



CITY OF LA VERNE

COYOTE MANAGEMENT PLAN



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SECTION 1: INTRODUCTION

The goal of the La Verne Coyote Management Plan is to discourage the habituation of coyotes in an urban environment by using education, behavior modification, and a robust human/coyote reporting and responding system. The recommended actions in this Plan are designed to increase communities' knowledge and understanding of how coyotes behave and to make clear how such behavior can be managed or reduced to eliminate human conflicts with coyotes. The ultimate goal of coyote behavior modification is to encourage the natural relocation of coyotes to their native environment.

The overall intent of this framework is to provide guidance for dealing with coyotes in the City of La Verne. This Plan has also been modeled after plans that were successfully utilized by other municipalities in Southern California. This Plan does not supersede federal, state, county, and city regulations and policies.

As recommended by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) and the Regional Coyote Management Framework (RCMF) is guided by the following principles:

- Human safety is a priority in managing human-coyote interactions.
- Coyotes serve an important role in San Gabriel Valley's ecosystems by helping to control rodent populations.
- Preventive practices are crucial to minimizing potential interactions and encounters with coyotes.
- Solutions for coyote conflicts must address both problematic coyote behaviors and the human behaviors that invite them.
- Non-selective coyote removal programs are ineffective for reducing coyote population sizes or preventing human-coyote conflicts in the long run.
- Region wide programs that involve residents can improve coexistence among humans, coyotes, and pets.

SECTION 2: COYOTE MANAGEMENT STRATEGY

The strategy for managing coyotes is based on balancing respect and protection of wildlife without compromising public safety. The main strategy is a multi-focused approach consisting of public education, enforcement, and reporting.

PUBLIC EDUCATION

Coyote awareness education is critical for residents to make informed decisions regarding their safety, properties, and pets by decreasing attractants, reshaping coyote behavior, and creating reasonable expectations of normal coyote behavior. Dissemination of information to residents, businesses, and schools will be accomplished through the use of the City's website, recreation brochure social media, school flyers, community meetings, such as coyote management workshops, and other direct and indirect public outreach campaigns.

Learning how to properly and effectively respond to a coyote encounter empowers residents and supports reshaping undesired coyote behavior. The public should understand what normal coyote behavior is when living in close proximity with coyotes. For example, vocalization (coyote calls) is a normal and acceptable behavior that does not indicate aggression.

It is recommended for the City to host trainings and provide education workshops in communities with high human-coyote interactions. We are also encouraged to provide information regarding coyotes to educate the residents and households residing in areas with high coyote sightings.

ENFORCEMENT

The act of feeding wildlife is known to lead to an increase in wildlife activity. Feeding can attract coyotes and their prey to an area leading to an increased likelihood of creating habituated coyotes and resulting in increased coyote-human interactions. California law prohibits feeding wildlife, including coyotes.

REPORTING

A four tier safety response plan has been developed to provide a mechanism for identifying and classifying different levels of human-coyote interactions. This response plan serves as a regional approach to identify different types of coyote behaviors.

SECTION 3: COYOTE ATTRACTANTS

While attacks on humans are extremely rare, urban landscape development, intentional and unintentional feeding, pet-related incidents, and media attention have led some residents to fear coyotes. It is important to note that attacks on free-roaming and unattended small pets are normal coyote behavior and do not necessarily indicate a danger for humans. Coyotes usually become habituated when they learn and associate people and/or neighborhoods with sources of food.

Residents may reinforce this behavior by acting inappropriately when they see a coyote. Steps must be taken to address safety concerns and misconceptions and to ensure appropriate responses to potential threats to human safety. It is important to keep in mind that coyotes have always been in and around La Verne and other parts of Southern California.

Coyotes are drawn to urban and suburban areas for the following reasons:

FOOD – Urban areas provide a bounty of natural food choices for coyotes that primarily eat rodents. However, coyotes can be further attracted into suburban neighborhoods by human-associated food, such as pet food, unsecured compost or trash, and fallen fruit in parks and yards. Intentional and unintentional feeding can lead coyotes to associate humans with sources of food, which can result in negative and aggressive interactions among coyotes, people, and pets.

