

# **City of West Covina Coyote Management Plan**

[www.westcovina.org/coyote](http://www.westcovina.org/coyote)

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## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

The intent of this plan is to provide guidance for City staff in dealing with coyotes in West Covina. Guidelines and provisions of this plan do not supersede federal, state and county regulations and policies.

### **Management Strategy**

City strategy for managing coyotes is based on balancing respect and protection for wildlife and their habitats without compromising public safety. The main strategy is comprised of a three-pronged approach consisting of:

- 1) Public education designed around coexistence with coyotes.
- 2) Enforcement of laws and regulations prohibiting the feeding of wildlife.
- 3) Ensuring public safety by implementing appropriate tiered responses to coyote and human interactions. This plan requires active participation on the part of the entire community including residents, homeowners associations, businesses and City staff alike.

### **Education**

Education is the key to having residents make appropriate decisions regarding their safety, managing their property and protecting their pets. Education will involve written materials through mailings, handouts available at City facilities and online materials. Educational tools may also include signage that will warn pet owners of the presence of coyotes. The goal of education is to decrease attractants, increase pet safety, reshape coyote behavior and create reasonable expectations by the community regarding normal coyote behavior.

It should be noted that the United States National Park Service has been conducting research on coyotes for over 20 years. Research in 2015, identified that not all coyotes travel from open spaces into urban areas. Instead, scientists are discovering that urban coyotes may now be living within urban settings and adjusting their behavior around urban activities.

### **Enforcement**

Feeding wildlife is known to lead to an increase in wildlife activity. Feeding can attract coyotes and their prey to an area leading to an increased likelihood of creating a habituated coyote(s) resulting in increased coyote and human interaction. California law prohibits feeding wildlife. Los Angeles County Department of Animal Care and Control Officers will strictly enforce the State law(s) and Chapter 6 of the City of West Covina Municipal Code, pertaining to wildlife.

## **Response Plan**

A detailed tiered response plan has been developed to provide a mechanism for identifying and classifying different levels of human and coyote interactions. Definitions of coyote encounters are listed in Appendix A. Appendix B provides a chart detailing coyote behavior, behavior classification and recommended responses.

## **COYOTE MANAGEMENT PLAN**

The City of West Covina does not own or have any control of wild animals found within its boundaries, nor is the City responsible for the actions or damage caused by them. These animals are a common and important integral part of our ecosystem.

Los Angeles County Animal Control Officers do not respond to service calls for normal coyote behavior, such as sightings. However, they will respond to calls which involve a sick or injured coyote(s) or if there is a public safety issue, such as a coyote threatening people or resting in an area frequented by people, such as a yard, park, playground, school, etc.

## **Background**

In 2015, municipalities in Southern California began to experience an increase in the amount of coyote encounters. These encounters included numerous attacks on pets by coyotes that were off leash and in residential backyards, and an upsurge in sightings in areas populated by people, including during the day. These encounters have caused residents to have a general sense of fear and a desire to manage the increased coyote activity in neighborhoods.

Historically, coyotes have existed in and around West Covina, finding safe haven in areas including South Hills, Walnut Creek Wash, Galster Park, Heritage Park, Shadow Oak Park, and surrounding neighborhoods. Any areas where dense brush is prevalent, such as hillsides, also create an environment where coyotes can build dens and reproduce. It is also believed that the prolonged drought has limited potential food and water sources which draws coyotes to residential neighborhoods in search of these resources to survive.

## **Difficulties Managing Wildlife**

The City of West Covina places a high value on its wildlife. The City promotes policies supporting prevention and implementation of remedial measures that do not harm the wildlife or their habitats. However, some individual animals have adapted to urban environments and have the potential to cause problems and/or conflicts in specific situations.

A wildlife problem is defined as any situation that causes a health or safety issue to its residents. In cases where problems with wildlife are associated with human behavior (i.e. leaving garbage exposed or intentional wildlife feeding), ordinances and enforcement may be enacted to minimize conflict.

In some cases, traditional management tools are ineffective. For example, relocation of animals is not ecologically sound and is not allowed in California without permission from the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW). Generally, relocated animals do not survive the transfer, and if they do, they rarely stay in the relocation area. They tend to disperse to other locations where they may cause problems to humans, be involved in territorial disputes or introduce disease. In some instances, the trans-located coyote will go to great lengths to return to its previous territory. For these reasons, the CDFW rarely allows relocation of wildlife.

