

Coyotes are territorial animals that are common throughout Cuyahoga County and all of Ohio. Coyotes have coexisted amongst us in Lakewood for years, rarely being noticed. Today, there are at least groups, living in Lakewood. A group lives in the Madison Park vicinity, another lives in the South West Corner, and the third in the Lakewood Park vicinity (see map below). Because coyotes are here to stay, it is important to learn to safely coexist with them. Coyotes serve an important role in the local ecosystem by keeping populations of smaller wild animals and vermin in check.



## General Coyote Facts

Coyotes in our area are usually grayish brown, but coloration can vary from buff to black. They have yellow or amber eyes, large ears and narrow, pointed muzzles. Most adults weigh 40 pounds, but their full coats and long legs can make them appear larger.

Coyotes residing in urban environments are typically nocturnal, unlike their counterparts in natural surroundings. This is most likely behavior adapted to avoid human contact. These animals switch their activity to be more active at night when human activity is minimal. They instinctively avoid people. Coyotes can be most active at dawn and dusk.

Coyote breeding season is usually January through March, with pups produced April through May, denning through August. Coyote dens can be found in hollowed out tree stumps, under rock outcrops, on a slope, under brush, or even in some open areas.



Coyotes are common across Cuyahoga County, and generally pose little threat to humans or pets. By following a few simple steps, we can coexist

Urban areas provide a bounty of natural food sources for coyotes, who primarily hunt small mammals such as mice, rats, and rabbits. They will also eat fruit and berries.

They occasionally scavenge unsecured garbage, pet food and compost. Both males and females will hunt. Coyotes will regularly hunt in the same area if food is regularly available

## Be Safe from Coyotes

**According to Lakewood's Animal Shelter Supervisor, Elaine Hearn, there has never been a recorded coyote attack on a human in our area.** However, coyotes that have become habituated to humans may not show fear when encountering humans. Habituation may result from coyotes' exposure to a constant source of food or repeated exposure to humans without negative reinforcement. Incidents can occur with coyotes who have grown accustomed to people, due to being fed by humans (deliberately or not). Never intentionally feed a coyote, and [remove any food attractants](#) in your yard. Coyotes may prey on small unattended domestic pets, such as cats and small dogs, if given the opportunity. [Keep your pets safe](#) by taking essential measures to eliminate the risks.

Deter coyotes from coming around your yard and reinforce coyotes' natural fear of humans by using "[hazing](#)" methods". Hazing is the term used for methods to drive off a coyote from an area or discourage undesired behavior. Hazing methods encourage the use of harassing actions without employing weapons or causing bodily harm to the coyote. Being highly intelligent animals, coyotes who are hazed, quickly learn to avoid neighborhoods, people and pets. The simplest method of hazing is being large and loud.

Most normal coyote activity is at night (dusk to dawn). If you or your pet has a **daytime** sighting or an **encounter** with a coyote, please report it to Lakewood Animal Control at 216-529-5020. An **encounter** would be defined as a direct, close meeting between a human or pet and a coyote.

Studies have shown that removal programs, such as trapping, are largely ineffective. If the conditions that lured the coyote to an area still exist, trapping will only temporarily remove the problem. And it won't be long before other coyotes move in to replace them. Research has shown that when attempting to control coyote populations (using lethal methods), coyotes exhibit a surge in their reproductive rates, allowing for quick regeneration of their population numbers. Lethal removal is only warranted when a coyote is an immediate threat to human safety. When a coyote, becomes increasingly aggressive, does not respond to hazing, or is the cause of multiple attacks on dogs, it can be an immediate threat.

But trapping should be left to a professional licensed commercial wild animal control operator, as Ohio Law is detailed and complicated when it comes to trapping laws. See ORC 1501:31-15-03 Nuisance Wild Animal Control.

All hunting is illegal in the City of Lakewood. No person shall hunt, kill or attempt to kill any animal by the use of firearms or any other means within the Municipality. See Chapter 505.22 of the codified ordinances of the City of Lakewood.

## Coyote Safety Checklist

### Remove Food Attractants

- ✓ NEVER intentionally feed a coyote.
- ✓ Do not feed feral cats, deer or other wildlife. This attracts coyotes as well.
- ✓ Do not feed pets outdoors; store all pet food securely indoors.
- ✓ Remove bird feeders and clean up fallen seed. Coyotes are usually not interested in the bird food, but bird feeders often attract rodents, especially squirrels, which then attract coyotes.
- ✓ Clean up fallen fruit around trees.
- ✓ Do not include meat, fish or dairy among compost contents.
- ✓ Clean up food and grease around outdoor grills after each use.
- ✓ Secure all trash containers with tight fitting lids. Periodically clean cans to reduce residual odors.

### Keep Your Pets Safe

- ✓ Pets should never be left outside unattended, especially from dusk to dawn.
- ✓ Keep your cats indoors.
- ✓ Dogs should always be kept on a leash (six-foot long or shorter), particularly in public areas.
- ✓ Use high fences around your yard. (According to the Humane Society of the United States, a fence would have to be at least eight feet tall and made of a material that coyotes cannot climb to deter a coyote).

### Hazing Methods

- ✓ Wave your arms above your head and yell "GO AWAY COYOTE!" in a low, deep voice.
- ✓ Throw tennis balls, sticks or other small objects toward (not at) the coyote.
- ✓ Yell, use a whistle, bells, air horns, bang pots and pans or whatever is your noisemaker of choice to make noise.
- ✓ Squirt with a hose, water guns filled with water or vinegar water.

### Remove Favorable Den Sites

- ✓ Trim vegetation to reduce hiding places and potential denning sites.
- ✓ Restrict access under decks and sheds, around woodpiles or any other structures that can provide cover or denning sites for coyote or their prey.

### Other Deterrents

- ✓ Install motion-activated lighting in your yard.