

City Of Whittier Coyote Management Plan



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Coyote Management Plan

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Introduction

The intent of this plan is to provide guidance for dealing with coyotes in Whittier. Provisions of the plan do not supersede federal, state and county regulations and policies. The plan does not apply to Whittier residents, businesses or homeowner associations in pursuit of their legal rights in dealing with coyotes.

Background

In 2016, cities in Southern California began to hear more frequently from residents about coyote encounters with humans and pets. Whittier residents reported coyote attacks on pets and increased coyote sightings in residential and business areas. The reports resulted in increased City Council and community interest in managing coyote activity in neighborhoods.

Coyotes are a common part of the ecosystem and the City does not own or control wild animals. Coyotes have historically existed in Whittier, finding safe haven in the hills, washes, drainages, and other areas where dense brush is prevalent. The City contracts with Los Angeles County for animal control; wildlife is included in their scope of services to only a small degree.

Coyote Biology



Coyotes are opportunistic, versatile carnivores that primarily eat small mammals, such as rabbits, ground squirrels, and mice. Coyotes prefer fresh meat but will eat significant amounts of fruits and vegetables during the autumn and winter months when their prey is scarce. Part of the coyote's success as a species is its dietary adaptability. This dietary flexibility, coupled with a close proximity to residents, has led the coyotes to seek alternative food sources, including small pets, pet food, and fallen fruits and vegetables in residential backyards.

Unfortunately for pets and pet owners, coyotes can't differentiate cats and small dogs from their other prey food sourcesⁱ.

Coyotes share many of the traits of their relatives: wolves, dogs, foxes, and jackals. They have narrow, elongated snouts, lean bodies, yellow eyes, bushy tails, and thick fur. Coyotes hunt at night and howl to communicate their location. They are intelligent creatures and have a heightened sense of hearing, smell and sight. Generally, coyotes are reclusive animals that avoid human contact. As coyotes have become urbanized and people's actions have not deterred coyotes, there are few real threats in suburban environments. Their habitat has expanded to include human-altered environments, including parks, golf courses, and suburban backyards. This has resulted in coyotes



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approaching people and even visiting yards when people are present.

Coyote breeding season is from late December through March and pups are born in the early spring. Females build dens in preparation for their young and have a gestation period of 63 days with litters typically of four to seven. Coyotes are generally monogamous and maintain pair bonds that can last for years. Both parents care for their young, frequently with the help of older offspring. Coyotes make their dens in rocky crevices, dense thickets, and sometimes the dens of other animals. The den is abandoned after the pups are weaned but may be used from year to year. Pups are close to adult size at about nine months, when some will begin to leave the pack while others may remain with their parents. The average lifespan of a coyote in the wild is six to eight years.

When living in close proximity to humans, coyotes tend to be nocturnal but may also be active in the early morning and at sunset. When a litter of pups needs to be fed, they may have to hunt around the clock. Coyotes normally hunt alone or in pairs and rarely as a pack, unless the prey is a deer or other large animal.

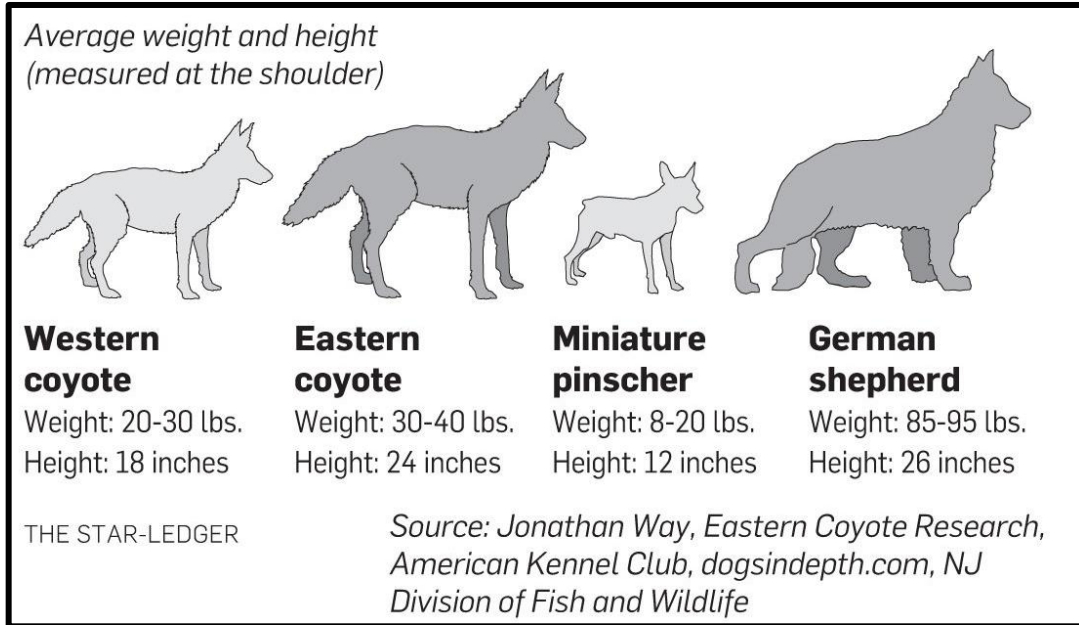
A pack is a coyote family dominated by an alpha male and female who form a breeding pair. It can also include this year's pups and offspring from the previous year, along with individuals from other packs that have been accepted into the family. The size of the pack will depend on the amount of food available to sustain it. If the pack relies on a natural diet, its numbers will tend to be smaller. But if the diet is subsidized by humans, either intentionally or unintentionally, its size could be considerably larger. Coyote packs have a "home range"—the entire area in which they live—and a "territory" that they will defend against other coyotes and whose boundaries are marked with urine, like dogs. Coyotes also use scat to mark the most heavily defended core areas, unlike dogs. As with the size of the pack, the size of the territory will depend on the amount of food available. If the pack relies on a natural diet, its territory will be larger than that of a pack whose diet is subsidized by humans.