As a last resort, lethal control measures, when employed, are controversial and selective, meaning they target the alpha coyote or problem coyote. If these methods are used, they must be humane and in compliance with federal and state laws.

It is not economically, ecologically or in any other way justified to attempt to remove all coyotes from the urban ecosystem as a means of addressing conflicts between humans and coyotes. Attempts made by local, state and federal agencies as well as private organizations over the past century to eradicate coyotes have proven to be ineffective. Moreover, during the past century coyotes have expanded their territories to include every state except Hawaii.

### **What Role do Coyotes Play in the Environment?**

Coyotes play an important role in the urban ecosystem, particularly as a top-predator. They eat a broad range of small animals, including squirrels, mice, rabbits, rats and gophers. Rodents make up a majority of their diet. In the process, coyotes control the population sizes of these animals, many of which are considered pests to humans. They also prey on “mesopredators,” such as raccoons and opossums. Without a top predator like the coyote to keep them in check, mesopredators can dramatically reduce bird populations by eating their eggs. Coyotes also disperse seeds of native plant species and recycle nutrients.

### **How do Humans Perceive Coyotes?**

People respond to coyotes in various ways. Some observe them with enjoyment, others with indifference and some with fear or concern. Personal experiences with coyotes may influence perceptions. Experiences range from animal sightings without incident to stalking, killing of pets or, and even attacks on humans. Although coyote attacks on humans are very infrequent, such incidents generate significant media coverage. Such attacks remain a very rare event and has not happened in the City of West Covina. Because wild animals conjure up fear in some people, actual sightings and perceptions

may become exaggerated or misconstrued (see Appendix A for coyote description of encounters). The wide range in perceptions of urban coyotes from West Covina residents supports the need for strong and consistent educational messages to clarify management techniques.

### **Have Coyote Numbers Increased in West Covina?**

Without tracking and updated inventories, it is difficult to know if the number of coyotes has increased in West Covina. What is known is that coyotes can become habituated to humans if they are intentionally or unintentionally fed, which can lead to loss of fear of people and bolder behavior.

In general, coyotes regularly roam an area of about two to five square miles to obtain enough food for the pack members. Normally, each pack is a territorial family group made up of three to ten coyotes. A portion of the area the pack inhabits is the pack's territory, which they will defend against other coyotes. The number of mature coyotes in the pack is often related to the amount of food resources in the territory.

A coyote pack usually has only one breeding (or alpha) female. This female often produces more pups than can be supported by the pack. Young coyotes may leave the pack at about nine to eleven months of age, but dispersal patterns are highly variable. These juvenile coyotes become transients. Other types of transients include older individuals that can no longer defend their role as upper level pack members and are pushed out of the pack.

Transients move all over in narrow undefended zones that exist between pack territories searching for an open habitat to occupy or group to join. They often die before they succeed (many are hit by cars). It is largely because of the constant influx of transients that coyote eradication programs fail.

Removing a group of territorial coyotes will create an undefended area into which the transient coyotes will flow. At all times of the year, numbers of transients are immediately available to replenish any voids created by killing the resident coyotes. Furthermore, if either the alpha male or alpha female in a pack is killed, ovulation in other breeding-age females is often triggered and a corresponding increase in the number of litters and/or number of pups per litter is observed.

### **Monitoring and Collecting Data**

Monitoring and data collection are critical components of an effective Coyote Management Plan. This is best accomplished with input from both residents and City officials. Coyote sightings or incidents can be made by calling the Community Services Department at (626) 919-6966 or by going online at [www.westcovina.org/coyote](http://www.westcovina.org/coyote) to enter location and information which will aid in creating a map of activity. Concerns can also be reported by downloading the City of West Covina Mobile Application. Emergency

animal control related incidents should be directed to the Los Angeles County Department of Animal Control at (626) 962-3577.

The purpose of monitoring human-coyote interactions is to document where coyotes are frequently seen and to identify human-coyote conflict hotspots, if they exist. Gathering specific data on incidents will allow for targeting of educational campaigns and conflict mitigation efforts, as well as the ability to measure success in reducing conflicts over time.

