



Puente Hills Habitat Preservation Authority

Endowment Provided by the Puente Hills Landfill

Coyotes play an important role in the ecosystem, helping to keep populations of rodents and other small mammals under control. Additionally they feed on raccoons, birds, insects, berries, fruits/vegetables, human garbage, outdoor pet food and small pets left unprotected. Thus, coyotes are one of the most adaptable animals, occurring in every habitat type (including urban areas) throughout North America.

When residents living in communities surrounding natural areas (such as the Puente Hills) get coyotes in their neighborhoods, their first thought typically is that the coyotes are “coming down from the hills”. Although many coyotes do enter suburban areas from natural areas looking for food, **many coyotes found in suburban areas are year-round residents**, including very urban neighborhoods with essentially no natural areas. Through the illegal feeding of coyotes, and/or lack of deterrent measures to discourage coyotes from entering residential areas, humans find coyotes amongst them. Coyotes naturally are found where the food is, and if attractants (like outside pet food and water, rodents, or free roaming house cats) are present, coyotes may be present as well.

Coyotes are not the serious threat that some people make them out to be since attacks on humans are very rare. It is when coyotes become accustomed to humans that they lose their shyness and can become more demanding. Eliminating coyotes by lethal means only perpetuates the population as coyote reproduction will increase to “make-up” for the lost individual, oftentimes resulting in more coyotes than before. Coyotes are most active and visible, potentially causing more interactions with people and pets, during mating season (December – February) and during pup-rearing season (May – July).

To coexist, it is important that coyotes do not associate humans with food. Coyotes are naturally fearful of humans, however they readily lose that fear when people intentionally (or unintentionally) provide food/water or shelter for them, or otherwise do not try to deter them from visiting. Eliminating sources that attract coyotes can go a long way in addressing the situation. If you encounter a coyote that is not retreating from humans, please adhere to the following:

- Make noise and make yourself seem even bigger. An average adult coyote is about 35 pounds and will be intimidated by people. While they may stop and observe, they will eventually run.
- Do not run away or turn your back on them. A coyote is hardwired to chase. Stand your ground and then back slowly away while making loud noises.
- When you're walking your dog, keep them on a short leash. Coyotes cannot distinguish between a small pet and their prey. Cats should not be left outdoors alone.
- If you feel your personal safety is immediately at risk, call 911.

For more information on coyotes, please read [this brochure provided by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife](#), and [click here](#). For more information on how to haze coyotes go to [Coyote Hazing](#).

