



Coexisting with Coyotes



We believe that an informed PebbleCreek resident is a happy, or at least a happier, resident so here is some factual information about coyotes.

From time to time the subject of Coyotes comes up in PebbleCreek. A few residents have reported increased sightings of coyotes in and around PebbleCreek. Why is this?

First, let's take a look at past coyote activity in PC.

Until recently, coyotes had been seen walking in washes / culverts, walking on the golf course, sometimes walking walls surveying yards for food sources, hunting rabbits in bushes near the front or back yard or nonchalantly walking down the street. All of these behaviors as described by residents are deemed "normal" coyote behavior. None of these coyotes demonstrated aggressive behavior toward humans or dogs. But remember you should never leave your dog or grandchildren unattended in your back yard or any other place.

Why PebbleCreek?

The requirements for wildlife to flourish are an adequate food source, a water source, and shelter to sleep/den, birth and raise their young.

Thus, PebbleCreek is an oasis for most wildlife (birds, ducks, Geese, rabbits, etc. Coyotes that have formed 'family groups' - like those in PebbleCreek - typically claim 1 to 2 square miles per coyote as their territory. Based on sightings, research and science, it is estimated that there are about 10 to 12 coyotes living within the twelve square miles surrounding PebbleCreek.

While coyotes typically dig their own dens, they also use abandoned animal holes. The undeveloped fields both inside and on the outskirts of PebbleCreek were ideal locations for dens and family group's shelter. Recent construction within PebbleCreek has disrupted and destroyed that habit. Coyotes are now forced to look elsewhere for shelter. They may be spending part of their day hunting food and part of their day searching for shelter in which to den.

If they cannot find suitable places to den, they will look elsewhere. While they may sleep under bushes in common areas or yards, they will not den there as it is not a protected space. They will more than likely continue to seek food, water and daytime resting shelter within PebbleCreek.

REMEMBER: It is important to keep coyotes afraid of humans by hazing them when they are in, on or near our personal space such as yards, patios, driveways, etc.

Interesting facts about coyotes:

ONLY the alpha male and female reproduce between Dec and Feb

They mate for life

Alpha female remains in heat 2-5 days

Gestation is about 60 days

Average litter size is 6-8

Both the male and female care for the young

21-28 days after birth pups emerge from the den

In about 35 days they are fully weened

50-70% of the pups DO NOT SURVIVE TO ADULTHOOD

Male pups disperse from the den between 6-9 months of age to establish their own territory and find mates

Females remain with parents to form basis of the family group

COYOTE LIFE CYCLE

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Dec-Feb: Breeding Activity

Feb-Apr: Den Selection

Apr-May: Birthing

May-Aug: Raising pups

Sep-Dec: Pup Dispersal*

* This is when you see more activity as the pups explore with adult

NORMAL COYOTE BEHAVIOR

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Active daytime and nighttime

Sitting and watching

Relaxing or playing in a field or grassy area such as a golf course

Walking nearby not paying attention to you

Dashing across the street in front of you

Following you and your dog with curiosity from a "comfortable" distance

Escorting you and your dog away from den, their territory, food or pups

Bluff charging your dog in an attempt to move your dog away from den or pups

Standing his/her ground unfazed by your hazing (you are unknowingly too close to den or pups)**** Simply back away slowly and go a different direction as they are protecting their young

HOW TO HAZE or SCARE COYOTES

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BE BIG BAD AND LOUD

Raise your arms and shout LOUDLY "COYOTE GO" (This alerts others of coyote presence)

Carry an air horn, whistle, shaker can (can filled with pennies) to scare away

Carry an automatic umbrella to pop open toward coyote while shout LOUDLY

Use a super soaker filled with vinegar or 1/3 ammonia and 2/3 water: aim at fur not eyes

Spray with water hose; do not allow them to become comfortable in your yard or personal space

For more information, visit: www.ProjectCoyote.org

[Coexisting with Coyotes](#) [More information](#)

NATURAL HISTORY

Coyotes are members of the canid family. Coyotes look similar to medium-sized dogs, and are often confused with Huskies. Coyotes are opportunistic: they can exploit a wide range of habitats, feast on a variety of natural and human-supplied foods, and, if necessary, adapt their activity periods to times when humans are not active. Despite being one of the most successful urban mammals, many people are surprised to see a coyote in their

backyard – and that surprise often leads to panic. The good news is that there really is not much to worry about!

Q: I just saw a coyote during the day – doesn't that mean he is rabid?

A: It is actually not unusual to see a coyote out during the day. Coyotes will venture out during daylight hours in search of food. Coyotes are opportunistic feeders, meaning they will hunt for food as the opportunity presents itself – regardless of day or night. Additionally, coyotes eat squirrels, and squirrels are only active during the day! So, if you see a coyote outside during the day, he is most likely in pursuit of a squirrel, small rodent, or other daytime food source such as rabbits.