### **Public Education and Outreach**

Education is the key to having residents make appropriate decisions regarding their safety or managing their property and pets. This involves decreasing attractants, increasing pet safety and creating reasonable expectations of normal coyote behavior.

Learning how to respond to a coyote encounter empowers residents and can help reduce undesired coyote behaviors. The public should understand what normal coyote behavior is when living in close proximity with coyotes. For example, vocalization is normal acceptable behavior and does not indicate aggression. Education and outreach efforts by the City should focus on:

- Understanding human safety, pet safety, coyote attractants, deterrents to coyotes on private property, including appropriate fencing, exclusion techniques, “what to do” tips, and information on appropriate hazing techniques.
- Developing a common language and awareness of normal versus abnormal behavior when discussing encounters with coyotes (see definitions in Appendix A)
- Disseminating information to residents, businesses and schools through the City’s website, cable television corkboard, social media, traditional media, fliers/handouts, mailers, etc.
- Consulting with land managers, non-profit organizations like the Humane Society of the United States and agencies like the California Department of Fish and Wildlife and the Los Angeles County Department of Agricultural Weights and Measures that provide public education materials, programs and expertise.

### **Coyote Attractants**

Coyotes are drawn to urban and suburban areas for the following reasons:

1. **Food.** Urban areas often support large numbers of rodents, including mice and rats. However, coyotes can be further attracted into suburban neighborhoods by human-associated food such as pet food, unsecured compost or trash and fallen fruit in yards. Intentional and unintentional feeding can lead coyotes to associate humans with sources of food, which can result in negative interactions between people and pets. To reduce food attractants in urban and suburban areas:
  - Never hand-feed or otherwise deliberately feed a coyote.

- Avoid feeding pets outside. Remove sources of pet food and water that a coyote could easily obtain. If feeding pets outside is necessary, remove the bowl and any leftover food promptly.
  - Never include meat or dairy in compost.
  - Maintain good housekeeping, such as regularly raking areas around bird feeders.
  - Remove fallen fruit from the ground.
  - Keep trash in high-quality containers with tight-fitting lids. Only place the cans curbside the morning of collection. If you leave out overnight, trash cans are more likely to be tipped over and explored.
  - Bag especially attractive food wastes, such as meat scraps or leftover pet food, before discarding
2. **Water.** Urban areas provide a year-round supply of water in the form of storm water impoundments and channels, artificial lakes, irrigation, pet water dishes, etc., which support both coyotes and their prey.
- During drought or otherwise dry conditions, water can be as alluring as food, so remove water bowls set outside for pets and make watering cans unavailable.
3. **Access to shelter.** Parks, greenbelts, open spaces, golf courses, buildings, sheds, decks and crawl spaces, etc., increase the amount and variability of cover for coyotes. They allow coyotes to safely and easily remain close to people, pets, homes and businesses without detection.
- In the spring, when coyotes give birth and begin to raise young, they concentrate their activities around dens or burrows in which their young are sheltered. Coyotes may take advantage of available spaces under sheds or decks for use as a den, bringing them into close contact with people and pets.
4. **Unattended Pets.** Pets are a normal part of an urban landscape. However, we must remember that we are living in their territory and coyotes may consider pets potential prey or competitors.
- Free-roaming pets, especially cats and sometimes small dogs, may attract coyotes into neighborhoods. The best way to minimize risk to pets is not to leave them outside unattended.
  - Cats. Coyotes primarily eat small mammals such as mice and rats, but will also prey on slightly larger mammals such as rabbits and groundhogs. Approximately the same size as a groundhog or rabbit, free-roaming outdoor cats may also be seen as eligible prey by coyotes. It is important to note that attacks on cats are normal coyote behavior and do not indicate a danger for people. The best way to protect cats from coyotes (and the other dangers of outside life, such as cars, disease, dogs and other wildlife)



is to keep cats primarily indoors and only let them outside in a secure enclosure when accompanied by a person and under the control of a leash and harness.