To reduce food attractants in urban and suburban area, residents should be educated to:

- Never hand-feed or otherwise deliberately feed a coyote.
- Avoid feeding pets outside and remove sources of pet food and water in outdoor settings. If feeding pets outside is necessary, remove the feeding bowl and any leftover food promptly.
- Never compost any meat or dairy products unless the compost is fully secured.
- Maintain good housekeeping, such as regularly raking areas around bird feeders, to help discourage coyote activity near residences.
- Remove fallen fruit from the ground.
- Keep trash in high-quality containers with tight-fitting lids.
- Only place trash bins curbside during the morning of trash collection. If left out overnight, trash bins are more likely to be tipped over and broken into by coyotes.
- Seal food waste, such as meat scraps or leftover pet food, before discarding the waste into trash bins.

WATER – Urban areas provide a year-round supply of water in the form of storm water impoundments and channels, artificial lakes, irrigation, swimming pools, and pet water dishes, which support both coyotes and their prey. In dry conditions, water can be as alluring as food. Residents should remove outdoor water bowls/cans and secure fountains, pools, and jacuzzis.

SHELTER – Parks, greenbelts, open spaces, sumps, golf courses, buildings, sheds, decks, and crawl spaces increase the amount and variability of cover for coyotes. They allow coyotes to safely and easily remain close to residents, pets, homes, and businesses without detection. Coyotes may take advantage of available

spaces under sheds or decks for use as a den, thereby bringing them into close contact with residents and pets.

UNATTENDED PETS – Coyotes primarily eat small mammals, such as mice and rats; however, they will also prey on slightly larger mammals such as rabbits and groundhogs. Animals that are approximately the same size as a groundhog or rabbit, especially unattended outdoor cats and small dogs, may attract coyotes into neighborhoods.

- The best way to minimize risk to pets from coyotes (and the other dangers of outdoor life such as cars, disease, and other wildlife) is to keep small pets indoors, only let them outside in a secured enclosure, or when they are accompanied by a person and under the control of a leash and harness that is less than six feet long.
- It is important to either keep dogs on a leash that is six feet long or shorter when outdoors or to stay within six feet of them when outside. Coyotes may view a dog on a leash longer than six feet as an unattended pet. Attacks on free-roaming small cats or dogs are normal coyote behavior and do not indicate a danger for humans. A free-roaming pet is considered as an unattended domestic pet outside of its enclosed yard or area.
- Although attacks on larger dogs are rare, coyotes may often attack a large dog when they feel that their territory is threatened. This generally occurs during the coyote breeding season, which takes place from January through March. During this time, it is especially important to not leave dogs outside unattended and to keep them on leashes (six feet long or less) when in public areas.

FERAL CATS – While residents who feed feral cats are often concerned that coyotes might prey on the cats, the act of feeding feral cats may cause more harm than good, as coyotes often frequent these locations. Resident should not feed feral cats to avoid attracting coyotes into their neighborhoods. Although it can be difficult for residents to protect feral cats from coyotes, the following tips can be helpful:

- Do not feed feral cats.
- If feral cats frequent your neighborhood, please contact Inland Valley Humane Society at (909) 632-9777.
- Haze coyotes seen near feral cat locations. Making coyotes feel uncomfortable will encourage them to stay out of the area.

Other domestic animals kept outside, such as rabbits and chickens, may also be viewed as prey by coyotes. Protect outdoor animals from coyotes and other predators with protective fencing and sturdy cages.

Residents are encouraged to use the Yard Audit Checklist as a tool to help recognize and remove attractants in their yards and neighborhoods.

SECTION 4: HAZING AND BEHAVIOR CHANGE

Some coyotes have become too comfortable in the close proximity of residents. To safely coexist, residents must modify their behavior to shape coyote behavior. Habituated coyote behavior needs to be reshaped to encourage coyotes to avoid contact with residents and pets.

Hazing, also known as “fear conditioning” or “scaring,” is the process that facilitates this change and is, by necessity, a community response to negative encounters with coyotes. The more an individual animal is hazed, the more effective hazing is in changing coyote behavior.

Hazing employs immediate use of deterrents to move an animal out of an area or discourage an undesirable behavior or activity. Deterrents include whistles, loud noises, spraying water, bright lights, throwing objects, waving arms, and shouting. Hazing can help maintain a coyote’s fear of humans and discourage them from neighborhoods, such as backyards and play areas.

Hazing is not intended to harm or damage animals, humans or property, but to change the coyote’s behavior. A coyote, similar to a dog, will not know that the behavior it is engaging in is unwanted unless some type of message is sent and reinforced repeatedly. Behavioral change also involves human activities such as identifying and removing attractants and protecting pets responsibly. If a human sees a coyote in an urban area and does not respond in any way, a message opposite of hazing is conveyed to the coyote.