The coyote is a very vocal animal with a varied repertoire of calls. It uses a long howl to report its location, short barks to warn of danger, yips when reuniting with pack members, growls when establishing dominance, whines and whimpers when bonding, and high-pitched barks to summon pupsⁱⁱ.

Coyotes are about as big as medium-size dogs, typically weighing 20 to 30 pounds and up to 50 pounds in some cases. They are 32 to 37 inches from head to rump, with the tail adding another 16 inches to their lengthⁱⁱⁱ.



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Management Plan Purpose

In response to the rise of coyote activity in neighborhoods, the City researched responses from surrounding communities and reviewed existing coyote management plans. The City wishes to manage the presence of coyotes with an emphasis on education, hazing, and lastly lethal means of removal when the safety of the public is at risk. The plan is meant to increase residents' understanding of how coyotes behave and make clear how such behavior can be managed to reduce or eliminate conflicts with coyotes. The plan requires active participation from the entire community, including residents, homeowner associations, volunteers, and the City. The Puente Hills Habitat Preservation Authority (Habitat Authority) is another resource that may assist residents to manage coyote encounters.

As recommended by the CDFW, the plan is adapted from a standard plan format used in other cities in Southern California and is guided by the following principles:

- Human safety is a priority in managing human-coyote interactions.
- Coyotes serve an important role in ecosystems by helping control the population of rodents.
- Preventive practices such as removal of food attractants, modification of habitat, and appropriate responses to wildlife interaction are central to minimizing potential interactions with coyotes.
- Solutions for coyote conflicts must address both problematic coyote behaviors (i.e. aggression towards people and attacks on pets) and problematic human behaviors (i.e. intentionally or unintentionally feeding coyotes and leaving unattended pets outside) that contribute to conflicts.
- Non-selective coyote removal programs are ineffective for reducing coyote population sizes or preventing human-coyote conflicts in the long run.
- A community-wide program that involves residents can improve coexistence among people, coyotes, and pets.



Difficulties Managing Wildlife

Whittier places a high value on its wildlife but acknowledges that some species adapted to urban environments have the potential for conflicts with humans. In addressing problems, Whittier supports prevention and remedial measures that do not harm wildlife or their habitats.

A human-wildlife conflict is defined as any situation that causes a health or safety issue to its residents. When problems with wildlife are a result of human behavior, such as

leaving garbage exposed or intentional wildlife feeding, the City recommends resident education, hazing (scaring), and enforcement to minimize conflict. Relocation of coyotes is not ecologically sound and is not legal in California without permission from the CDFW. Generally, relocated animals do not survive the transfer. If they do survive, they rarely stay in the relocation area and tend to scatter to other locations where they may cause conflict, be involved in territory disputes, or introduce disease. In some instances, coyotes will go to great lengths to return to their previous territory or adversely affect residents. For these reasons, the CDFW rarely allows relocation of wildlife.

Coyotes, like all predators, will stabilize their populations if they are not exploited. In general, coyotes regularly roam an area of two to five square miles, or the range necessary to get enough food for pack members. Each coyote family group is territorial and can be from three to ten individuals. A portion of the area the family inhabits is the pack's territory, which they defend from other coyotes. The number of mature coyotes in the family is linked to the amount of food resources in the territory. The family system keeps coyotes from getting too numerous because the families defend the area they need to survive.