- Feral cats. People who feed feral cats are often concerned that coyotes might prey on the cats. These concerns are well founded because coyotes can be attracted to the outdoor pet food. Although there is no sure way to protect feral cats from coyotes, the following tips can be helpful:
  - Do not feed feral cats. Doing so can have other unintentional consequences, including ecological damage.
  - If you are going to feed feral cats, provide an escape route.
  - Haze coyotes seen on the property (see Appendix C). Making them feel uncomfortable will encourage them to stay out of the area.
- Dogs. Dogs are also vulnerable to coyote confrontations. Incidents generally involve coyotes who are accustomed or habituated to people (usually from feeding), or coyotes who are protecting their territory and pups (usually during breeding season).
  - Small, unattended dogs may be seen by coyotes as potential prey. It is important, therefore, to keep dogs on a six-foot long or shorter leash when outdoors or stay within six feet of them when on your property. Coyotes may view a dog on a leash longer than six feet as an unattended pet and state law requires dogs be on a leash no longer than six feet. This precaution is especially important if you are in or near nature preserves or open-space areas. Attacks on unattended, small dogs are normal coyote behavior and do not indicate a danger to people.
  - Although attacks on larger dogs are rarer, coyotes will sometimes go after a large dog when they feel that their territory is threatened. This generally occurs during the coyote breeding season, which takes place from January through March. During this time, it is especially important not to let dogs outside unattended and to keep them on leashes (six feet long or less) when in public areas.
  - Do not allow dogs off leash, when not on your property. It is against the law and unsafe for your dog.

Other domestic animals kept outside, such as rabbits, may also be viewed as prey by coyotes. Protect outdoor animals from coyotes (and other predators) with protective fencing and/or confine them in sturdy cages each evening.

Residents are encouraged to use the Yard Audit Checklist (Appendix D) as a tool to help recognize and remove attractants in their yards and neighborhoods.

While human attacks are very rare, urban landscape development, habituation through intentional and unintentional feeding, pet related incidents and media attention have led some urban residents to fear coyotes. Steps must be taken to address safety concerns, misconceptions, and provide information on appropriate responses to potential threats to human safety. It is important to keep in mind that coyotes have been in and around West Covina and the San Gabriel Valley for a very long time, and they will continue to coexist with us through the unforeseen future.

## **Hazing and Behavioral Change**

Some coyotes have become too comfortable living in close proximity of humans. For coyotes to safely coexist with people, they need to fear and avoid contact with humans.

Hazing—also known as “fear conditioning”—is the process that facilitates change in coyote behavior and is by necessity a community response to negative encounters with coyotes. The more often an individual animal is “hazed”, the more effective hazing is in changing coyote behavior (see Appendix C for coyote hazing overview).

### **Goals of Hazing**

The goals of hazing are to:

- 1) Reshape coyote behavior to avoid human contact in an urban setting.
- 2) Give residents tools to actively engage in reshaping coyote behavior which will help support them to feel safe in their parks and neighborhoods.
- 3) Model appropriate and effective hazing behavior and share accurate information about coyotes with other residents, friends and family.

### **Hazing Process**

Human behavior can shape animal behavior, in either a negative or positive manner. People living in close proximity to coyotes can remove coyote attractants, identify potentially dangerous situations for their pets and themselves, and respond in a manner designed to change coyote behavior.

### **Overview of Hazing**

Hazing is a process whereby a person or a number of individuals encountering a coyote respond in like manner to make coyotes afraid and choose to leave a situation where their presence is unwanted.

Basic hazing consists of standing your ground, never ignoring or turning your back to a coyote(s), and yelling and/or making unpleasant and frightening noises until the animal(s) choose to leave. If the coyote does not leave, more aggressive tactics are in order.

More aggressive hazing consists of approaching an animal more quickly and aggressively, throwing projectiles like stones near, but not at, the animal, spraying with a hose or water gun, and creating a more heightened fear of contact so the animal flees. For more options, see Appendix C on hazing.

Hazing must continue once it begins until the animal leaves. Otherwise, the coyote will learn to “wait” until the person gives up. Not following through with hazing will actually create an animal more resistant to hazing instead of reinforcing the image that “people are scary”.

Hazing never involves injury to the animal, only the threat of injury. An injured animal becomes less predictable than a normal, healthy one. Purposefully injuring an animal (domestic or wild) also constitutes animal cruelty which is against State and Federal law.

A common concern with hazing involves potential danger to the hazer. A coyote’s basic nature is very skittish and this nature is what makes the technique useful. A normal, healthy coyote is very unlikely to escalate a situation with a person who is aggressively hazing. It is important that the hazer provides the coyote a clear escape route to flee and not corner the animal. A cornered animal may decide that attacking the hazer is the only option.

