



Yosemite West Property & Homeowners, Inc.

Habituated Coyotes in Yosemite West Pose Danger

In recent weeks, there have been several incidents with coyotes in Yosemite West:

- a coyote was bit on its right rear leg by a resident's dog and has been seen on a regular basis limping through the neighborhood;
- a coyote attacked and injured another resident's dog, which then required surgery; and
- residents on foot and bicycles have reported coyotes stalking them.

These are examples of habituated behavior, not wild behavior. Coyotes are by nature fearful of humans. When coyotes come around houses and yards during daylight hours, or are following people and threatening pets, there is a problem.

Coyotes become habituated when people feed them, either intentionally or unintentionally. When coyotes gain access to human food and garbage, their behavior changes. They lose caution and fear, and increase their daytime activities. Habituated coyotes pose a threat to human safety, especially to children. Coyotes become aggressive toward humans when they have been protected and allowed to coexist with people. In these cases, coyotes can become quite bold.

The California Department of Fish and Game (DFG) has been informed of the situation in Yosemite West and recommends the following actions (please also read the attached **Coyote Q&A**):

- leave the injured coyote alone and do not try to approach or help it by offering food or water;
- do not feed wildlife, or leave garbage or pet food available where coyotes can scavenge;
- secure pets at all times, leash pets when out for a walk, and bring pets indoors at night;
- do not leave young children or pets outside unattended;
- haze any coyote that approaches or follows you by throwing light objects (sticks, pine cones, rocks) or by making loud noises (yelling, clapping); and
- consider carrying pepper spray when walking in the neighborhood, particularly with a small dog.

Report any aggressiveness displayed by coyotes to DFG regional headquarters in Fresno (☎ 559-243-4005) or DFG Wildlife Biologist Tim Kroeker (☎ 559-641-7592) soon after an incident, so that DFG can interview you, monitor the situation, and take appropriate action. Report any incident occurring within the national park's boundary to park officials. In the event of an actual ongoing or imminent attack by wildlife, call ☎ 911.

We need everyone to be aware and diligent. Please inform your guests accordingly.

Yosemite West Property & Homeowners, Inc.

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Coyote Q&A

What should I do if I see a coyote?

Note the date, time of day and what the coyote was doing. Encourage the coyote to keep moving by shouting and gesturing aggressively at it.

What should I do if a coyote approaches me?

If a coyote approaches, appear as large and threatening as possible. Make aggressive gestures (moving arms and legs), shout in a low voice, and throw rocks, pine cones, or sticks. Never run; coyotes like to chase moving objects. Coyotes are naturally timid animals and will flee when confronted with aggression.

What should I do if the coyote keeps approaching me?

Continue to exaggerate the techniques listed above. Do not turn away or run. Maintain eye contact and move slowly toward a house or area of increased activity.

I've seen coyotes moving through my yard a lot recently. Why?

Regular coyote presence in your yard is a result of a nearby food source. The coyote may be finding a meal in your yard, your neighbor's yard, or at a house down or across the street. Intentionally or not, someone in your neighborhood is feeding coyotes. Identify and remove the attractants to reduce the potential for coyotes to pass through your yard: pet food stored or in bowls outside, accessible garbage bins and composts, fruit fallen from trees left to rot on the ground, and rat or mouse habitat (wood piles, birdseed).

Although the majority of a coyote's diet consists of rodents, they also enjoy fruit, berries, birds, eggs, fish, crustaceans, and small pets. Even a well-maintained bird feeder will attract rats, mice and coyotes. **Never feed coyotes**; fed coyotes lose their natural fear of people and become more aggressive toward people when people feed them.

How can I discourage coyotes from using my yard?

If one yard is providing coyotes with a regular food source, coyotes will be active throughout the neighborhood. Remove all attractants around your property such as: accessible garbage and compost, pet food left outside, rat and mice habitat (birdseed fallen from feeders). Remove or position bird feeders so squirrels, mice and coyotes cannot get to them. Eliminate water sources. Trim shrubbery (especially manzanita) near ground level to remove any hiding places for coyotes.

If a coyote is in your yard, make the animal aware it is not welcome. Scare the coyote off by waving something at them (stick, broom), throwing something at them (stones, balls, tins), clang pots and pans in their direction, or aggressively shake or throw a home-made coyote deterrent such as a **COYOTE SHAKER** (a pop can containing about forty pennies, wrapped in aluminum foil and sealed with duct tape) or a **CAN CLANGER** (a group of different sized tins and cans tied together with string).

Don't stop at your property line. A coyote in your neighbor's yard is the same thing as having one in your own. Harass the coyote until it has left the area.

How can I keep my cat safe?

The only way to ensure your cat is safe from coyotes is to keep it indoors. If cats are let outside, bring them in at dusk. You can give your cat time outdoors by building an enclosed cat run.

How can I keep my dog safe?

Coyotes sometimes prey upon small dogs. Small dogs have even been taken directly off the leash. You can ensure your pet's safety by supervising it at all times when outside. Allow your dog off-leash only in enclosed areas. If you encounter a coyote while walking your dog, gather your dog in your arms. If this is not possible, keep it on a short leash as you move toward an area with increased activity or a house. Shout, wave your arms, or throw objects at the coyote.

Large dogs rarely come into conflict with coyotes. Incidents generally occur during late winter and early spring when coyotes mate and are more territorial. Do not let your dog play or interact with coyotes. Other precautionary measures include:

- Keep a whistle handy while walking your dog. The whistle may not scare the coyote directly (coyotes hear the same sirens, car alarms, and horns as we do), but it may alert anyone nearby of your need for help.
- Walk your dog with another person and only during daylight hours.
- Make sure your dog is ahead of you and within sight at all times while walking.
- Avoid walking your dog near densely vegetated areas.

Any dog that is off leash should have an immediate recall response to eliminate potential conflict with coyotes, dogs, and people.

How can I prepare a child for potential coyote encounters?

Educate children how to behave around coyotes. Teach children to **BE BIG** (stand up and raise your arms in the air), **BE MEAN** (sound angry, stomp your feet, and throw something at the coyote), **BE LOUD** (yelling "Go Away Coyote" so anyone nearby will come help), and **NEVER RUN**.

Why should I not feed coyotes?

A Fed Coyote is a Dead Coyote. Coyotes that are intentionally fed by people invariably lose their fear of humans and develop aggressive behavior, and have to be destroyed. In addition, human food does not meet the animal's seasonal nutritional needs. Plenty of natural food is available for wildlife.

What should I do if I find an injured or sick coyote, or an abandoned pup?

Leave an injured or sick coyote alone and do not help it; wildlife may be frightened and in pain. People may see coyote pups and other wildlife babies alone in the spring. Before the animal is approached, it should first be observed for at least 24 hours to ensure the parent is not returning to take care of its young. Once you are certain it is orphaned contact your nearest wildlife rehabilitation center.

Please respect and protect wild animals. KEEP COYOTES WILD.