

**Libertyville Police Department
Policy on Responses to Coyote Complaints
January 2007**

Coyote Sightings

The Libertyville Police Department encourages residents to report coyote sightings on the non-emergency telephone (847) 362-8310. When such sightings do not include descriptions of strange coyote behavior, the sighting report will simply be logged and no response will be assigned. Coyote sighting reports will be periodically assessed for the purpose of inferring whether changes are apparent in coyote behavior.

Unusual or Threatening Behavior

Sighting reports that include unexpected coyote behavior will result in assignment of a police officer or animal control officer to respond and investigate. Unusual behavior might involve a coyote that approached closely to a human, or exhibited clear signs of injury or illness. On incidents where a threat to a resident, or where serious injury or illness is confirmed, the affected coyote will be trapped or destroyed in a humane manner and in accordance with regulations of the Illinois Department of Natural Resources.

Background

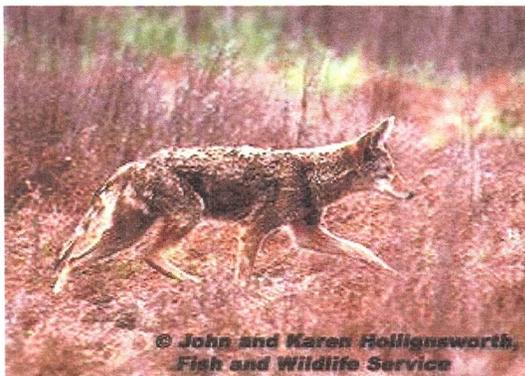
There has been an obvious presence of coyotes in the urban northeastern sections of Illinois for many years. According to the Illinois Department of Natural Resources, and several Illinois-based wildlife experts, coyote populations have grown to the natural maximum level that the available food supply will sustain.

There are strong and differing opinions among citizens on what local government should do about coyotes. The Village of Libertyville has reviewed complaints about coyotes and responses by the Police Department since 1997, when two small poodles were attacked. Since then, several coyote management methods have been tested by the Village, ranging from trapping, population assessment, extermination of an individual coyote, and simply leaving coyotes alone.

No coyote attacks on humans have been reported in Libertyville, or for that matter, in Illinois. Coyotes tend to shy away from humans, but not as much in urban areas as in rural areas. Wildlife experts presume the behavior difference is due simply to the closer human-coyote proximity in urban locations, where coyotes become less fearful of humans.

While mainly nocturnal, coyotes are frequently spotted during daylight hours in developed communities. Coyotes will attack other animals for food, and to reduce competition for food. It is common for coyotes to attack domestic cats and very small dogs, rabbits and deer fawns or adult injured or sick deer, as well as foxes. Key to keeping our distance from coyotes is to never feed or provide a source of food to them. Small pets and very small children should be constantly supervised when outdoors, for protection from coyotes or other threats to children and pets.

Coyotes can range in appearance from scrawny to full-bodied.



Coyotes Join Wildlife Migration to Cities (provided by the IL Dept. of Conservation) **CHICAGO AREA IS HOME TO GROWING NUMBERS OF COYOTES**

SPRINGFIELD, ILL. -- Chicagoans talk passionately about Da' Bears and Cubs, but there is a new, growing presence in Chicagoland: da' coyotes -- not a sports team, but the real four-legged critters.

Coyotes have given rise to some controversy. Some Chicagoans enjoy chances to watch their antics in the urban wild. Others praise coyotes' skills in controlling geese, deer and rodents that over-run golf courses, parks and gardens. But others complain when their house pets turn up missing.

"A delicate balance definitely exists between good and bad impacts when coyotes come to town," says Dr. Stan Gehrt, a wildlife biologist and professor at Ohio State University.

"There's no way to minimize how people feel when the family cat doesn't come home." Gehrt is in charge of ongoing studies to monitor urban coyotes in the Chicago area; studies started when he worked at the Max McGraw Wildlife Foundation in Dundee, Illinois.

Gehrt began studies in Cook County when residents began noticing more coyotes in urban areas near fields and wild areas. A few cats and dogs disappeared, and biologists decided it was time to understand more about the situation. Research focuses on population dynamics, movement patterns, coyote health and mortality factors, and recommendations for urban management. The studies continue for another two years.

Coyotes once were rare in Illinois. As many as 30 years ago, coyote populations were low due to now-defunct eradication programs. Coyotes have proliferated since then, moving from the western U.S. into eastern habitat where wolves used to be. Coyotes are adaptable and can live almost anywhere. Chicago is a case in point.

"Surprisingly, in Chicago there is plenty of food for coyotes," Gehrt notes. "Coyotes help stem urban deer over-population -- a serious concern to vehicle drivers, gardeners and park managers. In some areas, coyotes take 70 to 80 percent of urban fawns each year. Also, anyone who has battled throngs of cranky Canada geese or slipped on a blanket of droppings in the park knows that geese often are a problem. Coyotes eat goose eggs, goslings and occasionally nesting adults."

Gehrt continues, "Some golf course managers are glad to see coyotes because they feed on rodents that often damage wiring and dig holes. It is quite entertaining to watch a coyote pouncing and playing in a field near office buildings and homes. From that standpoint, coyotes provide a great service."

And about house pets?

"It's true," Gehrt admits. "Coyotes living near residential areas sometimes snatch house pets. Roaming cats and smaller dogs are at risk in coyote habitat, which includes fields, parks and woods."

He notes that people sometimes demand eradication of coyotes. But eliminating all coyotes is not practical, economical or workable. Research shows that once coyotes are removed, others quickly replace them. Therefore, widespread removal is a temporary solution.

"Only a few coyotes take domestic pets," Gehrt says. "When an offending coyote is identified, a nuisance control specialist can remove it. The best thing that a pet owner can do is take precautions to keep a pet safe and not encourage coyotes to come near. Humans shouldn't encourage coyotes; it only lessens their fear of pets and people."