GOALS OF HAZING

It is not economically and ecologically efficient to eradicate coyotes from the urban ecosystem. Hazing is part of a long-term plan to create safe and acceptable living situations, increase understanding of coyote behavior and reduce conflict between coyotes and people. Goals of hazing include:

1. To reshape coyote behavior to avoid human contact in an urban setting. Human behavior can shape animal behavior, in either a negative or positive manner. People living in close proximity to coyotes can remove coyote attractants, identify potentially dangerous situations for their pets and themselves, and respond in a manner designed to change coyote behavior.
2. To provide residents information and tools to actively engage in reshaping coyote behavior and to support feeling safe in their parks and neighborhoods. This can be accomplished by teaching residents effective and appropriate hazing techniques.
3. To model hazing behavior and share accurate information about coyotes among other residents, friends, and family.
4. Monitor hazing to assess its effectiveness and determine if further action or more aggressive hazing is needed.
5. Develop long-term community-based hazing programs.

TRAINING PROGRAM

The City of La Verne along with partners from California Department of Fish and Wildlife, Inland Valley Humane Society, and the County of Los Angeles will empower residents with methods to safely co-exist with wildlife.

Additionally, we are encouraged to promote CDFW's Wildlife Watch Program. More information regarding the Wildlife Watch Program can be found on <https://www.wildlife.ca./wildlife-watch>. Individuals and groups that are interested in participating in a hazing training program can contact their local Humane Society for a list of upcoming sessions:

- Inland Valley Humane Society: (909) 623-9777

SECTION 5: ENFORCEMENT

The act of feeding wildlife can attract coyotes and their prey to an area, leading to an increased likelihood of creating habituated coyotes and increased coyote-human interactions. California law prohibits feeding wildlife and local police departments will strictly enforce applicable state statutes pertaining to this activity.

The following are some of the applicable regulations that may be utilized as enforcement tools to discourage coyotes from proliferating in urbanized San Gabriel Valley:

CALIFORNIA CODE OF REGULATIONS TITLE 14. SECTION 251.1. HARASSMENT OF ANIMALS

Except as otherwise authorized in these regulations or in the Fish and Game Code, no person shall harass, herd, or drive any game nongame bird or mammal or furbearing mammal. For the purposes of this section, harass is defined as an intentional act which disrupts an animal's normal behavior patterns, which includes, but is not limited to, breeding, feeding, or sheltering.

LOS ANGELES COUNTY CODE TITLE 10. SECTION 10.84.010. PROVIDING FOOD FOR CERTAIN RODENTS OR PREDATOR ANIMALS PROHIBITED

It is unlawful to feed a non-domesticated rodent or non-domesticated mammalian predator as defined in this section, unless:

- The person is the owner of the animal and the animal is kept in accordance with the requirements of the State Department of Fish and Wildlife; or
- After notifying the responsible agency to pick up the animal, the person provides food to a trapped or injured animal.

For purposes of this chapter:

1. "Rodent" includes ground squirrels;
2. "Mammalian predators" include coyotes, raccoons, foxes, and opossums.

A violation of this section is a misdemeanor.

SECTION 6: SAFETY RESPONSE

A tiered response plan identifies and classifies levels of human and coyote interactions. The City of La Verne adopted the 4-tier coyote response plan that is showcased below.

Coyote Action	Classification	Response
Coyote heard	Unobserved Level Green	Provide educational materials and info on normal coyote behavior
Coyote observed moving in area	Sighting Level Green	Provide education materials and info on normal coyote behavior
Coyote observed resting in area	Sighting Level Green	Educate on hazing techniques, what to do tips
Coyote observed resting in area with people present	Sighting Level Yellow	If area is frequented by people, educate on normal behavior and haze to encourage animal to leave. Look for and eliminate attractants.
Coyote entering a yard without pets	Sighting Level Yellow	Educate on coyote attractants, yard audit, provide hazing info
Coyote entering a yard with pets	Encounter Level Yellow	Educate on coyote attractants, yard audit, hazing info, pet safety
Coyote entering yard and injuring or killing pet w/o people present	Pet Attack Level Orange	Gather info on specific animals involved, report circumstances, educate on coyote attractants, yard/neighborhood audits, hazing, pet safety
Coyote biting or injuring unattended pet/pet on leash longer than 6' with people present	Pet Attack Level Orange	Gather info on specific animals involved, report circumstances, educate on coyote attractants, yard/neighborhood audits, hazing, pet safety
Coyote following or approaching a person w/o pet (Stalking)	Encounter Level Red	Educate on hazing techniques and what to do tips. Removal/euthanasia considered if there is no response from the coyote to aggressive hazing, and there is evidence of recurrence.
Coyote following or approaching a person & pet (Stalking)	Encounter Level Red	Educate on hazing techniques and what to do tips and pet safety. Removal/euthanasia considered if there is no response from the coyote to aggressive hazing, and there is evidence of recurrence.

