

LIVING WITH COYOTES

Coyotes are monogamous. They breed just once a year from February to May and their gestation period is 63 days. Litters usually average anywhere from three to seven pups. These pups are born underground in a den that the female hollows out. Their babies begin to learn how to hunt at about ten weeks of age and are less than a year old when they leave their parents.

These dog-like mammals are found virtually anywhere there is a hefty plant and grass community. They are usually active at night and prefer to seek out food in the dark. However, it is not uncommon to see them out during the day. A coyote's diet is made up primarily of meat and fish, but they also eat vegetables, oats and fruits.

The coyote is similar in shape to a shepherd dog. The difference between the two is their tail; the coyote's tail is round and bushy, and carried straight out below its level back. A coyote's legs are slender and its feet smaller than those of a dog its same size. The muzzle is long and slender, and its ears large and erect.

Coyotes are basically garbage can bandits. Accused, often wrongly, of killing livestock, they are sometimes not welcome wildlife. What can you do to prevent problems from occurring with these wild neighbors?

– Erect fences (or walls) where possible. They should be high enough to keep this larger canine away and out of your backyard.

– Clear away bushes and dense weeds where rodents, reptiles, and insects dwell. The greater part of a coyote's diet consists of these critters, so keeping them away and off your property will help keep the coyote at bay, too.

– Since coyotes like meat and fish dishes, be sure to fasten garbage can lids tightly if one of these was on the dinner menu. Coyotes will also eat oats, vegetables and fruits, so dispose of these foods properly, too. Remove fallen fruit from underneath fruit trees.

– Be sure to pick up your pet's food dishes if you feed him/her outdoors. And, for safety sake, keep your pet inside at night. Cats and small dogs can become quick prey when left outside unattended.



– If possible, make sure that your livestock, such as chickens and ducks, are securely sheltered at night, not out wandering in the backyard.

– The mature coyote is a skilled hunter and has been known to prey upon deer. So, when planting a garden or shrubbery, pick deer-resistant plants to keep the deer away.

– Never intentionally feed or befriend a coyote. In Marin it is illegal to feed wildlife.

If you have any questions or encounter specific problems when dealing with wildlife,

please call the Marin Humane Society at 415.883.4621 or go to MarinHumaneSociety.org.

Resources:
Project Coyote
ProjectCoyote.org

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