Sometimes people are alarmed because a coyote exhibits a “brazenness” that is alarming. This does not necessarily mean that the animal is sick. Coyotes may habituate to humans because of food sources being constantly available (i.e. cat food left on the patio or repeated contact with no negative consequences). You can teach a bold coyote to be wary of you and other people by using negative conditioning. Make loud, scary noises by banging metal pot tops together when the animal is nearby, or spray the animal's hindquarters with a hose.

Call your local animal control officer or police if an adult coyote seen in daytime is acting at all sick or showing abnormal behaviors such as partial paralysis, circling, staggering as if drunk or disoriented, self-mutilating, or exhibiting unprovoked aggression or unnatural tameness. While waiting for animal control personnel, keep people and companion animals away from the animal.

Q: Will coyotes attack children or pets?

A: Neither the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) nor local and state health departments have classified coyotes as a human safety risk. Coyote attacks on people are extremely rare – and ironically that is why they are highly publicized the few times they do happen. On the other hand, according to the CDC, over 330,000 people visit the emergency room each year for treatment of a dog bite-related injury, yet we do not see fit to banish dogs from homes. Thus, it is essential to put risk in its proper context, which is why, statistically speaking; the risk of coyote harm to humans is practically nil.

Most, if not all, of the few coyote bites that occur nationally each year are directly related to coyotes being fed by humans, whether intentional or not. As a result, it is important to take proactive measures and ensure that there are no human-produced food sources, such as garbage or pet food, on your property that will entice coyotes with a quick and easy meal (see below for further information).

Although coyotes will occasionally prey on free-roaming cats and small dogs, the fear of coyotes or foxes eating pets is greatly exaggerated. Many more dogs and cats meet the unfortunate fate of being struck by an automobile. Coyotes and foxes seek out the type of prey that will give them the greatest reward with minimal risk of injury to themselves. As a result, their favored prey include small mammals such as rabbits, mice, rats, and squirrels, as well as human-produced food such as garbage, cat or dog food. Coyotes also eat insects, fruits and berries.

Regardless, common sense tells us that dogs, cats and young children never should be allowed outside unsupervised, whether the danger be from an automobile, another animal.

Q: Do coyotes hunt in packs?

A: No. Coyotes and foxes do form small family groups that share territories, but both species are normally solitary hunters, although they may sometimes hunt in pairs. Interestingly, howling is often a group exercise

for coyotes. However, there is no need to be alarmed if you hear the distinctive coyote howl; it merely functions as a communication between individuals or as a method for staking out territorial claims.

Q: How do I keep coyotes out of my yard?

A: You can prevent coyotes from visiting your yard by taking a few simple precautions: keep your garbage in a secure container, and only put it outside on the morning of pick-up; do not put any meat scraps in compost heaps; do not leave any pet food outside over night; restrict the use of bird seed – coyotes are attracted to it and the birds and rodents that use the feeder; pick up fallen fruit from underneath trees; and cut back brush around your property that provides cover for coyotes or their prey.

If you have a fenced-in yard, the Coyote Roller (available from Roll Guard, 619-977-6031 or www.coyoteroller.com) is an effective device for keeping dogs in and coyotes out. The Coyote Roller is a free-standing cylinder that attaches to the top of a fence, and literally “rolls” any animal off who is attempting to climb over.

Q: There is a coyote den near my property – what do I do?

A: People are often surprised to discover a coyote den near their property. Again, the mere presence of a den is nothing to be concerned about. If a coyote or fox den absolutely must be moved out of an area due to impending danger to the animals (ex: the den is located near a construction site), harassment strategies will encourage the animals to abandon their den. Place dirty, smelly sweaty socks, or rags sprinkled with a strong-smelling household cleaner such as ammonia, into the entrance to the den. All of these strategies tend to make the coyotes or foxes uncomfortable and encourage them to find a new den site. However, keep in mind that it is not an easy task to find and excavate a suitable denning site, so the foxes may try hard to stay at their original location for lack of a better place to go.

Remember, the presence of a coyote or fox den near your property does not present danger to yourself, your family or companion animals. The inhabitants of the den should only be encouraged to leave if there is a risk of impending danger to the denning animals. After learning that their fear was misplaced, many people come to find that having a coyote or fox den near their property is actually one of the best photo opportunities they can have. So pick up a camera, and “shoot!”

Q: Why can't I just trap coyotes out of my area?

A: Many state fish and game departments require that a person obtain a special permit to trap coyotes and few will issue such permit because of the mere presence of coyotes in an area. That aside, human killing of coyotes for predator control has ironically been a major factor in the increase of the coyote's home range; as coyotes are persecuted in one area, their adaptability allows them to make use of a new area. Additionally, for both coyotes, as well as most other “harvested” animals, population “control” tends to have the opposite effect; coyotes compensate for the artificial reduction in their population by breeding at an earlier age and having larger litters. In addition, more young will survive because of the increase in availability of food sources.

It is much easier, and more effective, to simply remove any potential attractants from your property, which will keep coyotes at a distance, and realize that they are valuable members of our urban landscape!

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