation begins when animals tolerate humans at a distance and progress in some instances to taming, which is, conditioning an animal through positive reinforcement such as food. Habituated animals can and do become troublesome and dangerous (Gehrt 2007).

Habituation of wildlife has recently been described as an animal's decreased responsiveness to humans due to repeated contact. Habituated animals, or those animals that have developed a psychological patience with human presence, are potentially much more dangerous than a non-habituated wild animal, because habituation is a state of unconsummated interest on the part of the animal expressing itself as tolerant of, or even attracted to, humans (Schmidt, 2007). It has been noted that this phenomenon has ushered in a host of new wildlife management challenges.

Intentional feeding of coyotes is likely the principal cause of the coyote losing its fear of humans, resulting in their approaching humans at close distances where the risks of negative interaction are highly likely (Timm, 2004). Intentional feeding should be strictly avoided. Humans also unintentionally provide food to wildlife and often provide opportunities for coyotes to obtain human food items either from careless storage of foods or from garbage containers or compost piles that are not animal-proof or that are full or overflowing.

Unruly Coyotes?

It is possible that there are certain changes in human behavior that have contributed to the rise of "bad" coyotes in suburban areas. Human modifications to the residential environment create an inviting, resource-rich habitat for coyotes entering into more

urban areas (Schmidt,2007).

Port Washington has over 30 parks, 2 nature preserves and numerous acres of open space land that provides ideal habitat for coyotes. Our interurban trail that runs along valley creek also provides exceptional resources for coyotes within the city.

Throughout the country it has been observed that a certain segment of the populace believes that any conflict between coyotes and people is solely the fault of people while another segment believes the coyote is at fault.

It is clear to most expert observers that coyotes have adapted well to certain suburban habitats, successfully denning and rearing pups in suburban neighborhoods in the presence of people, pets and traffic. They essentially have become “at home” in suburban areas and do not associate humans as enemies (Schmidt 2007).

Research Projects in both Illinois (Urban Coyote Research Program) and Rhode Island (Narragansett Bay Coyote Study) have noted that removal of coyotes by lethal means—though it may be necessary for some problem or nuisance animals—is not effective for population control. Lethal methods like hunting, trapping or poisoning—especially in neighborhoods—are generally more dangerous to pets and the community than to the problem coyotes. Eliminating an entire group of coyotes, rather than addressing potential root causes of the problem, simply creates a vacuum that other coyotes will fill. Such a flux in population can lead to ongoing interactions between coyotes and humans. This policy provides a plan to help guide informational/educational efforts that will aid residents in better understanding about how or why coyote interactions occur. Furthermore, the policy also looks to outline varying levels of response depending upon different triggering events.

Education/Public Information

When coyotes are initially encountered, many people regard them as interesting and inviting wildlife. Through research of coyote behavior, it can be safely assumed that when

coyotes settle in a neighborhood and find abundant food sources, they can become increasingly bold and possibly even aggressive towards humans.

A critical element of a coyote management plan is the education and awareness of residents. The education of the public is an important tool for the coexistence of residents and coyotes in a safe environment. An educational campaign should focus on how residents can coexist with coyotes. Examples of educational outreach include: brochures, informational postcards mailed to specific neighborhoods with an increased level of coyote sightings and incidents, detailed information and appropriate links made available on the City's website, educational signs posted in appropriate parks and open spaces and at those locations experiencing an increase in coyote activity.

Hazing

One of the solutions to interaction between humans and coyotes is hazing. A hazing program will encourage harassing without the use of weapons or bodily harm to the coyote.

The following are some examples of hazing/adverse conditioning methods that have proven effective. Although some of these methods can prove effective on their own, they are much more effective if combined:

- **Human behavior** – yelling, clapping or moving arms and acting in a threatening manner towards coyotes; however, be safe and never corner a coyote or approach a sick coyote or one with a young coyote nearby.
- **Sound devices** – using a device that makes a loud popping sound, air horns, banging pans, whistles or other noise makers.
- **Motion activated devices** – spotlights, strobe lights, motion activated water sprinklers. These devices tend to be most effective when sound is also incorporated.
- **Projectiles** – throwing objects such as rocks or golf balls in the vicinity of the coyote.
- **Predator Scents** – placing predator scent, such as wolf urine, in your yard can be an effective deterrent to coyotes.

Interactions between Coyotes and Humans

Coyote interactions range from sightings of an occasional coyote without additional incident

to attacks on pets, to the most extreme cases where coyotes attack people. Coyotes will attack and sometimes kill pets. Most metropolitan areas in the United States have reported an increase in the number of coyote and human interactions.

