

Coyote Fact Sheet



Answers to your questions

What are coyotes doing in Oakville? Shouldn't they be relocated to where they belong?

Coyotes are found in every urban centre in North America and are a natural part of our urban environment. Many people think it is unusual to see coyotes on a town road or sidewalk. It's actually very common. Much like foxes, squirrels, raccoons and other animals, they have found a permanent home in urban areas. Relocating or killing coyotes is not an option; it is difficult to accomplish and is only a band-aid solution. Capture and relocation of coyotes more than one kilometre away is not permitted under *Ontario's Fish and Wildlife Conservation Act*.

Is it true the coyotes we see in Oakville are actually coywolves?

There is a common belief that there is a hybrid species of animal called a "coywolf". In fact, the coyote we see in Oakville is the Eastern Coyote. Coywolf is a nickname for the Eastern Coyote. Eastern Coyotes share remnants of Algonquin (Eastern) wolf DNA. Scientists estimate that the initial cross-breeding of the species occurred approximately 100 years ago in north western Ontario. The small amount of DNA they share with wolves does not affect their behaviour or make them more aggressive.

Why are there so many more coyotes around now?

During the winter months, coyotes become more visible because there is less brush and leaf cover for them to blend into. Winter is also mating season, so coyotes may be travelling more as they seek a mate. There is no evidence that there is an increase in the coyote population in Oakville.

Keeping coyotes away from your property:

Coyotes are not considered to be a significant risk to people, but seeing one on your property or while out for a walk can be unnerving. There are steps we can take to keep coyotes away from our backyards and neighbourhoods. Hazing is a method used to instill a fear of humans and lets the coyote know it is not welcome. Based on field work and experience, Coyote Watch Canada tells us that for communities experiencing regular coyote sightings, consistent hazing and participation by the entire community can encourage a coyote to stay away from people and can help restore their natural fear of humans.

- Do not leave pets unattended outside. Watching your pet as it has its backyard break is a simple but important step you can take to keep it safe.
- Whenever you see a coyote on your property, haze it to scare it away so the coyote won't see your yard as a comfortable place to return to. Make loud noises – bang pots and pans,

yell, flash the lights, throw items that are available to you such as sticks or rocks, in the direction of (not at) the coyote. Consider installing an outdoor motion sensor. Review our coyote hazing video at oakville.ca for more tips.

- Never feed wildlife. Food sources on your property attract rodents and other small animals which are food sources for coyotes. Leaving food out for birds, squirrels or chipmunks also attracts coyotes. Keep pet food, water bowls and compost indoors. Keep trash cans covered. Put trash out the day of pick up, not the night before. Pick ripened fruit from trees and clear any rotten fruit from the ground.
- Plug gaps in fences and under decks and sheds.

What to do if a coyote follows or approaches you:

- **STOP.** If you have a dog(s) with you keep it on a short leash. Pick up small dogs. Do not let your dog approach the coyote.
- **MAKE YOURSELF BIG.** Stand tall, wave your arms above your head. Surprise gestures work best.
- **BE LOUD AND ASSERTIVE.** Shout “Go Away!”, stomp your feet, clap your hands. Carry a noise maker such as a whistle or use a plastic bag to make a loud popping sound. Try throwing items that are available to you such as sticks or rocks, in the direction of (not at) the coyote or carry a can of marbles or coins that you can shake to create a loud, unfamiliar sound.
- **SLOWLY BACK AWAY.** Maintain eye contact and continue to be loud and assertive. Never run from a coyote (or stray dog). If the coyote backs away a short distance and stops and looks back at you, continue to haze until the coyote has left the area.

What more can I do?

- **Share your experience.** Report details of your coyote sighting online using the coyote reporting form on oakville.ca. This helps us learn what areas the coyotes are frequenting and if further investigations are required.
- **Report infractions** – such as food left out or overgrown properties – on the coyote reporting form on oakville.ca or by calling ServiceOakville at 905-845-6601.
- Contact the Oakville Milton Humane Society at 905-845-1551 if you encounter a coyote you believe is sick or injured or in distress. If a coyote is captured, it will be sent to a wildlife rehabilitation centre for assessment, and released only after receiving a positive behaviour and health assessment.
- Call 911 if a coyote poses an immediate threat to safety.
- Learn more by reviewing Coyote Watch Canada’s eLearning module on Coyotes in the Urban Landscape at oakville.ca.
- Learn more about coyote behaviour at coyotewatchcanada.com.

Visit oakville.ca or contact ServiceOakville at 905-845-6601 for more information.