

Coyotes

Living with Urban Wildlife



The **coyote** is a natural inhabitant of the City of Kitchener and has adapted very well to life in the city. Coyotes are intelligent, curious and opportunistic animals that play an important ecological role in urban areas by eating other animals and controlling pest populations. They can live in close proximity to people without causing a problem.



Coyote (*Canis Latrans*)

Size: 25-40 pounds

Colour: Ranges from blondes and grey to browns and reds

Family: 5-6 pups born in April & May.

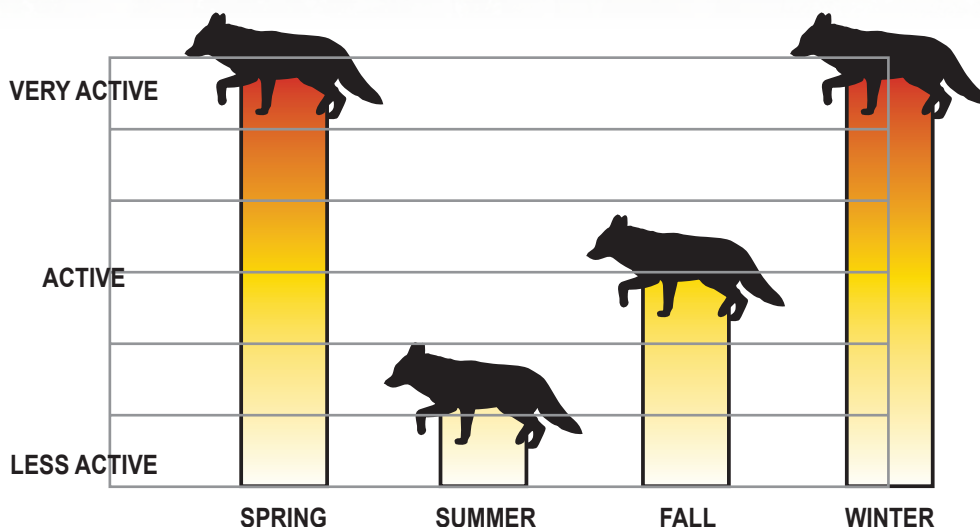
Description: The eastern coyote is part of the dog family and in Southern Ontario is a hybrid between the western coyote and the eastern red wolf. They have long legs, oversized pointed ears and large bushy tails with black tips. Their thick fur often makes them look larger than they actually are.

Habitat: Agricultural lands, green spaces and urban natural areas all provide excellent habitat. Coyotes travel great distances through and across the city and use features such as ravines, natural areas and hydro corridors to remain undetected. They prefer secluded locations for their den sites and will often choose areas near a permanent water source (eg. pond, river, stream).

Behaviour: Coyotes are active mainly at dusk, dawn and during the night but can be seen throughout the day. They can often be heard barking, yipping and yelping during the spring and early summer season, when they are teaching their young how to locate and catch food. Coyotes are territorial and will defend their territories against other coyotes and dogs.

Diet: Coyotes feed on whatever food is available. Their diet of plants and animals consists of different foods including fruits, vegetables, rodents, squirrels, beavers, geese and deer. An urban coyote's diet may also include carelessly stored garbage, food scraps and even small dogs and cats.

Seasonal coyote activity



Levels of seasonal coyote activity follow typical patterns related to their biology. Coyotes are more active during certain times of the year such as the spring when they are raising young, or during the winter, when they are looking for mates and protecting their territories.



When a coyote is fed by people, its behaviour and activity becomes unpredictable, which can cause conflicts with people and pets.

By understanding and respecting these animals, it is possible to live in harmony with them and continue to co-exist without conflicts.

Co-existing with Coyotes - Positive actions can reduce conflicts



What you can do

- Store garbage and pet food so coyotes cannot get to it.
- Make sure that your outdoor compost is kept in a secured location with a locking lid.
- Do not use compost pits or open compost piles.
- Do not put meat and other food scraps in your compost.
- Clean up fallen fruit around fruit trees.
- Keep your cats indoors and your dog on a leash at all times
- Respect and appreciate these animals from a distance - keep them wild!

Feeding a coyote affects everyone

A coyote that is being intentionally fed by humans is more likely to become a problem animal. By providing food to coyotes, you are causing problems for wildlife and for your neighbours. Excessively feeding other wildlife, including squirrels, rabbits, birds etc. could attract coyotes to a neighbourhood and unintentionally feed them.

Are Coyotes Dangerous?



The chances of a having a negative encounter with a coyote is very low. In Canada, in more than 10 years, there have been 2.4 people per year scratched or bitten by coyotes. In comparison and relative to other daily risks in Canada, the following statistics are provided:

- More than 460,000 dog bites per year
- 200 people per year struck by lightning

What about rabies?

Rabies is rare in coyotes in Ontario. Coyotes represent approximately 1% of all diagnosed incidents of rabies in wild animals over the past 40 years. A coyote that appears to be losing its fur is likely suffering from a natural skin parasite and not from rabies.



Encountering a Coyote

Coyotes will generally steer clear of humans. Simply seeing a coyote, even during daylight, should not be a reason for concern. If you are approached by a coyote, you should:

- Stay calm - do NOT run!
- Be loud, aggressive, wave your arms and shout
- Allow space between you and the animal
- Slowly walk away
 - If the animal has not moved away, throw something to scare it away.
- Walk with a partner or carry a walking stick for comfort
- Report any problem animals to the City of Kitchener



KEEP DOGS ON A LEASH AND YOUR CATS INDOORS:

Dogs are considered by a coyote to be a potential threat and should be kept on a leash at all times. Small dogs and cats are also often viewed as prey to a coyote.

City of Kitchener Municipal Code: Ch. 408 & 530

Concerns about coyote behaviour should be reported to the City of Kitchener by calling: 519-741-2345.

© Emily S. Damstra