

Coyotes in Western Washington

Coyotes are found throughout the Pacific Northwest, from downtown Tacoma to the smallest suburb. They are extremely adaptable and can thrive in any neighborhood that provides their basic needs.

Residential areas provide good habitat for coyotes. They find plentiful food in the mice, rabbits and raccoons that are drawn to yards and gardens. Parks, trails and natural areas offer water, shelter and the space coyotes need to live and raise their families.

Do coyotes pose a risk?

Although naturally curious, coyotes are usually timid animals and normally run away if confronted. As coyotes adapt to the presence of humans, some individuals lose their natural fear of us.

Coyote attacks on humans are rare. In most cases, attacks occur as a result of people feeding coyotes. Coyotes are capable of surviving in the city without our help. A coyote that associates humans with food may become demanding and aggressive. A coyote that bites a person must be destroyed. By feeding coyotes you put yourself, the neighborhood and coyotes at risk.

Can we make them leave?

Populations fluctuate, but coyotes probably won't leave. Eradication programs in cities have proven to be expensive failures. Community members can work together to instill a healthy and natural fear of humans back into coyotes—for their safety and ours. Coyotes are quick learners and consistent negative experiences can teach them to avoid people.

If you feel that coyotes in your neighborhood are displaying aggressive behaviors, urban coyote experts can provide a free assessment of your situation. The number for the USDA state office is (360) 753-9884.

About the Grit City Carnivore Project



This project is a partnership of the University of Washington, Tacoma, Point Defiance Zoo & Aquarium and Northwest Trek Wildlife Park. Together we're monitoring coyotes within the South Puget Sound area to better understand their distribution, study human-wildlife interactions and promote peaceful co-existence with carnivores.

Let us know when you see a coyote

Visit our website at GritCityCarnivores.org to learn how to report coyote encounters. Reports from the public are essential for gaining a better understanding of our wild neighbors.



**GRIT CITY
CARNIVORE
PROJECT**

A RESEARCH PARTNERSHIP OF
UW TACOMA • NORTHWEST TREK •
POINT DEFIANCE ZOO & AQUARIUM

FSC LOGO

Your Guide to Living With Urban Coyotes



GritCityCarnivores.org

Discouraging Coyotes

Coyotes can be active at any time of day but especially around dawn and dusk. Conflicts with coyotes occur most often during the spring and summer months as people and their pets spend more time outdoors and coyotes are raising their pups. Fall sightings are also common as young coyotes disperse and are learning to live on their own.

If a coyote approaches

Try to make coyotes feel uncomfortable around you, your kids, your home and your pets by teaching them a healthy fear of humans. If a coyote approaches you:

- Be as big and loud as possible
- Wave your arms, clap and throw rocks or other objects at the coyote
- Use a deterrent such as an air horn, vinegar in a water gun or banging pots and pans
- Shout in a loud and authoritative voice
- Do not run or turn your back on the coyote; face the coyote and back away slowly

Coyotes may follow people who are near their dens to ensure that they're not a threat to their pups. This is called escort behavior.



Teach your children

- Never approach wild animals or dogs you don't know!
- If a coyote approaches you, wave your arms, stomp your feet and yell GO AWAY COYOTE!
- Call for help
- If the animal doesn't leave, walk out of the area, keeping the animal in your sight

Protecting your pets

It can be difficult to accept, but pets can be seen as a food source to coyotes. Large dogs may be seen as a threat or possible mate. Coyotes have taken pets from backyards, open spaces and even right off the leash. Reduce the risk to your pet by following these guidelines.

Cats

The only way to guarantee your cat's safety from coyotes is to keep it indoors. Outdoor cats also face potential death from cars, diseases, parasites and dogs.

Dogs

- Always supervise your pet outside, especially at dawn and dusk
- Keep your dog on a short leash while recreating — avoid retractable leashes
- Do not allow your dog to play or interact with a coyote
- If possible, pick up your dog when coyotes are visible
- Avoid known or potential den sites and thick vegetation
- If you must leave your dog outside, secure it in a fully enclosed kennel
- Keep your pets' vaccinations current



Up to 70 percent of a coyote's diet consists of small mammals including mice, rabbits, rats and squirrels. The rest is a combination of fruits, vegetables, insects, fish, birds, eggs, garbage, and other available items.

Remove food sources that attract coyotes

- Outdoor pet food or water
- Birdseed or food sources that attract small mammals
- Accessible garbage or compost
- Fallen fruit or berries from trees or shrubs

Coyotes typically weigh 20 to 50 pounds, about the size of a medium dog. They often appear heavier due to a thick, double coat of fur.