A coyote family usually has one breeding (alpha) female. This female produces more pups than are ultimately wanted in the family. Young coyotes may leave the family at nine to eleven months of age but dispersal patterns are highly variable. These coyotes become transients. Other types of transients include older individuals that can no longer defend their role as upper level family members and leave the family.

Transients move in narrow undefended zones that exist between territories searching for an open habitat to occupy or group to join. They often die before they succeed; some are hit by cars. It is largely because of these transients that coyote eradication programs are unsuccessful. Removing a group of territorial coyotes will create an undefended area into which the transient coyotes will flow. Transients are immediately available to replenish any voids created by killing the resident coyotes. If either the alpha male or alpha female in a pack is killed, the loss may result in ovulation in other breeding-age females in the family and an increase in the number of litters as well as the number of pups per litter.



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Lethal control measures may be employed although this last resort is controversial and non-selective. It is extremely difficult to ensure that a problem-causing coyote will be the one located and killed. Traps must be humane and in compliance with federal and state laws but most are indiscriminate, capturing almost any animal that triggers them, including dogs, cats, and birds. These non-target species can sustain the same injuries as the target species and when released, may perish later from internal injuries or reduced ability to hunt or forage for food.

Environmental Role

Coyotes play an important role in the urban ecosystem. They are predators of squirrels, mice, rabbits, rats, gophers, and other small animals. Rodents make up a majority of their diet. Coyotes help protect songbirds by eating animals that prey on birds.

It is not economically or ecologically efficient to remove all coyotes from the urban ecosystem. Attempts made over the past century to eradicate coyotes have proven to be ineffective. During the past century, coyotes have expanded their territories to include every state except Hawaii.

Human Responses

People respond to coyotes in various ways. Some observe them with enjoyment, others with indifference and some with fear or concern. Personal experiences with coyotes may influence their perceptions, whether it is a sighting without incident, stalking, or killing pets. What is known is that coyotes can become habituated if they are intentionally or unintentionally fed, which can lead to bolder behavior when coyotes lose their fear of people. At the extreme, people may fear a coyote attack on humans.

Because wild animals conjure fear in many people, actual sightings and perceptions may become exaggerated or misconstrued. The wide range in perceptions of urban coyotes from Whittier residents supports the need for strong and consistent educational messages to clarify management techniques.

Coyote Population in Whittier

Without accurate tracking data, it is difficult to know the numbers of coyotes in the area. Monitoring and data collection are critical components of an effective coyote management plan. This is best accomplished with input from residents, the City, and the Habitat Authority. The University of California Extension Program records and tracks coyote sightings and incidents throughout Southern California from resident reports made to <http://ucanr.edu/sites/CoyoteCacher/>. Coyote Cacher is part of a research project with the University Cooperative Extension that aims to collect more information on coyote conflicts. The information residents provide is used to help inform researchers of trends in coyote conflicts, resulting in a better picture of local urban coyotes. The Habitat Authority also tracks local coyote sightings and incidents at 562-945-9003. Appendix A defines and standardizes the types of coyote sightings and incidents.

The purpose of monitoring human-coyote interactions is to document where coyotes are frequently seen and to identify human-coyote conflict hotspots. Gathering specific data on incidents will allow for targeting of educational campaigns and conflict mitigation efforts, as



well as the ability to measure success in reducing conflicts over time.

Management Strategy

This plan's strategy for managing coyotes is based on balancing respect and protection for wildlife and their habitats without compromising public safety. The three elements are public education designed around coexistence with coyotes; enforcement of laws and regulations prohibiting the feeding of wildlife; and ensuring public safety by implementing appropriate tiered responses to coyote and human interactions. The plan requires active participation on the part of the entire community including residents, homeowners associations, businesses, volunteers, Habitat Authority, and the City.

Education

Education will help residents make appropriate decisions regarding the safety of themselves, their property, and their pets by decreasing attractants, reshaping coyote behavior through hazing (scaring), and creating reasonable expectations of normal coyote behavior. The City will disseminate information to residents, businesses and schools through the City website, City TV Channel 3, social media, Whittier Police Department Twitter, local press, mailers, and flyers at public facilities.

Learning how to respond to a coyote encounter empowers residents and supports reshaping undesired coyote behavior. The public should understand what normal coyote behavior is when living in close proximity with coyotes. For example, vocalization is normal acceptable behavior and does not indicate aggression or killing of animals.

Enforcement

Feeding wildlife is known to lead to an increase in wildlife activity. Feeding can attract coyotes and their prey to an area leading to an increased likelihood of creating habituated coyotes and resulting in increases in coyote-human interactions. California law prohibits feeding wildlife. The City will strictly enforce the State law pertaining to this activity.