Coyote entering yard or home with people & pets, no injury occurring	Encounter Level Red	Gather info on specific animals involved, document circumstances, educate on coyote attractants, yard/neighborhood audits, hazing, pet safety. Removal/euthanasia considered depending on specific circumstances.
Coyote biting or injuring attended pet/pet on leash 6' or less	Pet Attack Level Red	Gather info on specific animals involved, document circumstances, educate on coyote attractants, yard/neighborhood audits, hazing, pet safety. City staff will inform the Los Angeles County Department of Agricultural Weights and Measures. Removal/ euthanasia recommended.
Coyote aggressive, showing teeth, back fur raised, lunging, nipping w/o contact	Threat Level Red	Gather info on specific animals involved, report circumstances, educate on coyote attractants, yard/ neighborhood audits, aggressive hazing, pet safety. City staff will inform the Los Angeles County Department of Agricultural Weights and Measures. Removal/euthanasia recommended.
Coyote biting or injuring person	Attack Level Red	Identify and gather information on specific animal involved, report circumstances, educate on coyote attractants, yard/neighborhood audits, hazing, and pet safety. City staff will inform the Los Angeles County Department of Agricultural Weights and Measures. Removal/euthanasia recommended.

If a human is attacked and physically injured by a coyote, the City will work with the Los Angeles County Department of Agricultural Weights and Measures, which will be the lead investigating agency to thoroughly investigate the incident, to identify and remove the responsible coyote. As a last resort, lethal removal will also be considered if there is a public safety issue with a coyote threatening residents—only after a thorough investigation and identification of the offending coyote.

Since coyotes are considered as “non-game wildlife,” any resident or homeowners’ association can, at their own expense, initiate action to protect themselves and their private property from coyote attacks within the limits of the law regarding trapping and hunting.

SECTION 7: Monitoring and Collecting Data

Monitoring and data collection are critical components of an effective Coyote Management Plan. This is best accomplished with the input from both residents and City officials. The purpose of monitoring human-coyote interactions is to document where coyotes are frequently seen and to identify human-coyote conflict hotspots, if they exist.

Gathering specific data on incidents will allow for targeting of educational campaigns and resident workshops, as well as the ability to measure success in reducing conflicts over time. It provides a repository for reported coyote activity, real-time alerts to stay abreast of reported activities, and GIS mapping by zip code. Residents may view coyote encounters in the La Verne area by visiting www.cityoflaverne/coyoteplan.

YARD AUDIT CHECKLIST

We encourage you to take steps to eliminate attractants on your property in order to minimize conflicts with coyotes. We also urge you to share this information with friends and neighbors because minimizing conflicts is most effective when the entire neighborhood works together.

	No Action Required	Adjustments Required	Recommended Action
FOOD			Never intentionally feed a coyote.
Pet Food			Never feed pets outdoors; store all pet food securely indoors.
Water Sources			Remove water attractants, such as pet water bowls.
Bird Feeders			Remove bird feeders or clean fallen seed to reduce the presence of small mammals that coyotes prefer to eat.
Fallen Fruit			Clean up fallen fruits around trees.
Compost			Do not include meat or dairy among compost contents unless the area is fully enclosed.
BBQ Grills			Clean up food around BBQ grills after each use.
Trash			Secure trash containers with locking lids and place curbside on pickup day. Periodically clean cans to reduce residual odors.
LANDSCAPING			Trim vegetation to reduce hiding places for rodents and coyotes and potential denning sites.
STRUCTURES			Restrict access under decks and sheds, around wood piles, or any other structure that can provide cover or denning sites for coyotes or their prey.
FENCING*			Enclose property with six-foot fence with additional extension or roller top to deter coyotes. Ensure that there are no gaps and that the bottom of the fence extends underground six inches or is fitted with a mesh apron to deter coyotes from digging underneath. *Must comply with local municipal code
PETS			Never leave pets unattended outside. Never allow pets to “play” with coyotes. Fully enclose outdoor pet kennels. Walk pets on a leash no longer than 6 feet in length.