Elements that promote effective hazing include:

1. Pet owners protecting their pets. Off-leash and unattended dogs and unattended outside cats attract coyotes (as does pet food).
2. Residents educating themselves on hazing effectiveness and techniques.
3. Hazing needs to be active for a sustained period of time to achieve the desired change in behavior.
4. Hazing requires monitoring to assess its effectiveness and to determine if further action or more aggressive hazing is needed.

## **Enforcement**

The act of feeding wildlife is known to lead to an increase in wildlife activity. Both intentional and unintentional feeding can attract coyotes and their prey to an area leading to an increased likelihood of creating a habituated coyote(s). This results in increased coyote and human interactions. California law prohibits feeding wildlife. Los Angeles County Animal Control Officers will strictly enforce the State law(s) and Chapter 6 of the City of West Covina Municipal Code, pertaining to this activity.

### **CALIFORNIA CODE OF REGULATIONS TITLE 14**

#### ***§251.1. Harassment of Animals***

*Except as otherwise authorized in these regulations or in the Fish & Game Code, no person shall harass, herd or drive any game or nongame bird or mammal or furbearing mammal. For the purposes of this section, harass is defined as an*

*intentional act which disrupts an animal's normal behavior patterns, which includes, but is not limited to, breeding, feeding or sheltering.*

## **Response Plan**

A detailed tiered response plan has been developed to provide a mechanism for identifying and classifying different levels of human and coyote interactions. Definitions of coyote encounters are listed in Appendix A. Appendix B provides a chart detailing coyote behavior, behavior classification and recommended responses.

### **Threat Level Tiered Response**

Level Green *Behavior:* A coyote is seen or heard in an area. Sighting may be during the day or night. Coyote may be seen moving through the area.  
*Response:* Education and hazing needed.

Level Yellow *Behavior:* A coyote appears to frequently associate with humans or human-related food sources, and exhibits little wariness of human presence. Coyote is seen during the day resting or continuously moving through an area frequented by people.  
*Response:* Education and repeated hazing needed.

Level Orange *Behavior:* A coyote is involved in an incident(s) where there is an attended domestic animal loss. Several level orange incidents in the same general area may indicate the presence of a habituated coyote(s).  
*Response:* Education and aggressive hazing needed, and public awareness of incident(s) and circumstances discussed. If multiple level orange incidents have occurred in the same vicinity within a short amount of time, removal/euthanasia may be recommended.

Level Red *Behavior:* A coyote that has been involved in an investigated and documented provoked or unprovoked close encounter or attack on humans.  
*Response:* Public awareness of incident(s) and circumstances discussed. City staff in cooperation with Los Angeles County Department of Agricultural Weights and Measures may work to remove/euthanize the responsible coyote(s) after a thorough investigation of the incident(s).

## Appendix A - Definitions of Encounters with Coyotes

**Active Coexistence:** Humans and coyotes coexist together. Humans take an active role in keeping coyotes wild by learning about coyote ecology and behavior, removing attractants, taking responsibility for pet safety, and hazing coyotes in neighborhood or community spaces (except for predetermined coyote-appropriate areas). Hazing is not appropriate in a designated nature reserve or similar open space, unless the coyote exhibits threatening behavior to persons or leashed pets.

**Human Attack** – A human is injured or killed by a coyote.

**Provoked** - A human-provoked attack or incident where the human involved encourages the coyote to engage. Examples may include domestic pets off-leash in an on-leash area, dog on leash longer than 6' in length, or a human intentionally corners, injures, tries to injure, attempts to capture or feeds the coyote.

**Unprovoked** - An unprovoked attack or incident where the human involved does not encourage the coyote to engage.

**Pet Attack** – A pet is injured or killed by a coyote.

**Attended animal loss or injury** - When a person is within 6' of the pet, the pet is on leash, is attacked, and injured or killed by a coyote.

**Domestic animal loss or injury** - A coyote injures or kills a pet who is off leash or on a leash that is greater than 6' in length. Off leash also pertains to a domestic animal in a yard, but unattended, or more than 6' from its owner. Also includes "depredation"—predation on domestic pets. Unattended animal loss or injury is considered the result of normal coyote behavior.