In the Cook County (Illinois) Coyote Study, researchers were surprised to find so many coyotes living near people, despite the fact that relatively few conflicts had been reported. Of those radio-collared coyotes, various sex and age classes became nuisances, and in nearly all cases, either disease or feeding by residents was involved. However, the Cook County Study also noted that overall, very few coyotes had become “nuisances” in Cook County, providing further evidence of a coyote’s general pattern to avoid humans.

For the purpose of this policy, nuisance activity is considered as a reported and verifiable pet attack(s) and/or a pattern of threatening human interactions.

These types of behavior may suggest that a coyote is “habituated,” or has lost its fear of humans. Habituation may result from food attractants in backyards or neighborhoods (such as pet food, unsecured garbage, fallen fruit, etc.) and/or repeated exposure to humans without negative reinforcement. A coyote may appear to be habituated or exhibiting bold behavior if it is observed doing things such as languishing in parks during the daytime in close proximity to humans, following humans and their pets, or not running away upon encountering people. These bold behaviors associated with habituation are what can ultimately lead to human-coyote conflicts in urban areas.

Factors leading to conflicts.

Factors leading to Conflicts

Important factors leading to coyote/human conflicts include (Schmidt 2007):

- 1) An attractive, resource rich suburban environment which provides sources of food, shelter and water to attract coyotes;
- 2) Human acceptance or indifference to coyote presence (i.e., not establishing boundaries);
- 3) Lack of understanding of coyote ecology and behavior, particularly when coyote habituation progresses to aggressive behavior towards

- humans; and
- 4) Intentional feeding.

The City of Port Washington encourages all residents to take steps to eliminate attractants on your property in order to minimize interactions with coyotes. Residents are also urged to share this information with friends and neighbors because minimizing interactions is most effective when the entire neighborhood works together.

[Appendix C](#) contains a helpful tool for property owners to utilize when reviewing your yard for possible coyote attractants. The “Yard Audit” is a listing of common attractants and recommendations on how to reduce the potential for attracting a nuisance animal.

Monitoring/Data Collection

Coyote monitoring and data collection are critical components to implementing an effective coyote management action plan. One of the important tools of a monitoring program is input from both residents and employees. The purpose of monitoring coyote interactions with humans is to document where coyotes are frequently seen, how many coyotes are within an area, and possible identification of problem or nuisance coyotes. Gathering specific data on coyote sightings will allow the City, and county, to focus specific components of its management action plan with a more defined effort to prevent possible negative coyote/human interactions.

For coyote nuisance incidents, again a **nuisance activity is considered as a reported and verifiable pet attack(s) and/or a pattern of threatening human interactions**, a resident can fill out a Coyote Incident Reports ([Appendix B](#)). Based on verifiable nuisance activity an Incident Map will be developed. This Incident Map will allow for quick identification of areas within the City where incidents are high and may require implementation of a component(s) of the management plan. The Incident Map will also allow for a better understanding of coyote habitats as they interface with residential areas. The Incident Map will also provide the ability to generate notification lists in identified areas for the distribution of educational materials as needed.

Coyote incident reports will be available online on the City website and in paper form in the

lower level of City Hall. Completed forms can be turned into the lower level of City Hall

Coyote Response plan

The City of Port Washington has taken both a progressive and proactive approach to the creation of a formal policy to help address the potential root causes behind human-coyote interactions within the community. The following matrix, found in [Appendix A](#), sets forth a sequence of suggested actions by the City in response to varying classifications of coyote interactions.

As coyotes continue to adapt to the suburban environment and their populations continue to expand and increase, interactions with humans may be expected to occur (Timm, 2007). To reverse this trend, residents must attempt to correct coyote behavior problems before they rise to a safety risk. If appropriate preventative actions are taken before coyotes establish feeding patterns in neighborhoods, further problems can be avoided. This requires aggressive use of hazing, as well as correcting environmental factors that have attracted coyotes into the neighborhood (especially intentional and unintentional feeding). If a nuisance type of activity has occurred a Coyote Incident Report should be filled out and returned to the lower level of City Hall. If it is an emergency involving an interaction with a human causing injury the police department should be called immediately.

The City's data collection efforts, via resident submitted "Coyote Incident Reports", are intended to help identify any trends of nuisance coyote activity within a specific area(s) of the City. **Nuisance coyote activity, for the purpose of this response plan, is considered as a pattern of aggressive coyote activity that has been established through multiple reports of threatening interactions towards humans and/or a report of a verified pet attack.**

It should be noted that a pet injured while off-leash and off of its owner's property does not constitute a verifiable pet attack. As indicated, the City of Port Washington does not intend to pursue a large-scale culling program, but rather a specific and targeted approach to addressing problem (i.e., nuisance) coyotes.

The City of Port Washington recognizes environmental benefits of maintaining encouraging natural wildlife populations and will make effort to maintain natural ecosystems.