Response Plan

A tiered response plan will identify and classify different levels of human and coyote interactions (Appendix A). Appendix B details coyote behavior, behavior classification, and recommended responses.

Coyote Attractants

While attacks on humans are very rare, some residents fear coyotes due to urban landscape development, habituation through intentional/unintentional feeding, pet related incidents, and media attention. It is important to note that attacks on free-roaming and unattended small pets are normal coyote behavior and do not necessarily indicate a danger for people. A small pet looks like normal prey to a coyote.

Coyotes usually become habituated when they learn to associate people and/or neighborhoods with sources of food. Residents reinforce this behavior by not reacting appropriately when they see a coyote. Steps must be taken to address safety concerns



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and misconceptions and to ensure appropriate responses to potential threats to human safety. It is important to keep in mind that coyotes have been in and around Whittier and other parts of southern California for a very long time.

Coyotes are drawn to urban and suburban areas for the following reasons:

Food. Urban areas provide a bounty of natural food choices for coyotes that primarily eat rodents such as mice and rats. However, coyotes can be further attracted into suburban neighborhoods by human-associated food such as pet food, unsecured compost or trash, fallen fruit in yards, and unattended outdoor pets. Intentional and unintentional feeding can lead coyotes to associate humans with sources of food, which can result in negative interactions among coyotes, people and pets. To reduce food attractants in urban and suburban areas:

- Never hand-feed or otherwise deliberately feed a coyote.
- Avoid feeding pets outside. Remove sources of pet food and water. If feeding pets outside is necessary, remove the bowl and any leftover food promptly.
- Never compost any meat or dairy (unless the compost is fully secured).
- Maintain good housekeeping, such as regularly raking areas around bird feeders, to help discourage coyote activity near residences.
- Remove fallen fruit from the ground.
- Keep trash in high-quality containers with tight-fitting lids. Only place the cans curbside the morning of collection. If left out overnight, trash cans are more likely to be tipped over and broken into.
- Bag especially attractive food waste such as meat scraps or leftover pet food before discarding.

Water. Urban areas provide a year-round supply of water in the form of storm water impoundments and channels, artificial lakes, irrigation, pet water dishes, and pools, which support both coyotes and their prey. In dry conditions, water can be as alluring as food; residents should remove outdoor water bowls and watering cans.

Shelter. Parks, greenbelts, open spaces, sumps, golf courses, buildings, sheds, decks, and similar spaces increase the amount and variability of cover for coyotes. They allow coyotes to safely and easily remain close to people, pets, homes and businesses without detection. In the spring, when coyotes give birth and begin to raise their young, they concentrate their activities around dens or burrows in which their young are sheltered. Coyotes may take advantage of available spaces under sheds or decks for use as a den, bringing them into close contact with people and pets.

Pets. Coyotes primarily eat small mammals such as mice and rats, but will also prey on slightly larger mammals such as rabbits and groundhogs. Animals that are approximately the same size as a groundhog or rabbit, such as unattended outdoor pets like cats and small dogs, may attract coyotes into neighborhoods.

The best way to minimize risk to pets from coyotes (and the other dangers of outdoor life such as cars, disease, dogs and other wildlife) is to keep small pets indoors or only let



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them outside in a secure enclosure or when accompanied by a person and under the control of a leash and harness.

Owners can further minimize risk to pets by using physical deterrents. Roller bars can be purchased or self-constructed from PVC pipe and installed on top of fences and walls to block coyotes from jumping into yards. Motion sensitive lights and sprinklers around homes and yards can scare coyotes away from pets and unintentional food sources. Commercially available dog jackets do not impede a dog's ability to walk but protect small animals from coyote attacks. A spiked collar area prevents neck bites and deadly shaking; Kevlar sides prevent teeth from puncturing the vest.

It is important to keep dogs on a leash six feet or shorter when outdoors or to stay within six feet of them. Coyotes may view a dog on a leash longer than six feet as an unattended pet. Attacks on free-roaming small cats or dogs are normal coyote behavior and do not indicate a danger for people. A free-roaming pet is considered an unattended domestic pet outside of its enclosed yard or area.

Although attacks on larger dogs are rare, coyotes will sometimes go after a large dog when they feel that their territory is threatened. This generally occurs during the coyote breeding season, which takes place from January through March. During this time, it is especially important not to let dogs outside unattended and to keep them on leashes less than six feet long.

Feral Cats. People who feed feral cats are often concerned that coyotes might prey on the cats. These concerns are well founded as coyotes can be attracted to the outdoor pet food. There is no sure way to protect feral cats from coyotes; please consider reporting the cats to County Animal Control or the City. If feeding continues, the following tips can help:

- Feed cats only during the day and at a set time, and pick up any leftovers immediately.
- Provide escape routes for cats.
- Haze (scare) coyotes observed on the property (Appendix C). Making them feel uncomfortable will encourage them to stay out of the area.

