

City of Strongsville Animal Control

Coyote Information

It's mating season for coyotes and my office has been getting calls about coyote sightings, here is some info that may be useful to assist you with any concerns you may have about coyotes. If you see a coyote make loud noises and scare it off, deter the coyote whenever it is spotted, do not leave your pets out unattended and for long periods of times. If you have outdoor cats (you shouldn't) bring them in. Break up the times you let your pets out to go to the bathroom coyotes can schedule your animal's activities if they are routine.

Below is some factual information put out by the OHIO DIVISION OF WILDLIFE about coyotes and their behaviors, You can also go to their website wildlife.ohiodnr.gov for more reliable information on wildlife/human conflicts

Q. Is what I am seeing a coyote?

Some of the major characteristics to look for are a bushy black-tipped tail and overall gray appearance. Often coyotes get referred to as wolves, however there are no wild free-ranging wolves in Ohio.



Q. Are coyotes only gray in color?

No. Coyotes can come in many colors as seen below. However the black-tipped tail will almost always be present and all coyotes will have the yellow eyes.

Q. Aren't coyotes only found in rural areas?

No. Coyotes can be found throughout Ohio and are even a common inhabitant of cities.

Q. Where did these coyotes come from?

Coyotes were not reintroduced into Ohio. Starting 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.

Q. Will a coyote kill my cat?

While it is certainly possible for coyote-cat interactions to occur, there are ways to help avoid them. A study by Stubbs and Krausman (2009) looked at coyote-cat interactions in Tuscon, AZ. Over a three month survey there were 36 interactions with 19 resulting in the cat being killed. In one interaction, the cat even chased the coyote off. However, 31 of the 36 (86%) of the interactions were between sunset and sunrise. The best way to keep your cat safe is to ensure that that it is indoors before sunset and that you leave no cat food or water bowls out overnight.

Q. Will a coyote kill my dog?

Coyotes do not typically look to kill dogs. Most coyote-dog interactions occur when the dog is off leash and chases the coyote. In some rare cases, female dogs in heat left outside during the breeding season in February may be of interest by male coyotes for potential breeding. The best way to keep your dog safe is to keep it on leash when you are outside with it. Remember, there is a leash law in Ohio. Also, most adult coyotes weigh between 25 and 35 pounds and they seldom weigh more than 45 pounds. You can see below that even a cocker spaniel weighs the same or more than a coyote. Coyotes typically will not look to take on a dog larger than itself, viewing it as a fight they will not win. Even small dogs often prove to be too much of a hassle for coyotes to deal with.

Q. What about attacks on people?

Coyote attacks, especially in the Eastern US, are very uncommon. Conover in *Resolving Human-Wildlife Conflicts* found that annually there are only two coyote attacks on people in the US with zero fatalities. Comparatively he noted that humans are over 300 times more likely to get attacked by a skunk than a coyote. In Northeast Ohio there has only been one documented "attack" on a person. The interaction occurred in the Chagrin Reservation in the early 2000's when a coyote ran up to a biker and bit his leg. However, that coyote was quickly trapped and consequently tested positive for rabies. No known, verified attack has occurred by a healthy coyote in Northeast Ohio on a human. However, you should treat ALL wildlife with respect and remember that they are all wild animals. In addition, you should never intentionally feed coyotes.

Q. Then what do coyotes eat?

A coyote's diet mainly consists of small rodents. Gehrt (2006) evaluated coyote feces in Cook County, IL (Chicago area) and found 42% of their diet comprised of small rodents. While 22% of their diet consisted of deer, the majority of that is due to coyotes taking advantage of road killed deer. Coyotes will feed on any type of road kill they can find. Also, a large portion of their diet consists of vegetative matter such as fruits and grasses.

Q. Why does there seem to be a large increase in the coyote population around me?

The data from the Ohio Division of Wildlife suggests that the coyote population overall in Ohio is stabilizing. However, coyotes will move around and occupy new areas for several reasons. It could be that some younger coyotes are dispersing from their mother's home range in the fall. It could also be that your area has an abundant source of rodents upon which they can feed. If you have bird feeders, it is a good idea to make sure all bird seed is cleaned up off of the ground daily to lower the number of rodents around your home.

Q. Do coyotes hunt in packs?

No. Coyotes live in family units usually consisting of only five-six coyotes. This family unit is made up of two adults and the young from the previous year. However, one major difference from their cousin the wolf is that coyotes are solo hunters. The only time you may see multiple coyotes hunting together is when the mother is teaching its pups how to hunt. However, even in these situations there is no coordinated attack.

Q. Do coyotes interbreed with dogs?

While biologically it is possible for coyotes and dogs to breed and produce offspring (called coydogs), the occurrence is not common. A study conducted by the Ohio Division of Wildlife in the 1980's found an occurrence rate of only 2% statewide. It is likely that most of these were in rural Ohio where it is much more common for dogs to be allowed to run freely on a landowner's property.

Q. Is it unusual to see a coyote out during the daytime?

Coyotes have learned to adapt to city living very well. Especially in the spring and fall you will regularly see coyotes out during the day. In the spring they are spending more time looking for small rodents to feed the pups. In the fall the previous years' pups are forced to leave and look for areas unoccupied by other coyotes. Because of their great adaptation to cities, they regularly hear doors slamming, dogs barking, people talking, etc. So, they get used to those noises when they are out moving around. This is much like living next to a railroad. Over time you get used to the noise of the trains going by. It is normal behavior for them to pay no attention to people. A good rule-of-thumb is that a sick coyote will look and act sick. They will have hair loss, stumble when they walk, or continuously approach and/or growl at people. If you notice any of these situations, call the [City of Strongsville Animal Control Officer Chuck McCleary at..... 440-580-3180 \(Monday-Friday 7am-3pm\)](tel:440-580-3180), or after hours call [Strongsville Police at... 440-238-7373\(emergencies only please\)](tel:440-238-7373).