

Coyotes in Oakland County



Coyotes are closely related to dogs and wolves. The scientific name, *Canis latrans*, means "barking dog".

They are extremely adaptable and are found in most native habitats, as well as in suburban and even urban areas where they often go unnoticed.

Coyotes live for 6 to 8 years in the wild.

The average range of a coyote's territory is 8 to 12 square miles.

Mated pairs produce 3 to 10 pups annually.

Coyote ID

A coyote's ears are pointed and stand erect. When running, coyotes carry their bushy, black-tipped tail below the level of their back. There is a wide variation in the coyote's coat color, but generally the upper body is yellowish grey, and the fur covering the throat and belly is white to cream color. A coyote might be difficult to distinguish from a German shepherd dog at a distance, but is usually less than half that size (about 20-30 pounds) and has proportionally longer legs.

Coyote Cuisine

- The majority of a coyote's diet consists of mice, voles, rabbits and other small mammals. Fawns are frequent prey, but coyotes do not reduce deer populations.
- They will also eat insects, birds, frogs, snakes, fruit and plants.
- Unlike many opportunistic foragers, coyotes rarely raid trash even in urban areas, preferring natural foods.

For questions contact:

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Help Keep Coyotes Wild

As the top predator in southern Michigan, coyotes play a major role in natural ecosystems. For many people they are the embodiment of the wild. It is therefore important that we work to coexist with coyotes.

Most coyotes that become a nuisance are thought to have become habituated to people. Do your part to prevent this:

Eliminate outdoor food sources.

Be sure trash (especially food waste) is secure. Don't place pet food outside and don't feed feral cats. Even if coyotes aren't eating these food sources directly, they may be attracted by smaller animals that are. Fallen seed beneath bird feeders will also draw rodents that may attract coyotes.

Haze coyotes that seem unafraid:

If a coyote leaves as soon as it sees you, do nothing. If it watches you or follows you, haze it! Wave your arms above your head and make lots of noise - shout "go away!" If necessary throw a stick in its direction. Be persistent! Always do this immediately, even if you enjoy watching coyotes. A healthy fear of people will keep coyotes wild.

Report aggressive or sick coyotes immediately to park staff, or contact Oakland County Animal Control at 248-858-1090.

Do Coyotes Present a Threat to People or Pets?

- Sometimes, but rarely. Coyotes are typically timid in the presence of humans. They are most active at dawn and dusk, but seeing them during the day is not unusual. Coyotes do occasionally attack pets, but no attacks on humans have been reported in Michigan. Attacks by dogs are far more common!
- Coyotes may follow people walking dogs, especially when guarding their pups in the spring. This is not dangerous as long as the coyote keeps its distance, but we ask that you haze any coyote that does this to teach it the behavior is not acceptable. Don't allow your dog to challenge a coyote.
- Never approach or touch a coyote! Don't leave cats, dogs or small children unattended outside. Attacks are reported to be more common during the winter breeding season. Don't run from a coyote as it may perceive you as prey. In the unlikely event of an attack, hit it, kick it or throw something - remember, you're much larger than a coyote!

Park Regulations

Place trash, including food, in covered garbage receptacles. Obey the 6-foot leash rule! Never allow dogs off leash except within the securely fenced dog parks.

For More Information on Coyotes:
michigan.gov/dnr
animaldiversity.org
Mammals of the Great Lakes Region
urbancoyoteinitiative.com
urbancoyoteresearch.com

