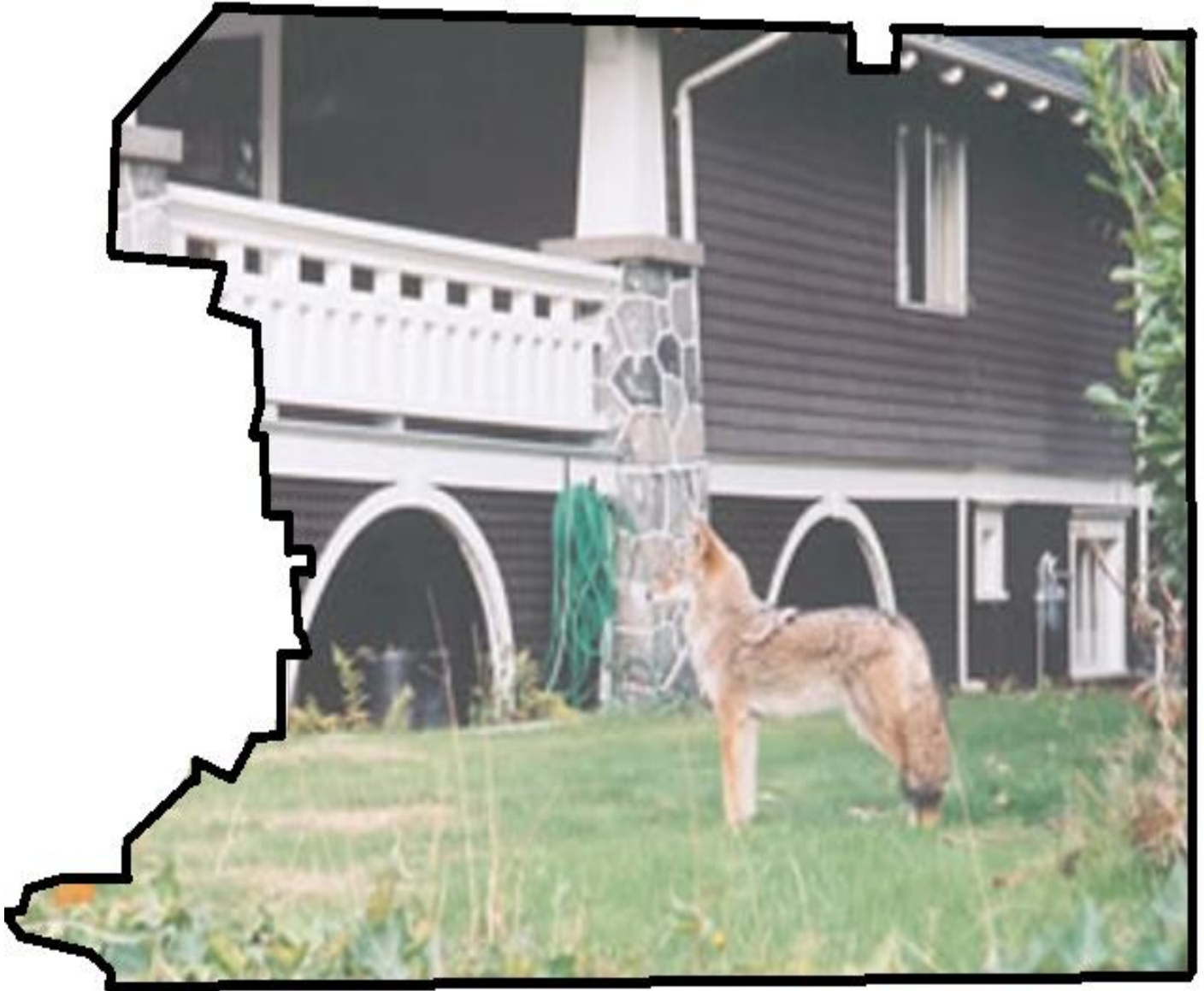


# Urban Coyote Management Plan City of Hudson, Ohio

November 2022



**Information in this plan was prepared by: Geoff Westerfield, Division of Wildlife**

Additional content for this coyote management plan was obtained from:  
Coyote Management & Coexistence Plan Prepared by Chicago Animal Care and Control.

