



*DO YOU KNOW...about Coyotes????????????????????*

Coyotes (*Canis latrans*) are territorial, social members of the dog family whose lifespan averages fifteen years in the wild. Males range in size from 10 to 20 kgs (22 to 44 lbs) with females slightly smaller. Body color ranges from grey to reddish brown with rust colored paws, tails, and muzzles. Natural habitats include grasslands and wooded hills but they can also be found in scrub areas, deserts, Alpine regions, and subarctic tundra. Their territory size is directly related to the habitat quality; several square miles are usually sufficient.

Their breeding season is generally February through March and gestation is an average of 63 days. Litter size ranges from three to six pups, depending on the mother's age; older females tend to have larger litters. The pups nurse up to two months but are offered regurgitated food by both parents at three weeks of age. The male will hunt for the female and provide protection during the first month when she is unable to leave the den. Pups are independent at nine months of age with the males generally moving off to find their own territories.

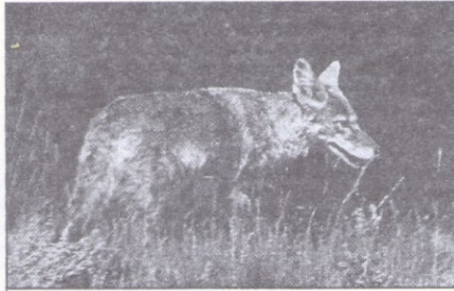
Coyotes are opportunistic omnivorous (both plant and animal matter) feeders, going after rabbits, hares, rodents, insects, berries, and acorns. For small prey, they are solitary hunters they but will join others in bringing down deer. In suburban areas, their diet may expand to include feral cats, small dogs, garden vegetables, trash, pet food, and small livestock (lambs, chickens, etc.)

Coyotes have been moving back into Maryland in recent years because of human pressure in the Midwest and more open space here due to deforestation. Many livestock owners, suburban parents, and pet owners are concerned about what this means for their and their animals' safety. The following are the common problems coyotes present us with and their solutions.

**Problems & Solutions:**

- 1. Livestock:** Coyotes tend to go after chickens and lambs, as they are small and easy prey. Because they have set territories, only the coyote (or pair) whose territory intersects with the farm needs to be removed. "This strategy recognizes that it is better to leave coyotes that do not kill

livestock alone so that they will keep other coyotes, who might be livestock killers, away."\* Poultry can be protected with secure coops and proper fencing. Electric fencing has proven very useful in keeping coyotes (and other potentially harmful creatures) out of paddocks and other farm areas.



ADULT COYOTE

**2. Habitat Management:** In suburban areas, coyotes tend to go for the easiest meal, which is most likely your trash, or any pet food you leave out at night. Trash that most attracts coyotes includes chicken, fish, and pet food. To minimize smell, try freezing these items until your trash day, sprinkling ammonia on top of your trash, or purchasing cans with tight fitting or locking lids. Do not leave pet food or water out at night as these could attract the coyotes in the first place. These methods will also help deter stray cats and dogs, opossums, and raccoons.

- 3. Domestic Pets:** Many pet owners are concerned for the safety of their pets. If you abide by Maryland county laws, you will have no problems with coyotes as these laws state that no pet (cat, dog, or other) is allowed outside unattended or off your property unleashed. When your animals are in your yard, stay with them. Your presence will deter any wildlife from approaching as well as deter your pet from leaving your yard. "In areas where there is little natural tree cover, those who must leave cats outdoors can help protect them by installing . . . long climbable wooden posts (4x4 or corner posts) that stand out of the ground at least six to eight feet."\* This allows the cats an escape route.

- 4. Children:** Parents are afraid for the safety of their children for they fear that coyotes will try to attack. Coyotes are naturally shy creatures who want as little contact with humans as possible. If any wildlife approaches you or your child, go back inside and call the proper authorities.



Adult Grey Fox

For more information on these beautiful creatures visit: [www.desertusa.com/june96/du\\_cycot.html](http://www.desertusa.com/june96/du_cycot.html) and [www.nationalgeographic.com](http://www.nationalgeographic.com) search: coyotes

NOTE: In Maryland, it is illegal to rehabilitate coyotes without special permission from the Maryland Wildlife and Heritage Service of the Department of Natural Resources.

*NOW YOU KNOW !!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!*

\*Taken from: *Wild Neighbors*, Humane Society of the United State 1997, pg. 92

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