



Coyote Awareness in Laguna Woods

*Coyotes (*Canis latrans*) are native to California and can be seen everywhere from densely populated urban areas to more rural, wilderness-type settings. While most encounters with coyotes are non-threatening, coyotes can exhibit aggressive behavior and attack people and pets. Climate-related reductions in wilderness sources of food and water, as well as the presence of “attractants” such as off-leash dogs, dogs on long leashes, free-roaming cats, food and water left outside, and fallen and low-hanging fruit, may increase coyote activity.*

What is Being Done?

Laguna Beach/Laguna Woods Animal Services works throughout the year to prevent and respond to instances of aggressive coyote behavior. Our approach is multifaceted and includes:

- **Public Education**

Animal Services Officers are available to speak with you in-person or remotely. Arrangements can also be made for Animal Services Officers to speak at club events or neighborhood gatherings. For more information, please leave a message on the Non-Emergency Coyote Hotline at (949) 639-0501 or email coyotes@lagunabeachcity.net.

- **Hazing**

Animal Services Officers use sound, visual, and tactile stimuli (e.g., non-lethal water balls) to frighten coyotes and discourage their presence.

- **Habitat Management**

Animal Services Officers work closely with property owners to eliminate “layups,” dens, and other areas where coyotes might hide, lurk, rest, or breed.

- **Abatement**

Lethal coyote abatement is undertaken as conditions warrant. While targeted abatement to address habituated coyotes that have become a public safety problem can be helpful in disrupting aggressive behavior, research shows that more extensive efforts can actually increase reproductive rates and result in even greater numbers of coyotes.

***Who should
I contact
and when?***



When Should I Call 9-1-1?

- If you or someone else are in imminent danger or under attack

When Should I Contact Animal Services?

(949) 497-0701 (Press 0) or
coyotes@lagunabeachcity.net

- If you encounter a coyote exhibiting aggressive behavior (**non-aggressive coyote sightings should be reported to the Non-Emergency Coyote Hotline**)
- If you have knowledge of a coyote attack
- If you observe off-leash dogs (except at the City of Laguna Woods' dog park)
- If you observe dogs on leashes longer than 6 feet
- If you observe anyone actively feeding wildlife

When Should I Contact the Non-Emergency Coyote Hotline?

(949) 639-0501 (leave a voicemail) or
code@cityoflagunawoods.org

- If you observe pet food or water bowls left outside
- If you observe fallen or low-hanging fruit
- If you observe ground-level vegetable plants (except in designated garden centers)
- If you observe bird seed on the ground
- If you observe overgrown vegetation providing habitat for coyotes

What Can Individuals Do?

✓ Obey leash laws

Keep your dog on a leash when outdoors. Allowing dogs to be off leash for even “just a moment” (e.g., while bringing in the mail, unloading groceries, or at the end of a walk) greatly increases the risk of a coyote attack. When returning home from a walk, do not remove your dog’s leash until you are inside with the door securely closed behind you. **Allowing dogs to be outdoors without a leash is illegal and carries fines and penalties!** (*Laguna Woods Municipal Code Section 5.14.010*)

Walk your dog using a leash of six feet or less. The greater the distance between you and your dog, the more likely a coyote is to attack. **Walking dogs using a leash longer than six feet is illegal and carries fines and penalties!** (*Laguna Woods Municipal Code Section 5.14.010*)

If you would like your dog to be able to play outside off leash, consider visiting the City of Laguna Woods’ “A Place for Paws” Dog Park at 23190 Ridge Route Drive, Laguna Woods, CA 92637. There are also several nearby public dog parks in other cities that would welcome you and your dog.

✓ When you walk your dog, walk safely

Walk your dog with a friend or in a group, whenever possible. If you encounter a coyote, stand tall, shout, flail your arms in a defiant manner, and throw rocks or other small objects. Consider carrying a whistle, air horn, or other noisemaker.

Avoid walking your dog near Aliso Creek. Aliso Creek spans nearly 20 miles from the foothills to the ocean and is a natural habitat and source of water for coyotes and other wildlife. While there are no “coyote free” areas, choosing to walk your dog in such close proximity to wildlife is unnecessarily risky.

Consider purchasing coyote-deterrent vests and other protective armor for your dog to wear when outdoors. Check with your pet supply store or veterinarian for recommendations.

✓ Keep cats indoors

Free-roaming cats are easy prey for coyotes, no matter the size or breed. Keep your cat inside your home to ensure its safety and avoid emboldening coyotes.

✓ Keep pet food and water bowls indoors

Pet bowls are convenient sources of food and water for coyotes. Keep pet bowls indoors at all times. Doing so will also help to ensure your pet is alert and not distracted by eating or drinking when outdoors.

✓ Do not feed wildlife

Though often well intentioned, feeding wildlife draws coyotes closer to populated areas where they can lose their natural fear and caution, making them a threat to both people and pets. **Feeding wildlife is illegal and carries fines and penalties!** (*Laguna Woods Municipal Code Section 5.20.070*)



DO NOT allow your dog to be off-leash.



Walk your dog in groups!



Keep your cats indoors.



DO NOT feed wildlife.



Remove fallen and low-hanging fruit.



Keep bird feeders clean.



Report aggressive coyote behavior.

✓ Remove fallen and low-hanging fruit, as well as ground-level vegetable plants

Coyotes are omnivores and will eat nearly anything, including fruit and vegetables. To prevent fruit trees and vegetable plants from becoming sources of food for coyotes, pick up fallen fruit and remove fruits and vegetables within three feet of the ground.

The City of Laguna Woods discourages the planting of new fruit trees and vegetable plants outside of designated garden centers.

✓ Keep bird feeders clean

Even small amounts of bird seed that finds its way to the ground may attract rodents and other animals that are easy prey for coyotes.

✓ Report aggressive coyote behavior

Too often, individuals fail to report encounters with aggressive coyotes or make reports to entities other than Laguna Beach/Laguna Woods Animal Services. As your animal services provider, we are only able to act on reports that we actually receive.

What Can't Be Done?

✗ Coyotes cannot be completely eradicated

It is not possible to eradicate all coyotes due to their breeding and territorial patterns, nor would it be wise given ecosystem implications (e.g., predator-prey cycles). Research shows that, often times, when coyotes are aggressively eradicated, their reproductive rates increase, with breeding occurring earlier and in greater numbers.

✗ Coyotes cannot be relocated

There are no known locations that accept relocated coyotes. Just as it would be unlawful for others to abandon coyotes in Laguna Woods, it would be unlawful for Laguna Woods to abandon coyotes elsewhere.

✗ Coyotes cannot be poisoned or sterilized

It is generally illegal to use poisons or toxicants to control coyotes.

There are no large-scale sterilization methods available for coyotes.



City of Laguna Woods

24264 El Toro Road
Laguna Woods, CA 92637

(949) 639-0500

TTY (949) 639-0535

www.cityoflagunawoods.org

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