The plan has been customized and formatted for use in the City of Hudson by the City of Hudson

**Contact Us:** Hudson Public Works Department (330) 342-1750

## BACKGROUND

It is not uncommon in the City of Hudson, or any other urban community, for residents to see and/or hear coyotes. Often, seeing or hearing coyotes creates a concern for residents that pet and human lives are at risk. Due to their intelligence and adaptability, in addition to extensive urbanization and the subsequent decline of larger predators, coyotes have successfully expanded their range across Ohio into urban areas. While physical encounters between coyotes and humans are extremely rare, the co-existence of coyotes and humans does present at times opportunities for physical encounters. This plan outlines feasible strategies and tactics to prevent potential coyote encounters in the City of Hudson.

Coyotes were not reintroduced into Ohio. In the early 1900's, coyotes started expanding their range likely due to the loss of other predators in the Eastern United States. As they came into the Midwest, some went north into Canada and expanded to the North of the Great Lakes while others expanded range south of the Great Lakes. The first documented coyote in Ohio was in 1947 in Preble County however they may have been present in Ohio as early as 1919. By the 1970's coyotes occupied all counties in Ohio. While coyote populations continued to increase through the early 2000's, currently the Division of Wildlife population estimates show the statewide population is stable. However, localized increases due to movements of coyotes, even in urban areas, is not uncommon. This can be due to either newly opened territory from coyote removal or an increase in localized food resources.



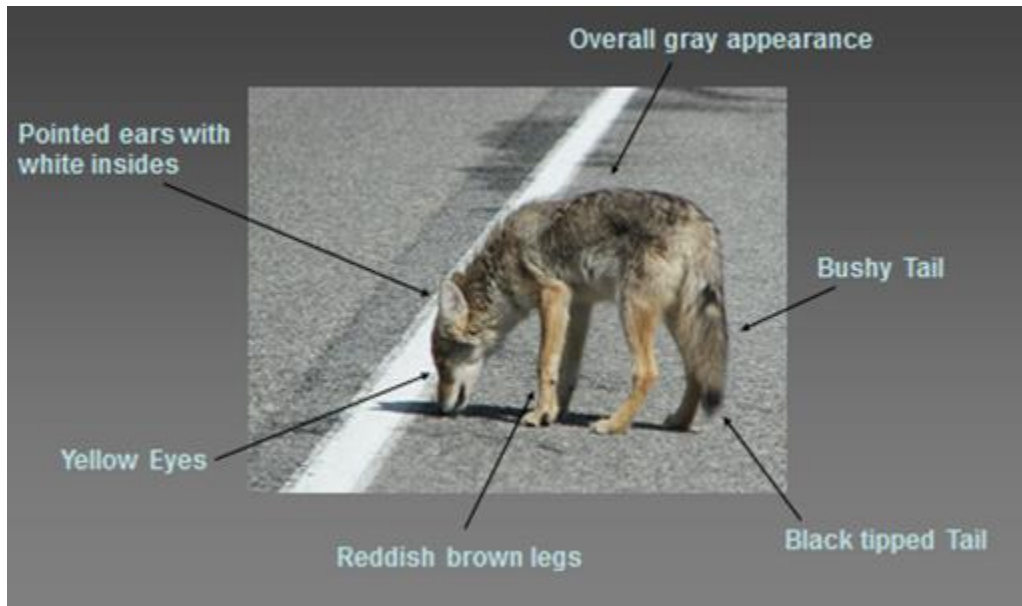
## STATE AND LOCAL GOVERNING LAW

In Ohio, coyotes are managed by the Ohio Division of Wildlife and protected as a furbearer under Ohio Revised Code 1531.01 <https://codes.ohio.gov/ohio-revised-code/section-1531.01> Laws for hunting and trapping coyotes are within Ohio Administrative Code 1501:31-15-09. <https://codes.ohio.gov/ohio-revised-code/chapter-1501> In addition, Ohio Administrative Code 1531: 31-15-03 provides additional laws for addressing nuisance coyotes. Options for physical removal of coyotes can be found in the “Physical Removal” section of this plan.