**Suspected Pet Attack:** A coyote is an opportunistic feeder and may feed on recently dead or dying animals, especially cats that were hit or killed by cars or other means. Partially consumed remains may be found and suggest the animal was attacked by a coyote. In cases where Animal Control Officers respond to these calls, without knowledge of an actual attack, the incident may be recorded as a suspected attack.

**Encounter:** An unexpected, direct meeting between a human and a coyote that is without incident.

**Feeding:**

**Intentional feeding** - When a person, or persons, actively and intentionally feeds coyotes or provides food for animals in the coyote food chain.

Unintentional feeding - When a person or persons are unintentionally providing access to food. Some examples are accessible compost, fallen fruit from trees, open sheds and doors, and pet food left outdoors.

Unintentional feeding: bird feeders – When a person or place of business with bird feeders provides food for coyotes, e.g. birds, bird food, rodents, and squirrels. Bird feeders must be kept high enough from the ground so a coyote is unable to reach the feeding animals. The area under the bird feeder must be kept clean and free of residual bird food.

**Hazing:** A training method that employs immediate use of deterrents to move an animal out of an area or discourage an undesirable behavior or activity. Hazing techniques include loud noises, spraying water, bright lights, throwing objects near but not at the animal and shouting. Hazing can help maintain a coyote's fear of humans and deter them from neighborhood spaces, such as backyards and play spaces. Hazing does not and should not damage animals, humans or property.

**Threat Incident:** A conflict between a human and a coyote where the coyote approaches a human and growls, bares teeth or lunges; injures or kills an attended domestic animal. A human is not injured.

**Stalking Incident:** A conflict between a human and a coyote where the coyote follows a person with or without an attended pet on leash. A human is not injured

**Observation:** The act of noticing or taking note of tracks, scat or vocalizations.

**Sighting:** A visual observation of a coyote(s). A sighting may occur at any time of the day or night.

**Unsecured Trash:** Trash that is accessible to wildlife, e.g. individual garbage cans, uncovered or open dumpsters, trash cans over flowing, or where scattered trash is outside the receptacle.

## Appendix B - Coyote Behavior, Behavior Classification & Recommended Response

Coyote Action	Classification	Response
Coyote heard	Unobserved Level Green	Provide educational materials and info on normal coyote behavior
Coyote observed moving in area	Sighting Level Green	Provide education materials and info on normal coyote behavior
Coyote observed resting in area	Sighting Level Green	Educate on hazing techniques, what to do tips
Coyote observed resting in area with people present	Sighting Level Yellow	If area is frequented by people, educate on normal behavior and haze to encourage animal to leave. Look for and eliminate attractants.
Coyote entering a yard without pets	Sighting Level Yellow	Educate on coyote attractants, yard audit, provide hazing info
Coyote entering a yard with pets	Encounter Level Yellow	Educate on coyote attractants, yard audit, hazing info, pet safety
Coyote entering yard and injuring or killing pet w/o people present	Pet Attack Level Orange	Gather info on specific animals involved, report circumstances, educate on coyote attractants, yard/neighborhood audits, hazing, pet safety
Coyote biting or injuring unattended pet/pet on leash longer than 6' with people present	Pet Attack Level Orange	Gather info on specific animals involved, report circumstances, educate on coyote attractants, yard/neighborhood audits, hazing, pet safety
Coyote following or approaching a person w/o pet (Stalking)	Encounter Level Red	Educate on hazing techniques and what to do tips. Removal/euthanasia considered if there is no response from the coyote to aggressive hazing, and there is evidence of recurrence.
Coyote following or approaching a person & pet (Stalking)	Encounter Level Red	Educate on hazing techniques and what to do tips and pet safety. Removal/euthanasia considered if there is no response from the coyote to aggressive hazing, and there is evidence of recurrence.