Other domestic animals kept outside, such as rabbits and chickens, may also be viewed as prey by coyotes. Protect outdoor animals from coyotes and other predators with protective fencing and sturdy cages.

Residents are encouraged to use the Yard Audit Checklist (Appendix D) as a tool to help recognize and remove attractants in their yards and neighborhoods.



Hazing and Behavior Changes

Some coyotes have become too comfortable in the close proximity of people. To safely coexist, humans must modify their behavior to shape coyote behavior. Habituated coyote behavior needs to be reshaped to encourage coyotes to avoid contact with humans and pets.

Hazing, also known as “fear conditioning” or “scaring”, is the process that facilitates this change and is, by necessity, a community response to negative encounters with coyotes. The more often an individual animal is hazed, the more effective hazing is in changing coyote behavior.

Hazing employs immediate use of deterrents to move an animal out of an area or discourage undesirable behavior or activity. Deterrents include loud noises, spraying water, bright lights, waving your arms, throwing objects, and shouting. Hazing can help maintain a coyote’s fear of humans and discourage them from neighborhoods such as backyards and play areas. Hazing is not intended to harm or damage animals, humans or property, but to change the coyote’s behavior. A coyote, just like a dog, will not know that the behavior it is engaging in is unwanted unless some type of message such as hazing is sent and reinforced repeatedly. Behavioral change also involves human activities such as how to identify and remove attractants and how to responsibly protect pets. If a human sees a coyote in an urban area and does not respond in any way, a message opposite of hazing is conveyed to the coyote.

Goals of Hazing

It is not economically and ecologically efficient to eradicate coyotes from the urban ecosystem. Hazing is one piece of a long-term plan to create safe and acceptable living situations, increase understanding of coyote behavior and reduce conflict between coyotes and people, with these goals:

- To reshape coyote behavior to avoid human contact in an urban setting. Human behavior can shape animal behavior, in either a negative or positive manner. People living in close proximity to coyotes can remove coyote attractants, identify potentially dangerous situations for their pets and themselves, and respond in a manner designed to change coyote behavior.
- To provide residents information and tools to actively engage in reshaping coyote behavior and to support feeling safe in their parks and neighborhoods. This can be accomplished by teaching residents hazing techniques.
- To model hazing behavior and share accurate information about coyotes among other residents, friends and family.
- To monitor hazing to assess its effectiveness and determine if further action or more aggressive hazing is needed.
- To develop long-term community based hazing programs.

General Considerations

Levels of hazing need to be appropriately relevant to coyote activity.

- Coyotes live in open spaces and the best practice is to leave them alone and



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educate the public on personal safety.

- Coyotes are often out late at night when few people are present. This is normal acceptable behavior. Hazing may not be necessary.

Exceptions: In early stages of hazing, programs should still engage animals. Coyotes that associate danger in the presence of people under all circumstances will be reinforced to avoid contact.

Hazing must be more exaggerated, assertive and consistent when first beginning a program of hazing. As coyotes learn appropriate responses to hazing, it will take less effort from hazers. Early in the process, it is extremely common for coyotes not to respond to hazing techniques. Without a history of hazing, they do not have the relevant context to respond in the desired outcome by leaving.

Techniques and tools can be used in the same manner for one or multiple coyotes. Usually there is a dominant coyote in a group who will respond; others will follow its lead. Do not ignore, turn your back, or avoid hazing because there are multiple coyotes instead of a single individual.

The more often an individual coyote is hazed by a variety of tools and techniques and a variety of people, the more effective hazing will be in changing that animal's future behavior.

Hazing must be directly associated with the person involved in the hazing actions. The coyote must be aware of where the potential threat is coming from and identify the person. Coyotes can and do recognize individual people and animals in their territories. They can learn to avoid or harass specific individuals in response to behavior of the person and/or pet.

Coyotes can be routine in habit. Identifying their normal habits can help target which habits to change. For example, the coyote patrols the same neighborhood at the same time in the morning three to five days a week. Hazers should concentrate on that time and place to encourage the animal to adapt its routine to decrease contact with people.

Certain levels of hazing must always be maintained so that future generations of coyotes do not learn or return to unacceptable habits related to habituation to people. Human behavior must change to support hazing and continued identification and, if necessary, remove possible attractants. Education about exclusion techniques including how to identify and remove attractants, personal responsibility in pet safety and having reasonable expectations are critical parts of a coyote hazing plan.

