

Co-Existing with Coyotes at The Village Green

Why Might Coyotes Be Here?

Coyotes are highly adaptive, opportunistic omnivores who can range over many square miles of territory. If they are sighted somewhere, it usually means there is food, water or shelter available to them on site or in adjacent areas (and are passing through on their way there). Similar to bears, raccoons and humans, they will eat a variety of foods. In the wild, their diet consists of dead animals, fruits, vegetables and berries, and insects, as well as mostly rodents—their most common prey. In urban environments, they have also added cats and small dogs to their diets along with pet food and human food wherever they can find it (usually in unattended/unsecured garbage receptacles or areas).

When Are Coyotes Active?

Coyotes are typically nocturnal. While often active just before dawn and after dusk, coyotes in human occupied areas operate throughout the night in order to avoid humans. They may also be seen during daylight hours when they become habituated to finding easily available food during these times and are not disturbed from finding it either because humans allow it or do not realize their presence.

What Do I Do If I See A Coyote?

- **NEVER RUN AWAY OR TURN YOUR BACK ON A COYOTE**—the coyote may instinctively view it as an opportunity to chase, and you lose the natural advantage you have over a coyote which prefers to flee an encounter with anything larger than its size (most LA coyotes are 20-25 pounds and rarely if ever larger than 35 pounds).
- **HAZE IT TO SCARE IT AWAY**—see Active Hazing tips below.
- Maintain **EYE CONTACT** with the coyote at **ALL TIMES** to show your dominance.
- Make yourself as **LARGE** as possible by waving your hands above your head or doing a jumping jack in place. You can also use your clothing to wave or swing around or expand to make yourself look bigger. Opening an umbrella works well if you have one.
- **DO NOT PANIC!** – humans almost always have the upper hand in virtually any coyote encounter and staying calm will allow you (and your companions) to control the situation.
- **REPORT IT!** Try your best to recall the details of the coyote – size, coat color, tail and ears (study pictures of coyotes on the internet so you can understand how to distinguish them from a dog or a fox) and call PLATT SECURITY or the Village Green Office with a specific time, date and location of the sighting. If the animal is acting aggressive, appears hurt or sick or approaches you or seems to be showing no fear of humans or acts erratically, report those details as well.

What does Coyote “HAZING” Mean?

In the City of Los Angeles, even in built-up areas, it is not uncommon to come upon a coyote (or other wild canine like feral dogs). However, with every encounter, the coyote should be left associating people and their pets with at best no reward and, at worst, uncomfortable and unpredictable situations where they believe they might be harmed if they engaged in actual contact. Instilling a deep fear and wariness of humans in coyotes will enable them to steer clear of humans as they go about their normal routines and not associate humans with food (prey) or comfort.

Organizations like ProjectCoyote.org break hazing into “PASSIVE” and “ACTIVE” categories. Passive hazing involves steps you can take to move/keep coyotes out of an area in the first place.

Active hazing involves handling a face-to-face encounter with a coyote to scare them off.

What Are PASSIVE HAZING Techniques?

This category focuses on one rule only: **REMOVING ATTRACTANTS**

- Closely supervise small children and animals when they are outdoors.
- Do not leave dogs unattended in patios **at any time**.
- **Do not allow pets, including house cats, to roam freely** and especially never at night—cats have become an easy and favorite prey of urban coyotes.
- This may seem obvious, but **DO NOT** feed coyotes or provide water for them. Leaving water out for other wildlife, like squirrels, will also attract them and should not be done.
- Do not feed pets outdoors, but if you must, do not leave any uneaten food outside unattended. Do not leave out food for cats, feral or otherwise—coyotes will be attracted not only to the food, but to kill the cats and other animals (raccoons, opossums) that come for the food.
- If you have bird feeders, clean all fallen seed from the ground. Coyotes will eat the seed and/or the wildlife attracted to it—birds, squirrels, skunks, raccoons and opossums.
- Do not leave any food or garbage outside or in your patios and never overnight. Spray trash areas and garbage receptacles with ammonia to deter food scents from attracting all wildlife.
- Pick fruit off trees and fallen fruit off ground, including figs and loquats.
- Close off crawl spaces under furniture, sheds or decks to avoid unwittingly creating shelter.
- Install motion-activated devices on patios/porches that would trigger in the presence of coyotes.
- If approached by a coyote (or threatening dog) while walking your dog, pick up your dog and use the active hazing techniques below.
- **Always walk dogs on as short a leash as possible**, and never on long retractable leashes (what one Fish and Game official called “fishing for coyotes”)—keep them close to you. This also protects against attacks by feral and stray dogs.

What Are ACTIVE HAZING Techniques?

Active hazing is about making sure a coyote who is either hanging around to feed or just passing through believes that humans are a greater source of danger and discomfort than anything they might gain from engaging with humans or their property.

- The goal is to use the things that coyotes naturally shy away from (**LOUD NOISES, LARGE SHAPES, HUMANS, PREDATORS BIGGER THAN THEY ARE**) to your advantage.
- **Make your presence known!** Coyotes do not want to engage with confident assertive humans. When outside at night or pre-dawn, rattle your keys, talk loudly and sharply, sing out loud...
- **Whenever you see a coyote—SCARE IT AWAY! Shout, holler, scream, bang on a pot, blow a loud whistle or use an air horn.** Shaking a soda can with heavy coins in it works as does waving your arms, a broom, or a stick in the air.
- Coyotes may run a short distance, then stop and look back to see if a threat is still present. It is important to **KEEP HAZING** and increase the intensity until the coyotes are out of sight.
- **IF YOU FEEL COMFORTABLE**, assertively, but gradually, approach the coyote to make sure they keep moving away from you. You are **TRAINING them to be AFRAID**, so be convincing. Here’s a simple how-to video: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0G-0vxMWvmo>.
- Spray with a hose or super-soaker water toy.
- Throw small rocks, tennis balls or other objects to scare them off; you don’t need to hit them—just throwing close to them will create enough unpredictability to have them avoid you.