**Appendix B - Coyote Behavior, Behavior Classification & Recommended Response  
cont.**

Coyote entering yard or home with people & pets, no injury occurring	Encounter Level Red	Gather info on specific animals involved, document circumstances, educate on coyote attractants, yard/neighborhood audits, hazing, pet safety. Removal/ euthanasia considered depending on specific circumstances.
Coyote biting or injuring attended pet/pet on leash 6' or less	Pet Attack Level Red	Gather info on specific animals involved, document circumstances, educate on coyote attractants, yard/ neighborhood audits, hazing, pet safety. City staff will inform the Los Angeles County Department of Agricultural Weights and Measures. Removal/ euthanasia recommended.
Coyote aggressive, showing teeth, back fur raised, lunging, nipping w/o contact	Threat Level Red	Gather info on specific animals involved, report circumstances, educate on coyote attractants, yard/ neighborhood audits, aggressive hazing, pet safety. City staff will inform the Los Angeles County Department of Agricultural Weights and Measures. Removal/euthanasia recommended.
Coyote biting or injuring person	Attack Level Red	Identify and gather information on specific animal involved, report circumstances, educate on coyote attractants, yard/ neighborhood audits, hazing, and pet safety. City staff will inform the Los Angeles County Department of Agricultural Weights and Measures. Removal/euthanasia recommended.



## Appendix C – General Considerations

1. Levels of hazing need to be appropriately relevant to coyote activity.
  - a) Coyotes live in open spaces and the best practice is to leave them alone and educate the public on personal safety.
  - b) Coyotes are often out late at night when few people are present. This is normal, acceptable behavior. Hazing may not be necessary.
  - c) Exceptions: In early stages of hazing, programs should still engage the animal. Coyotes that associate danger in the presence of people under all circumstances will be reinforced to avoid contact.
2. Hazing must be more exaggerated, aggressive and consistent when first beginning a program of hazing. As coyotes “learn” appropriate responses to hazing, it will take less effort from hazers. Early in the process, it is extremely common for coyotes not to respond to hazing techniques. Without a history of hazing, they do not have the relevant context to respond in the desired outcome (to leave).
3. Techniques and tools can be used in the same manner for one or multiple animals. Usually, there is a dominant animal in a group who will respond—others will follow its lead.
4. The more often an individual coyote is hazed by a variety of tools, techniques and a variety of people, the more effective hazing will be in changing that animal’s future behavior.
5. Hazing must be directly associated with the person involved in the hazing actions. The coyote must be aware of where the potential threat is coming from and identify the person.
6. Coyotes can and do recognize individual people and animals in their territories. They can learn to avoid or harass specific individuals in response to behavior of the person and/or pet.
7. Coyotes can be routine in habit. Identifying their normal habits can help target which habits to change. For example, the coyote patrols the same bike path at the same time in the morning three to five days a week. Hazers should concentrate on that time and place to encourage the animal to adapt its routine to decrease contact with people.
8. Certain levels of hazing must always be maintained so that future generations of coyotes do not learn or return to unacceptable behavior related to habituation with people.
9. Human behavior must change to support hazing and continued identification and, when necessary, removal of possible attractants.
10. Education about exclusion techniques including how to identify and remove attractants, personal responsibility in pet safety and having reasonable expectations are critical parts of a coyote hazing plan.

11. Coyotes are skittish by nature. Habituated behavior is learned and reinforced by human behavior. Coyotes as a rule DO NOT act aggressively toward aggressive People. The one exception is a sick or injured animal. Engaging a sick or injured animal can result in unpredictable behavior. If this is suspected, people should not engage and should remove themselves from the situation, and then immediately contact Los Angeles County Department of Animal Control at (626) 962-3577.
12. Individuals involved in hazing need to be trained in explaining hazing to residents who witness the process. They also need to explain the difference between hazing and harassment of wildlife and goals of appropriate behavior for coexistence.

### **Neighborhood Wildlife Watch Training Program**

Because coexisting with wildlife involves the community, initiating the hazing training programs and hazing activities with community members must be supervised by experts. Without this support, the programs will ultimately fail. Information should include basic training on background, coyote ecology information, and an overview of hazing with examples of techniques. Materials should be provided such as handouts, contact information and resources when questions, comments and concerns come up relating to coyotes.

Hazing requires community involvement, understanding and support. Residents are best equipped to respond consistently and at the most opportune times in their own neighborhoods, parks and open spaces not identified as nature reserves.

