

City of Calgary Parks – Coyote Safety Tips/ Questions and Answers

June 12, 2017 Memo to Mayor and Members of Council - Attachment

Safety Tips

- Exercise caution and be aware of your surroundings, especially if your home backs onto an open space or natural area.
- Don't leave small children or pets unattended.
- Even if there isn't a sign, remember that it is denning season and that coyotes could be around.
- Keep pets on a leash particularly in natural areas, and if in an off-leash area keep them in sight and under control.

What should I do if a coyote approaches or acts aggressively?

- Do NOT run or turn away.
- Try to scare the animal by shouting and waving your arms overhead.
- Bang sticks or objects together towards the animal – make as much noise as possible.
- Maintain eye contact with the animal and back away slowly.
- Carry a shrill whistle or portable alarm with you in areas frequented by coyotes.

How can I help to reduce or avoid problems with coyotes?

- Never approach or feed coyotes. Feeding them will habituate them to humans; they will associate humans with a food source.
- Secure open areas under porches, decks or steps.
- Clean up your compost, garbage and other potential food sources and clean up fallen fruit from trees and around bird feeders. Do not leave pet food dishes outdoors.
- Clean up after your pets in your yard or in parks. Coyotes can be attracted to an area by dog feces.
- Do not approach or feed wildlife. Wildlife do not need to be fed, and it may affect their health. It can create a dependency and habituate them to humans and teach them to associate humans with food.
- Do not provoke or approach coyotes to take photos.
- Do not attempt to intervene with dens or coyotes without a wildlife expert present.

Can coyotes be relocated?

Relocating coyote packs or individuals is not a viable option. Alberta Fish and Wildlife also do not support moving the pack because coyotes are very territorial. There is a risk that coyotes already established in the area of relocation will likely injure or kill introduced animals. There is also a risk of spreading disease.

What is the longer term solution for the denning season for next year and subsequent years?

Calgary Parks monitors coyote occurrences throughout the city. Calling 3-1-1 to report observations is a valuable source of information to identify populations and sites of potential conflict. We will take steps to reduce chances of conflict by removing any dens near pathways or other heavily used areas.

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We will preferentially use hazing or other aversive conditioning to instil a fear of humans in coyotes. Where there are persistent problems, or a threat to public safety, we will take steps to cull problem animals.

What will happen after the denning season is over – will coyotes be rampant in communities?

In the majority of cases, coyotes are exhibiting defensive behaviour during the denning season in order to protect their young. Once the young are no longer dependent on dens, we expect that most coyotes will disperse and generally avoid contact with humans. Feeding, food conditioning or other situations where animals are attracted to yards or busier areas of parks may result in continued conflict.

Is this year an anomaly or an indication of what will continue in future years as well? Will The City consider culling coyotes?

Discussions with Alberta Fish and Wildlife suggest that there may be some increased conflict in other areas of the province as well as in Calgary. We don't have any evidence at this point that this will be a problem in the future, but will actively monitor the situation.

Culling coyotes is our least preferred option, but will be used when necessary. Culling may not reduce population levels over time as coyotes will often reproduce more rapidly in these situations. The best long term solution is to reduce unnatural food sources or other attractants and promote co-existence strategies.

It is extremely unlikely, if not impossible to eliminate coyotes in the city or in any particular area.