## Coyote Ecology

### ***Coyote Identification***

Coyotes often resemble a small German Shepherd with their grayish coat, pointed ears, long and slender snout, and bushy, black-tipped tail. However, it is not uncommon to see color variations in coyotes from dark black to very light gray.



### ***Basic Ecology***

Most coyotes weigh approximately 30-35 pounds, although their long legs and thick fur, especially in the winter, make them appear larger. A coyote's diet is usually composed of small rodents, fruit, and birds. Coyotes will also eat roadkill, including deer, when available. In an urban setting, a coyote typically lives to about the age of three. The most common cause of death for urban coyotes results from motor vehicle accidents.

### ***Social Tendencies***

Coyote populations contain family units that inhabit select territories across a landscape and solitary individuals that span across overlapping territories. Coyote home ranges vary, depending on the environment, anywhere from about two to eight square miles. Group sizes and pack characteristics can vary depending on environmental contexts and food supply. Generally, family units are made up of an alpha male and female responsible for most of the breeding and several other individuals that defend the territory. Normally, each group is a territorial family group that varies in number from three to ten individuals. Wandering individuals usually occur in cases where coyotes are searching for mates or unoccupied spaces.

### ***Behavior Patterns***

Urban coyotes tend to be highly adaptive and capable of developing altered characteristics and behavior traits in response to urban environments. Their adaptability leads to an ability to navigate successfully through urban networks, almost completely undetected. Urban coyotes can adopt nocturnal behavior traits in response to the urban landscape, making them further

undetected to people (Gehrt, 2011). Sighting of coyotes tend to be associated with breeding activity, usually from December through February. Generalizing coyote behavior is challenging due to the potential for large trait variations between individual coyotes. While many coyotes tend to remain elusive and fearful, some individuals may exhibit more bold characteristics. These coyotes are more inclined to approach people and would be the ones more likely to pose a threat to residents and/or pets.

## **Coyote Threats**

### ***Threat to Humans***

Across America the average number of coyote attack on humans is relatively rare at two injuries/year (Conover, 2001). Usually these are quick attacks and do not result in loss of life. In most of these situations, the proximity to humans is a result of the coyote being fed by humans. There have been around 150 documented attacks in North America in entirety, mostly in Western United States, and only two fatalities [Cook County, IL Coyote Project].

In Ohio, coyote attacks on people have been extremely rare. There have only been a few verified coyote attacks on people, none of which caused loss of life. In most cases, the coyote attacks are compounded with additional issues such as the coyote being sick with rabies or distemper, the coyote being fed either directly or indirectly, or the person was not giving the coyote its due space.

### ***Threat to Pets***

When residents see coyotes, there is a concern for attacks on domestic pets. Smaller breeds of dogs or cats tend to be more likely to be victims of coyote attacks. Coyotes may prey on dogs or cats as food sources or to eliminate perceived competition.

A study by Stubbs and Krausman (2009) looked at coyote-cat interactions in Tucson, AZ. Over a three-month survey there were 36 interactions with 19 resulting in the cat being killed. However, 31 of the 36 (86%) of the interactions were between sunset and sunrise. The best way to reduce the potential for a coyote-cat interaction is to ensure that cats are kept indoors from sunset to sunrise and that you leave no cat food or water bowls out overnight.

## **Coyote Attractants in Urban Areas**

Minimizing coyote attractants is the best way to reduce the possibility of coyotes using residential properties. In most cases, residents don't realize that there are coyote attractants on their property. Appendix B (Yard Audit Checklist) is an easy way for a resident to assess if they need to make any property modifications to discourage coyotes from their yard. Coyotes are drawn to urban and suburban areas for the following reasons:

### ***Food***

Urban areas provide a bounty of natural food choices for coyotes. Their primary prey are rodents. However, coyotes can be further attracted into urban 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 among coyotes, people, and pets. To reduce food attractants in urban and suburban areas:

- a. Never hand-feed or otherwise deliberately feed a coyote.
- b. Avoid feeding pets outside. Remove sources of pet food and water. If feeding pets outside is necessary, remove the bowl and any leftover food promptly. You should never leave food for pets outside unattended.
- c. Never compost any meat or dairy (unless the compost is fully secured).
- d. Maintain good housekeeping, such as regularly raking areas around bird feeders, to help discourage coyote activity near residences. Spilled bird seed attracts small mammals which can encourage coyote activity as they look for prey
- e. Remove fallen fruit from the ground. In addition to coyotes eating the fruit, it also can attract small mammals to the area.
- f. Keep trash in high-quality containers with tight-fitting lids. Only place the cans curbside the morning of collection. Trash left out overnight may attract coyotes.
- g. Maintain areas around BBQ grills and regularly empty grease traps.

### ***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. In dry conditions, water can be as alluring as food. Some of the ways to address water as an attractant are:

- a. Remove water bowls set outside for pets.
- b. Don't leave objects in the yard that can collect water (ex. Tires, upside down lids, patio furniture, etc.).
- c. Make sure any bird baths are at least two feet off the ground.
- d. Fix any areas in the yard that allows standing water to sit for more than 24 hours.

### ***Access to Shelter***

Parks, open spaces, golf courses, buildings, sheds, decks, etc., increase the amount and variability of cover for coyotes. They allow coyotes to remain safely and easily 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. Alleviate potential shelter for coyotes:

- a. Do not stack large piles of brush or tree trimmings in your yard.
- b. Fence off areas under decks and porches with the fencing buried at least one-foot underground.
- c. Fill in any old groundhog holes in the yard. Coyotes can easily dig out a groundhog den for their use.
- d. Do not leave junk piles in your yard.
- e. Ensure sheds and out-buildings are secure and that coyotes can't get in.

- f. Minimize the amount of stacked firewood on your property.

### ***Unattended Pets***

Pets are a normal part of an urban landscape. Within their territory, coyotes may consider pets as potential prey or potential competitors. Free-roaming pets, cats, and small dogs may attract coyotes into neighborhoods. The best way to minimize risk to pets is to avoid leaving them outside unattended or without being on a leash. Approximately the same size as a groundhog or rabbit, free-roaming outdoor cats may also be seen as eligible prey items by coyotes. It is important to note that attacks on cats are normal coyote behavior and do not indicate a danger for people. The only sure way to protect cats from coyotes is to keep cats indoors.

## **Coyote Management Approaches**

### ***Education and Outreach***

A critical element of a successful coyote management plan is the education and awareness of residents. Education is the key to residents making appropriate decisions regarding their safety and managing their property and pets. This involves decreasing food attractants, taking precautions with pets, and creating tolerance of normal coyote behavior. To foster true coexistence between coyotes and humans, it is important to inform people and provide them with the facts about urban coyotes and the steps they can take to reduce the potential for negative interactions. Residents must understand the role they play in shaping the behavior of local coyote populations. Unfortunately, some individuals may become enamored by the presence of coyotes and intentionally feed them as a means of attracting the animals. People should also be encouraged to avoid instances of unintentional feeding, such as leaving trash out for extended periods of time. In addition to limiting access to food, residents should also be taught how to behave in the case of a human-coyote interaction. Educational programs are necessary in teaching residents about coyote behavior and addressing people's fear.

Education and outreach are important so that the city can educate the residents when negative interactions with coyotes occur.

An educational campaign used by the city may include:

- a. Management Plan informational documents
- b. Information on the City of Hudson website
- c. Social media (ex. Facebook)

### ***Hazing***

Generally, coyotes are reclusive animals that avoid human contact. Coyotes in urban and suburban environments, however, may learn that neighborhoods provide easy sources of human-associated food while presenting few real threats. Hazing is an activity or series of activities that are conducted with the intention of changing behavior of habituated coyotes and/or to re-instill a fear of people in the local coyote population. Hazing can help maintain a coyote's fear of humans and deter them from neighborhood spaces such as backyards, greenbelts, and play spaces. Hazing is not always one hundred percent effective in altering the

behavior of coyotes and may not work in every case. In addition, individual coyotes will react differently to various hazing techniques. The more often an individual animal is hazed, the more effective hazing can be in changing coyote behavior. Being highly intelligent animals, coyotes that are hazed quickly learn to avoid neighborhoods, people, and pets. The goals of hazing are to:

- Reverse the habituation of coyotes to people, teaching them to fear and avoid humans once again.
- Discourage coyotes from entering public areas such as parks, playgrounds, and yards when people are present.
- Discourage coyotes from approaching people and pets.
- Empower residents by giving them tools to use when they encounter a coyote, thereby reducing their fear of coyotes.
- Increase awareness about coyote behavior among residents and involve the community in coyote management efforts.

There are two types of hazing:

- a. **Basic hazing:** Consists of directly facing the coyote and using techniques until the coyote(s) chooses to leave. Basic hazing encourages the use of harassing actions without employing weapons or causing bodily harm to the coyote. Continued use of basic hazing is done to educate the coyote(s) that they are not welcome in that particular area. Using a variety of different hazing tools is critical because coyotes can become desensitized to the continued use of just one technique, sound, or action. Basic hazing can be performed by anyone and includes the following techniques:
  - Yelling and waving your arms while approaching the coyote.
  - Making loud noises with whistles, air horns, megaphones, soda cans filled with pennies, pots, and pans.
  - Throwing projectiles such as sticks, small rocks, cans, tennis balls or rubber balls at the direction of the coyote.
  - Squirting water from a hose, water gun or spray bottle (with vinegar water).
- b. **High-intensity hazing:** Consists of approaching the animal quickly and aggressively and should only be carried out by trained professionals such as animal control and law enforcement officers. High-intensity hazing should be used in specific areas and only in response to more egregious incidents. Examples of high-intensity hazing may include, but are not limited to use of:
  - Pepper balls
  - Noise makers such as shellcrackers, bangers, and screamers
  - Rubber buckshot or rubber slugs
  - Clay pellets
  - Pepper spray
  - Tasers
  - Paint balls

### ***Physical Removal***

Physical removal should only be considered in extreme cases, when a coyote is a threat to the safety of the residents. It is not economically, ecologically, or in other ways efficient to try to remove all coyotes from the urban ecosystem. Targeted removal of particular coyotes causing a particular problem is a more promising approach than large-scale removal of local coyote populations. The Ohio Division of Wildlife establishes rules and laws for allowance of physical removal of coyotes. By Ohio State Law, coyotes cannot be relocated once trapped. In situations where the city determines the need for lethal removal of a coyote exists, police officers may remove the offending coyote at their discretion. However, residents may also remove an offending coyote at their discretion using the following options:

- a. Hiring a certified Division of Wildlife Nuisance Wild Animal Control Operator. Operators who are certified can be found at <http://wildlife.ohiodnr.gov/Portals/wildlife/PDFs/Licenses%20&%20Permits/CNWACO%20Current%20License%20Holders.pdf>. These operators trap coyotes for a fee with the responsibility of the fee being paid by the resident hiring the operator. Because the resident is hiring the operator, the operator will usually begin trapping within a few days of the resident contracting with them.
- b. The Ohio Division of Wildlife has an agreement for the Ohio State Trappers Association (OSTA) to maintain a list of willing trappers who can trap coyotes for free. However, unlike Nuisance Wild Animal Control Operators, because the trappers are doing the service for free it may take a few weeks for the OSTA trapper to begin trapping. Prior approval must be obtained from the city by the resident before they may use an OSTA trapper.
- c. A resident may trap the coyote on their own property. However, because of the intelligence of coyotes only residents that have experience trapping coyotes should entertain this option. Prior approval must be obtained from the city before any resident by begin trapping.