Helpful Contacts

Incident reports can be found online at:

cityofportwashington.com

Hardcopies available at the lower level of City Hall

100 W. Grand Avenue

(262) 284-2600

Superintendent of Parks & Forestry-Jon Crain

(262)284-2600 ext.1522

jcrain@portwashingtonwi.gov

Port Washington Police Department

Non- Emergency (262) 284-2611

WI Department of Natural Resources

(414) 263-8500

dnr.wi.gov

Coyote



Herbert Lange

Coyotes are naturally secretive creatures, but they are opportunistic hunters. If food is available in your neighborhood you may see them, day or night. Coyotes primarily feed on small rodents and rabbits, and are an important member of the food chain because of this tendency, but coyotes will eat anything they can find, including fruit, vegetables and insects. Their presence can be unnerving or frightening for people unused to coyotes, but generally they are more afraid of you than you are of them. In some cases, they may attack and kill small pets, although coyote attacks on humans are exceptionally rare. There are numerous ways to manage the presence of coyotes in your area.

Do Not Feed Wildlife

- Do not store pet food out of doors, and keep pet food bowls inside when not in use.
- Do not keep trash out of doors, or keep it secure with tight-fitting lids.
- Do not provide food and water for other wildlife. Rodents are attracted to bird seed, and they are a coyote's natural prey. Coyotes will also eat bird seed, fruit, and compost for an easy meal.

Protect Your Pets

- Keep cats indoors and watch dogs when outdoors. Only leave pets unattended when they are secure in a kennel with a covered top.

Discourage Coyotes

- Clear brush and undergrowth in your yard that can provide cover for coyotes or habitat for important coyote prey species.
- Scare tactics can be used if you see a coyote in your yard or while out walking. Yell and make loud noises, shake or throw pop cans filled with coins, throw a ball, shoe, sticks or other object in the direction of the coyote and/or spray the coyote with water. You can also buy ultrasonic dog repellents or pocket-sized air horns.
- Fencing 6–7 feet high and buried approximately 1 foot deep can help keep all but the most determined coyotes out of an area.
- Pick up all fallen fruit from fruit trees, keep compost secure, and make sure trash cans are tightly lidded and secure. Never leave loose trash outside.



Alyson Hunt



DeKalb County, IL
Coyote Project

Quick Facts

- Coyotes are omnivores that will eat anything edible. In the above photo, for example, a coyote caught a squirrel at a bird feeder.
- Urban coyotes tend to use what natural green space is available, including parks and cemeteries.
- Urban coyotes are usually more nocturnal (active at night) than their rural relatives, but may be active during the day if they are feeding pups or weren't successful in hunting the night before.
- Trapping and hunting of coyotes is legal year-round on your property without a DNR license. Many municipalities have regulations about the discharge of firearms. Please check with your local government to ensure adherence to local ordinances.
- Lethal removal is recommended for coyotes that display aggressive behavior towards humans.



For more information, visit our webpage:
dnr.wi.gov

WM-567 2014

Urban Wildlife Factsheet: Coyote

Appendix A: Response Plan

<u>Response</u>	<u>Action</u>	<u>Trigger</u>	<u>Responsibility</u>
Level 1	Education	Public Awareness	City/Community
The city of Port Washington will engage in ongoing efforts to provide educational materials, both online, and in paper format, pertaining to within the community. Partnerships between the City, Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, and other appropriate organizations will be utilized to promote and distribute educational materials and coordinate informational workshops as needed.			
Level 2	Data Collection & Education	Sighting/Interaction	Community/City
In order to collect specific and useful data pertaining to coyotes within the community, the City will provide an avenue for reporting various types of coyote interactions. A coyote incident report will be made available both online and at the lower level of City Hall. Collected data will be used to identify coyote activity trends and turn to the best management action.			
Level 3	Trapping/Hunting & Education	Inquiry/Local Concern	Individual/Group
The trapping and hunting of coyotes is legal throughout the State of Wisconsin year-round in accordance with State law. The City of Port Washington does however prohibit discharging a firearm within city limits. A bow and arrow may be used in accordance with the City's local ordinance which can be found online at cityofportwashington.com or by contacting the local police department.			
Level 4	Nuisance Removal & Education	Threat/ Pet Attack	City
In the event that there is a verified pet attack that was on a leash, Port Washington will dispatch a contractor to in a attempt to locate, trap and remove the nuisance animal.			
Level 5	Emergency Response Nuisance removal Education	Human Attack	Public Safety & City Contractor
In the event of a coyote attack on a human. Port Washington will dispatch emergency services to provide medical attention to the individual and to possibly remove the aggressive animal if it is still in the area. If emergency services are unable to locate the animal, a City contracted professional will be engaged in an attempt to locate, trap and/ or lethally dispatch the coyote. In the event of an emergency, please dial 911			