1. Locations of trainings offered should be based on where human-coyote conflicts are most often reported in specific neighborhoods, parks or open space or proactively when requested by neighborhood community or volunteer groups.
2. Trainings are free to the public.
3. Topics to be covered include, but are not limited to:
  - Basic coyote information, including natural history and ecology;
  - The role of coyotes in ecosystems and their rights to co exist;
  - Discussion on why coyotes are in the City;
  - Normal and abnormal coyote behavior;
  - Seasonal behavior changes: breeding season, pups, denning behavior;
  - Reality of dangers towards people vs. danger towards pets;
  - Children and coyotes;

- How human behavior influences coyote behavior;
  - Attractants;
  - Tips on deterring animals from entering private property;
  - Appropriate response when encountering a coyote;
  - What is hazing: goals and how to engage;
  - Appropriate hazing techniques and tools;
  - Pet safety tips.
4. Updates, additional coyote information, electronic flyers and handouts distributed to participants. Information is encouraged to be passed on to others.
  5. Participants shall be notified of “hot spots” and encouraged to haze in the area.
  6. Ask for feedback on hazing training and use of hazing techniques.

### **Summary of Hazing**

Hazing is a process whereby individuals and volunteers respond in like manner to make a coyote uncomfortable and choose to leave a situation where their presence is unwanted.

Basic hazing consists of standing your ground, never ignoring or turning your back to a coyote(s), yelling, and making unpleasant and frightening noises until the animal(s) choose to leave.

More aggressive hazing consists of approaching an animal quickly and aggressively, throwing projectiles near the animal, spraying with a hose or water gun containing water or white vinegar, or creating fear of contact so the animal leaves the situation. Note: Many projectiles are not legal, including but not limited to slingshots, paintballs, guns and pepper balls.

Hazing must continue once it begins until the animal leaves. Otherwise, the coyote will learn to “wait” until the person gives up. The ineffective hazing will create an animal more resistance to hazing instead of reinforcing the image that “people are scary”.

Hazing should never injure the animal. An injured animal becomes less predictable versus a normal, healthy one who responds in a consistent and predictable manner to hazing. It is also illegal to willfully injure an animal, domestic or wild, unless protecting yourself or your pet(s) against physical harm.

Hazing should be conducted in a manner that allows the coyote to return to its normal habitat in a direction that would minimize harm to the animal. Hazing the animal in the direction of other houses and busy streets should be avoided. Hazing uses a variety of different tools, which is critical because coyotes can get used to individual items and sounds:

1. Noisemaker: voice, whistles, air horns, bells, “shaker” cans, pots, pie pans;
2. Projectiles: sticks, small rocks, cans, tennis balls, rubber balls;
3. Deterrents: hoses, spray bottles with vinegar, pepper spray, bear repellent, walking sticks.

**Note: Additional Hazing Tips can be found on the City’s website at [www.westcovina.org/coyote](http://www.westcovina.org/coyote).**

## Appendix D - Coyote Yard Audit Checklist

	OK	FIX	Ways to Mitigate
<b>FOOD</b>			NEVER hand-feed or intentionally feed a coyote!
<b>Pet Food</b>			Never feed pets outdoors; store all pet food securely indoors.
<b>Water Sources</b>			Remove water attractants (such as pet water bowls and leaky irrigation) in dry climates.
<b>Bird Feeders</b>			Remove bird feeders or clean fallen seed to reduce the presence of small mammals that coyotes prefer to eat.
<b>Fallen Fruit</b>			Clean up fallen fruit around trees.
<b>Compost</b>			Do not include meat or dairy among compost contents unless fully enclosed.
<b>BBQ Grills</b>			Clean up food around barbeque grills after each use.
<b>Trash</b>			Secure all trash containers with locking lids and place curbside the morning of trash pickup. Periodically clean cans to reduce residual odors.
<b>LANDSCAPING</b>			Trim vegetation to reduce hiding places and potential denning sites.
<b>Structures/Outbuildings</b>			Restrict access under decks and sheds, around woodpiles, or any other structure that can provide cover or denning sites for coyotes or their prey.
<b>*FENCING</b>			Enclose property with an *8-foot fence (or a 6-foot fence with an additional extension or roller-top) to deter coyotes. Ensure that there are no gaps and that the bottom of the fence extends underground 6 inches or is fitted with a mesh apron to deter coyotes from digging underneath. <b>*Must comply with West Covina Codes</b>
<b>PETS</b>			Never leave pets unattended outside.
			Never allow pets to “play” with coyotes.
			Fully enclose outdoor pet kennels.
			Walk pets on a leash no longer than 6 feet in length.

We encourage you to take steps to eliminate attractants on your property in order to minimize conflicts with coyotes. We also urge you to share this information with friends and neighbors because minimizing conflicts is most effective when the entire neighborhood works together.