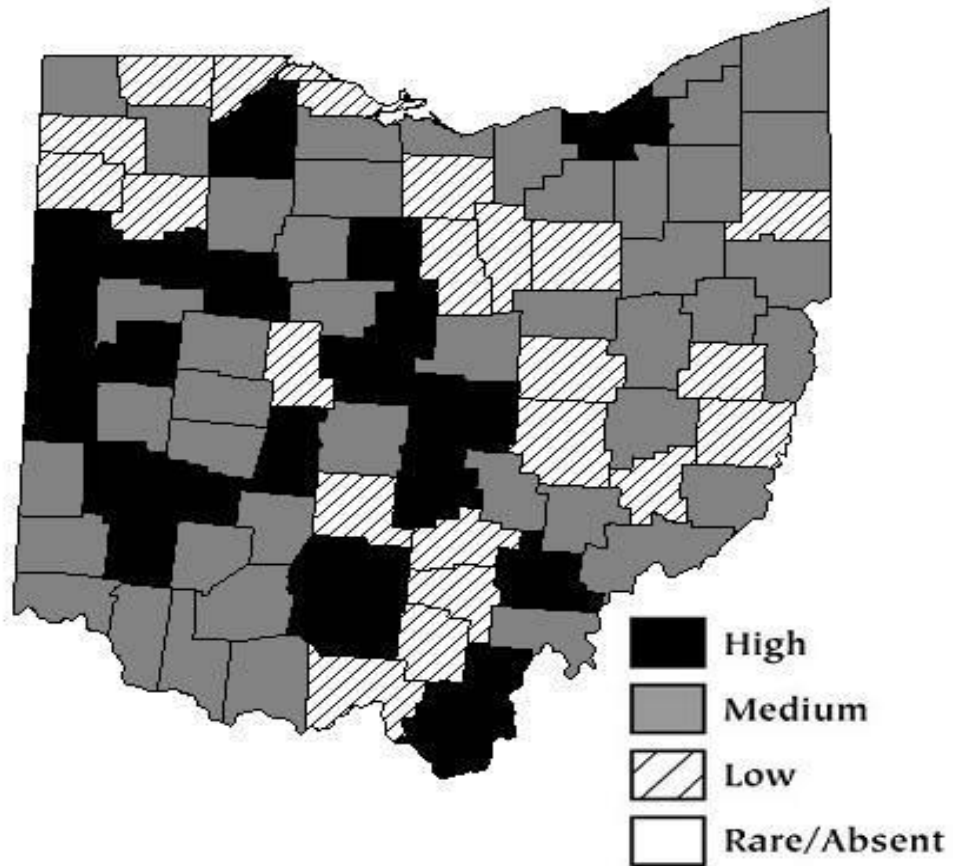
### ***Leash Law***

Enforcing leash laws and monetary fines for off-leash dogs can help address problematic behavior that could lead to coyote-pet conflicts. Residents should be instructed to keep pets on a leash six feet long or less or contained within a physical fenced-in area. Often residents will use electronic dog fences. However, those fences should not be relied on for reducing coyote-dog encounters since coyotes are not restrained by the electronic dog fence, electronic dog fences periodically fail, and dogs can easily pass over the barrier when chasing an animal. Hudson's leash law and rules and regulations are found in Codified Ordinances Chapter 618: [https://codelibrary.amlegal.com/codes/udsonoh/latest/udson\\_oh/0-0-0-34749](https://codelibrary.amlegal.com/codes/udsonoh/latest/udson_oh/0-0-0-34749)

**For assistance with stray animals or nuisance wild animals in the City of Hudson, please contact Summit County Animal Control at [\(330\) 643-2845](tel:3306432845) or visit their website: <https://co.summitoh.net/departments/Division-of-Animal-Control.html#nav-faqs>**