Appendix B: Coyote Incident Report

INCIDENT REPORT

1. Incident Date: _____
2. Incident Time: _____ AM or PM
3. Location (*please provide nearest address or cross street*):
4. Incident Type (*incident types defined below*)
 - Encounter
 - Aggressive Behavior
 - Pet Incident/Attack

Encounter: An unexpected direct meeting between human and coyote(s) with no physical contact and no aggressive behavior displayed by the coyote(s)

Aggressive Behavior: Meeting between a pet or human and coyote(s) that results in one of the following types of aggressive behavior: growling, baring teeth, lunging, flanking

Pet Incident/Attack: Pet or human is physically contacted, bitten or killed by a coyote(s)

5. Please Describe the Observation / Encounter / Aggressive Behavior / Incident / Attack:

If reporting an observation, completion of question #5 concludes the report. Please feel free to provide additional information at the bottom of this report. THANK YOU.

6. How Many Coyote(s) did You See?
7. Did the Coyote Appear Sick or Injured? Yes or No (*if No, please skip to #9*)
8. If so, Please Describe (*e.g. limping, foaming at the mouth, missing patches of hair*):
9. Are You Aware of a Food Source in the Area where the Incident Occurred? Yes or No
10. If so, Please Describe (*e.g. bird feeder, bait pile, animal carcass, etc.*):
11. Was an Attempt Made to Haze/Discourage the Coyote? Yes or No (*if No, please skip to #14*)
12. If so, What Efforts were made to Haze/Discourage the Coyote? (*mark all that apply*)
 - Shouting
 - Noise Maker
 - Garden Hose or Water Gun
 - Throwing Object(s)
 - Firearm or Bow-and-Arrow

○ Other _____

13. Please Indicate how the Coyote Reacted to the Hazing?

- Unfazed by Hazing Efforts
- Walked/Trotted a Short Distance and Stopped
- Walked/Trotted Away without Stopping
- Ran a Short Distance and Stopped
- Ran Away without Stopping
- Other _____

14. Please Provide any Additional Information/Detail about your Incident not covered elsewhere

15. Please feel free to attach photographs or other documentation to this report that you feel is appropriate. If you are submitting this report to document an attack on your pet, please attach photographs of the injuries, as well as a bill or statement of charges from your veterinarian.

16. Contact Information

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____

E-Mail: _____

Appendix C: Yard Audit

Item	OK	FIX	N/A	Ways to Mitigate
Food				NEVER hand-feed or intentionally feed a coyote!
Pet Food				Never feed pets outdoors; store all pet food securely indoors.
Water Sources				Remove water attractants such as pet water bowls.
Bird Feeders				Remove bird feeders or clean fallen seed to reduce the presence of small mammals that coyotes prefer to eat.
Fallen Fruit				Clean up fallen fruit around trees.
Compost				Do not include meat or dairy among compost contents unless fully enclosed.
BBQ Grills				Clean up food around barbecue grills after each use.
Trash				Secure all trash containers with locking lids and place curbside the morning of trash pickup. Periodically clean cans to reduce residual odors.
Landscaping				Trim vegetation to reduce hiding places and potential denning sites.
Structures/ Outbuildings				Restrict access under decks and sheds, around woodpiles, or any other structure that can provide cover or denning sites for coyotes or their prey.
Fencing				Establish a 6-foot fence (only as permitted by City code and/or Homeowner Association [HOA] regulations) to deter coyotes. Ensure that there are no gaps and that the bottom of the fence extends underground 6 inches or is fitted with a mesh apron to deter coyotes from digging underneath.
Pets				Never leave pets unattended outside.
				Never allow pets to “play” with coyotes.
				Fully enclose outdoor pet kennels.
				Walk pets on a leash no longer than 6 feet in length.

Appendix D: References

Village of Riverside

Coyote Policy, Village of Riverside, Illinois

City of Greenwood Village

Coyote Management Plan, *Greenwood Village, Colorado*.

City of Wheaton

Coyote Management Plan, *City of Wheaton, Illinois*.

Cook County

Cook County Coyote Project/Urban Coyote Research Program, Cook County Illinois

Conservation Agency

Narragansett Bay Coyote Study, Jamestown Rhode Island

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Coyote Attacks: An Increasing Suburban Problem, *North American Wildlife & Natural Resources Conference*

Timm, R.M. & Baker, R. O. (2007)

A History of Urban Coyote Problems, *Proceedings of the Wildlife Damage Management Conference*

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Complexities of Urban Coyote Management: Reaching the Unreachable, Teaching the Unteachable, and Touching the Untouchable, *Proceedings of the Wildlife Damage Management Conference*

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