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Coyotes

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Many residents of Orange County have expressed concerns about coyote sightings and the consequences of predator animals within the urban environment. Several residents have lost their pets to these skilled hunters because they were not aware of recent coyote activity in the area.

Coyotes are found in ALL areas of Orange County. Contrary to popular belief, these animals do not require open space or “wild areas” to survive. In fact, most coyotes within the urban setting are the offspring of generations of coyotes who lived and flourished in the urban areas of Orange County.

Though these animals are far from domesticated, they are very comfortable living in close proximity to human beings. They have little fear of humans and are frequently seen trotting along within a few feet of joggers, bikers and horseback riders. While not normally a danger to human beings, coyotes will display defensive behaviors if threatened or cornered; therefore, it is important to leave a comfortable distance between you and a coyote.

Small pets can easily become coyote prey. Cats and small dogs should not be allowed outside alone, even in a fenced yard. It is highly recommended that their owner always accompany small pets. Though coyotes generally hunt between sunset and sunrise, they can be observed at all hours of the day and will not pass up the opportunity for an easy meal. A dog or cat left in a backyard can be taken in a matter of moments.

If you do encounter a coyote that behaves aggressively, you have probably gotten too close to its prey or its family. Increase the “comfort zone” between you and the coyote. A coyote behaves in a similar way as domestic dogs that are defending their territory and family. Even a fully fenced yard will not keep out a hungry, athletic coyote. These animals are extremely agile and can easily scale any residential fence. All children should be taught from a very early age to avoid strange animals, whether domestic or non-domestic. They should never attempt to feed a wild animal. When older children are hiking or are in parks, they should be instructed on coyote safety. Eradication and/or relocation of the urban coyote is not effective. These programs actually provide a vacuum in nature, causing these animals to have even larger litters, ultimately increasing the coyote population.

Practicing these defensive measures will minimize the nuisance and losses caused by urban coyotes.

Many steps can be taken to protect you and your property from nuisance animals like coyotes and other wildlife.

Fence off animal enclosures (fully enclose if possible).

Keep cats and small dogs indoors or in the close presence of an adult.

Feed pets indoors.

Store trash in covered heavy-duty containers.

Keep yards free from potential shelter such as thick brush and weeds.

Enclose the bottoms of porches and decks.

Eliminate potential food and water sources, such as fallen fruit and standing water.

For more information, contact:

OC Community Resources

OC Animal Care

Phone: (714) 935-6848

Website: www.ocpetinfo.com