Coyotes are skittish by nature. Habituated behavior is learned and reinforced by human behavior. Coyotes as a rule DO NOT act aggressively towards aggressive people. The one exception is a sick or injured animal. Engaging a sick or injured animal can result in unpredictable behavior. If this is suspected, people should not engage and remove themselves from the situation, then immediately contact the City at 562-567-9810.

Individuals involved in hazing need to be trained in explaining hazing to residents who



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witness the process. They also need to explain the difference between hazing and harassment of wildlife and goals of appropriate behavior for coexistence.

Training Program

Because coexisting with wildlife involves the community, initiating the hazing training programs and hazing activities by residents must be supervised and trained by experts from CDFW Wildlife Watch program and ultimately by the City Wildlife Management program. Without this support, the programs will ultimately fail. Information will include basic training on background, coyote ecology information, overview of hazing, and examples of techniques. Materials including handouts, websites, contact information and resources will be used when questions arise.

Resident volunteers will learn about coyote behavior and be aware of realistic expectations, understanding normal versus abnormal coyote behavior, identifying aggressive coyote behavior, and having a consistent response to residents' concerns and comments.

Behavioral change and hazing includes the following:

- Pet owners need to protect pets. Off-leash, unattended, and free-roaming cats and dogs (as well as pet food) attract coyotes.
- Residents need to learn effective hazing techniques. A hazing program must be instituted and maintained.
- Hazing needs to be sustained for a period of time to achieve the desired effect for long-term success.
- Hazing requires monitoring to assess its effectiveness and to determine if further action or more consistent hazing led by City volunteers is needed.

Volunteer Training

Successful hazing requires community involvement, understanding, and support. Residents are best equipped to respond consistently and at the most opportune times in their own neighborhoods, parks and open spaces. Hazing should take place in open spaces only if people are confronted with an aggressive coyote.

Interested residents may contact the City at 562-567-9810 to register for training on how to haze coyotes. Training will be offered based on data accumulated from the public on coyote activity in specific neighborhoods or proactively when requested by the neighborhood or volunteer groups. Training is free of charge and topics will include:

- Basic coyote information
- Why coyotes are in Whittier
- Normal and abnormal coyote behavior
- Seasonal behavior changes like breeding season, pups, denning
- Realities of danger to people vs. danger to pets
- Children and coyotes
- How human behavior influences coyote behavior
- Attractants
- Deterrents



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- Appropriate responses when encountering a coyote
- Appropriate hazing techniques and tools
- Pet safety tips

Volunteers will be notified of “hot spots” and asked to haze in that area. The City requests that volunteers email a report each time they haze coyotes so the City may evaluate the program and which techniques are working best. Reports are most helpful when including this information:

- Date, location, time of day, number of coyotes
- Initial coyote behavior, hazing behavior, coyote response
- Effectiveness rating
- Tools and techniques used
- Additional details/comments

Enforcement

Feeding wildlife is known to lead to an increase in wildlife activity. Feeding can attract coyotes and their prey, leading to an increased likelihood of creating a habituated coyote and resulting in increased coyote/human interactions. California law and County and City codes prohibit feeding wildlife. The City will strictly enforce the law pertaining to this activity.

Los Angeles County Code Title 10

§10.84.010 – Providing Food for Certain Rodents or Predator Animals Prohibited

Except as otherwise provided for herein, no person shall feed or in any manner provide food to a non-domesticated rodent or a non-domesticated mammalian predator.

Whittier Municipal Code

Chapter 6.04 - ANIMAL CONTROL ORDINANCE

It is unlawful to violate any provision of Los Angeles County Code Title 10.

Landscaping Code

Overgrown landscaping can create a welcoming environment for coyotes and their prey to shelter or build a den. City code enforcement officers will notify residents of their responsibility to maintain landscaping if such conditions are reported to the City.

Response Plan

A tiered response plan identifies and classifies levels of human and coyote interactions (Appendix B). Definitions of coyote encounters are provided in Appendix A.

If a human is attacked and physically injured by a coyote, the City will work with the CDFW, which will be the lead investigating agency to thoroughly investigate the incident, and to identify and remove the responsible coyote. As a last resort, lethal removal will also be considered if there is a public safety issue with a coyote threatening people—only after a thorough investigation and identification of the offending coyote.



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The City contracts with Los Angeles County Animal Control Services to respond to calls that involve a sick or injured coyote. If there is an immediate public safety issue, such as a coyote threatening people in an area frequented by people, the Whittier Police Department will respond.

Since coyotes are considered “non-game wildlife” any resident or homeowners’ association can, at their own expense, initiate action to protect themselves and their private property from coyote attacks, within the limits of the law regarding trapping and hunting.