## COYOTE RELATIVE DISTRIBUTION



**Appendix A – Action Plan**

<b>Situation</b>	<b>Goals</b>	<b>Action</b>
<p>Coyote seen repeatedly within a one-week period on a particular property.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Send communication to the residents</li> <li>Prevent the coyote(s) from remaining in the area</li> <li>Removal of attractants</li> </ul>	<p><b>City</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Determine best method for communicating necessary messaging</li> </ul> <p><b>Residents</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Use basic hazing techniques described in this manual</li> <li>Complete Yard Audit Checklist (Appendix B of this plan)</li> </ul>
<p>Physical pet encounter.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Verify incident</li> <li>Communicate with the pet owner</li> <li>Send communication to the residents</li> <li>Prevent the coyote(s) from remaining in the area</li> <li>Removal of attractants</li> </ul>	<p><b>City</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Appropriate staff member discusses with resident to verify and document the event</li> <li>Advise resident to perform the Yard Audit Checklist (Appendix B of this plan)</li> <li>Determine best method for communicating necessary messaging</li> </ul> <p><b>Residents</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Use basic hazing techniques described in this plan</li> <li>Complete Yard Audit Checklist (Appendix B of this plan)</li> </ul>
<p>Coyote acting bold, aggressively or exhibiting uncharacteristic behaviors. Examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Pets or humans being approached or followed; coyote falling over, injured.</li> <li>Coyote closely blocking your path; lunging at pet or human.</li> <li>Coyote present on property day and night and returning regularly; growling.</li> <li>Coyote attacks/kills pets or livestock.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Verify the incident</li> <li>Send communication to the residents</li> <li>Removal of coyote</li> <li>Communication to the Division of Wildlife</li> </ul>	<p><b>Residents</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Report incident to the police department by calling (330) 342-1800. (In the event of a medical emergency, please call 911).</li> </ul> <p><b>City</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Appropriate staff member discusses with resident to verify and document the event</li> <li>Determine best method for communicating necessary messaging to residents</li> <li>Notify county Wildlife Officer of the incident</li> </ul> <p><b>Division of Wildlife</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Communicate incident to district wildlife management staff and discuss trapping/removal services</li> </ul>
<p>Physical human encounter. Example: Seemingly intentional attack on a human being.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Verify incident</li> <li>Send communication to the residents</li> <li>Removal of coyote</li> <li>Communication to the Division of Wildlife</li> </ul>	<p><b>Residents</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Report incident to the police department by calling (330) 342-1800. (In the event of a medical emergency, please call 911).</li> </ul> <p><b>City</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Dispatch appropriate staff to investigate the claim</li> <li>Determine best method for communicating necessary messaging</li> <li>When able to do so, lethally remove the coyote. If needed, request assistance from the Division of Wildlife</li> <li>Notify county Wildlife Officer of the incident</li> </ul> <p><b>Division of Wildlife</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Assist with lethal removal of the coyote if requested</li> <li>Communicate incident to district wildlife management staff</li> </ul>

**Appendix B:  
YARD AUDIT CHECKLIST**

For Municipal or Homeowner Use

<b>Check for</b>	<b>Attractant</b>	<b>If checked, mitigate by:</b>
	Coyotes intentionally being fed/hand fed	Report activity to Hudson Police Dept.
	Pet food/water containers left outside	Never leave food containers outside unattended
	Compost container present	Ensure no meat or dairy is being put in compost
	Bird feeders present	Ensure bird seed is cleaned up daily
	Fruit trees present	Ensure fallen fruit is cleaned up daily
	Trash cans have loose, or no, lids	Install lids and ensure lids fit tightly
	There are areas of standing water	Fill in depressions that are holding water
	There are objects holding water (ex. Tires)	Remove objects
	Bird baths present	Ensure bird baths are at least 2 feet off the ground
	BBQ grill present	Clean areas around BBQ grills weekly
	Piles of brush/tree trimmings on the property	Properly get rid of brush piles and tree trimmings
	Decks and porch on the property	Fence off any gaps with fence buried at least 1 foot
	Groundhog holes present	Trap groundhogs if present, fill holes afterwards
	Junk pile present	Properly get rid of junk pile
	Shed or outbuilding on property	Ensure there are no holes in the structure and doors are secure
	Stacks of firewood present	Limit the amount of stacked firewood or store in a structure
	Electronic dog fence used	Do not leave dog unattended, or put on a lead, at night
	Dogs are walked outside	Ensure dogs are on a leash at all times
	Cats are let outside	Keep cats indoors at all times (or at least from sunset to sunrise)

**Literature Cited**

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