Conflict/Incident Definitions

An incident is described as a “conflict” between a human and a coyote where the coyote exhibits the following behavior: coyote approaches a human and growls, bares teeth, or lunges; or injures or kills an escorted/on-leash pet. This includes loss of an attended pet, but not human injury. When human injury occurs, it is defined as an “attack.” The California Department of Fish and Game will investigate the incident if a human is physically injured.

Circumstances Determine the Response

In a provoked attack, the City will coordinate with the Whittier Police Department and CDFW will determine if circumstances indicate a continued threat to human safety. The initial response may range from targeted education up to lethal removal of the involved animal.

In an unprovoked attack, the City will coordinate with the Whittier Police Department and CDFW to determine if there is a continued threat to human safety and will plan a course of action, potentially including a permit for trapping. The City will not engage in any attempts of general culling. Only specific animals will be targeted.

Continued response will depend on details of the attack. The level of threat to human safety will determine if continued action is needed, including increased educational materials such as flyers, mailers or press releases, public meetings, and potentially applying for a trapping permit.

If trapping is determined to be necessary in consultation with the CDFW, the City will contract with state licensed trappers and advise the CDFW on location, duration, and details of trapping attempts. Trapping will generally not extend beyond one week except in extenuating circumstances.

If there is immediate danger that requires shooting, the Whittier Police Department will respond. No private individual will be authorized to discharge a firearm within the City.

If a coyote is lethally removed, the City will evaluate and determine what educational measures and hazing techniques should be modified in order to decrease any reoccurrence.



APPENDIX A Definitions

Active coexistence. Humans and coyotes exist together. Communities decide on community space, such as open spaces, where coyotes are appropriate and do not haze, feed, or interact with them in these areas. Humans take an active role in keeping coyotes wild by learning about coyote ecology and behavior, removing attractants, taking responsibility for pet safety, and hazing coyotes in neighborhood or community spaces (except for predetermined coyote appropriate areas).

Conflict. A coyote approaches a human and growls, bares teeth, or lunges; or injures or kills an escorted/on-leash pet. This includes loss of an attended pet, but not human injury.

Attack. A human is injured or killed by a coyote.

Provoked attack. A human-provoked attack or incident where the human involved encourages the coyote to engage. Examples include dog off-leash in an on-leash area; dog on leash longer than 6' in length, or a human intentionally approaches or feeds the coyote.

Unprovoked attack. An unprovoked attack or incident where the human involved does not encourage the coyote to engage.

Pet Attack. A pet is injured or killed by a coyote.

Attended animal loss or injury. When a person is within six feet of the pet and the pet is on leash and is attacked and injured by a coyote.

Unattended animal loss or injury. A coyote injures or kills a pet. Also includes "depredation" - predation on domestic pets. Free-roaming animal loss or injury is normal behavior for a coyote.

Encounter. An unexpected, direct meeting between a human and a coyote that is without incident.

Intentional feeding. A resident or business actively and intentionally feeds coyotes including intentionally providing food for animals in the coyote food chain.

Unintentional feeding. A resident or business is unintentionally providing access to food—accessible compost, fallen fruit from trees, sheds and doors left open, trash on ground, and pet food left outdoors, among others.

Unintentional feeding/bird feeders. A resident or business with bird feeders may provide food for coyotes (birds, bird food, rodents, squirrels). Bird feeders must be kept high enough from the ground so a coyote is unable to reach the feeding animals. The area under the bird feeder must be kept clean and free of residual bird food.



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Hazing. This training method employs immediate use of deterrents to move an animal out of an area or discourage an undesirable behavior or activity. Hazing techniques include loud noises, spraying water, bright lights, waving arms, throwing objects, and shouting. Hazing can help maintain a coyote's fear of humans and deter them from neighborhood spaces such as backyards and play spaces. Hazing does not injure/damage animals, humans or property.

Threat Incident. A conflict between a human and a coyote where the coyote approaches a human and growls, bares teeth, or lunges; or injures or kills an attended domestic animal. A human is not injured.

Stalking Incident. A conflict between a human and a coyote where a coyote follows a person with or without an attended pet on leash. A human is not injured.

Observation. Noticing coyote tracks, scat, or vocalizations.

Sighting. A visual observation of a coyote. A sighting may occur at any time of the day or night.

Unsecured Trash. Trash that is accessible to wildlife, including individual garbage cans and bags, uncovered or open dumpsters, or overflowing trash receptacles.



APPENDIX B Coyote Behaviors and City Response

Encounter Type	CDFW	City Response
Heard	N/A	Education on coyote behavior
Seen moving through area frequented by people	N/A	Wildlife Management responds if multiples in one area; inspects and eliminates attractants
Seen resting in area frequented by people	N/A	Wildlife Management responds; inspects and eliminates attractants; hazing
Stalking person with or without pet	N/A	Wildlife Management responds; education on hazing, pet safety protocols, “what to do” tips; hazing team
Entering yard without people or pets	N/A	Wildlife Management responds; education on hazing, pet safety protocols; inspects and eliminates attractants; hazing team
Biting or injuring unattended pet	N/A	Wildlife Management gathers information on specific animals involved, documents circumstances; education on hazing, pet safety protocols; inspects and eliminates attractants; aggressive hazing team
Biting or injuring attended pet	Report	Wildlife Management gathers information on specific animals involved, documents and reports circumstances to CDFW; education on hazing, pet safety protocols; inspects and eliminates attractants; aggressive hazing team
Acting aggressive, back fur raised, showing teeth, lunging	Report; targeted lethal removal considered	Wildlife Management gathers information on specific animals involved, documents and reports circumstances to CDFW
Biting or injuring person	Report; trapping for targeted lethal removal	Wildlife Management gathers information on specific animals involved, documents and reports circumstances to CDFW

Coyotes are classified as non-game species and may legally be taken year-round with a state license. Private landowners may address coyote concerns on their property with a licensed trapper if there is threat to property or livestock. If a coyote is seen exhibiting aggressive behavior as described in Appendix B, residents are encouraged to call the City at (562) 567-9810. For after hours, please inform the local Police Department at 562-567-9200. For emergencies, call 9-1-1.



APPENDIX C Hazing

Human behavior can shape animal behavior, in either a negative or positive manner. People living in close proximity to coyotes can remove coyote attractants, identify potentially dangerous situations for their pets and themselves, and respond in a manner designed to change coyote behavior.

Hazing is a process whereby individuals and volunteers make a coyote uncomfortable and choose to leave a situation where their presence is unwanted.

Basic hazing consists of standing your ground, never ignoring or turning your back to a coyote, and yelling and making unpleasant and frightening noises until the animal chooses to leave.

More aggressive hazing consists of approaching an animal quickly and aggressively, waving your arms, throwing projectiles in the direction of (but not at) the coyote, and spraying with a hose or water gun, all of which are used for creating fear of humans so the animal leaves the situation.

Hazing must continue once it begins until the animal leaves. Otherwise, the coyote will learn to wait until the person gives up. Not following through with hazing will create an animal more resistant to hazing instead of reinforcing the image that people are scary.

Hazing should never injure the animal. An injured animal becomes less predictable versus a normal, healthy one who responds in a consistent and predictable manner to hazing.

Hazing should allow the coyote to return to its normal habitat in a direction that would minimize harm to the animal. Hazing the animal in the direction of other houses and busy streets should be avoided.

Hazing uses a variety of different hazing tools. This is critical as coyotes get used to individual items and sounds.

Noisemaker. Voice, whistles, air horns, bells, “shaker” cans, pots, pie pans

Projectiles. Sticks, small rocks, cans, tennis balls, rubber balls

Deterrents. Hoses, spray bottles with vinegar, pepper spray, bear repellent, walking sticks

A common concern with hazing involves potential danger to the hazer. A coyote’s basic nature is very skittish and the nature of the species is what makes this technique successful. A normal, healthy coyote will not escalate a situation with an aggressive person. Hazing is not successful with every species of wild animal because different types of animals have different traits.



**APPENDIX D
Yard Audit**

	OK	FIX	WAYS TO MITIGATE
FOOD			Never 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 the area is fully enclosed.
BBQ Grills			Clean up food around barbeque grills after each use.
Trash			Secure trash containers with locking lids and place curbside on pickup day. Periodically clean cans to reduce residual odors.
LANDSCAPING			Trim vegetation to reduce hiding places for rodents and coyotes and potential denning sites.
STRUCTURES			Restrict access under decks and sheds, around wood piles, or any other structure that can provide cover or denning sites for coyotes or their prey.
FENCING*			Enclose property with six-foot fence with additional extension or roller top to deter coyotes. Ensure that there are no gaps and that the bottom of the fence extends underground six inches or is fitted with a mesh apron to deter coyotes from digging underneath. *Must comply with City of Whittier Municipal Code
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.

Residents are encouraged to take steps to eliminate attractants on their property and share this information with friends and neighbors because minimizing conflicts is most effective when the entire neighborhood works together.

ⁱ Images courtesy of pixabay.com

ⁱⁱ Source: Coyotes 101. (n.d.). Retrieved November 27, 2017, from <http://www.coyotesmarts.org/coyotes101/>

ⁱⁱⁱ Size information from National Geographic