Coyotes in the City

Sioux Falls is a beautiful city with many trees, parks, and water resources. Many neighborhoods have grassy waterways for floodwater runoff. These areas provide great opportunities for enjoying nature. One of the wild animals that might live in these areas are coyotes, who use these areas for homes or for concealed pathways for travelling.

Coyotes are a native species in South Dakota and may live in areas of Sioux Falls throughout the year. They weigh approximately 20-30 lbs and they eat a variety of foods such as bugs, mice, bird eggs, fruit, squirrels, rabbits, bird seed, cat or dog food, and garbage. Coyotes are attracted to the City because it provides them a relatively safe place to live, plenty of food and many places to hide. Coyotes are naturally timid and normally run away if confronted.

I saw a coyote in my neighborhood – what should I do?

Even though you saw a coyote, it doesn't automatically mean you are in danger. Coyotes generally live peacefully among people and can be beneficial by eating pests such as insects, rodents and rabbits. However coyotes are a wild animal, and they should not be fed or approached by humans. The best way to keep them from interacting with you or your pets is to haze (scare) them. If you do nothing when you see a coyote, the coyote will start to become habituated (lose its fear of humans), which may lead to the coyote biting a pet or person.

Some ways to discourage coyotes from entering your yard:

Fence them out. A fence 6 foot high is a good option for keeping coyotes out of your yard.

Don't feed them. Keep your pet's food in the house. Don't feed stray animals. Keep garbage secured and keep the drippings cleaned up under your grill. Clean up fallen fruit from trees. clean up under bird feeders (which also attract rodents, a favorite food for a coyote).

Never leave your pet outside unattended. Coyotes may see larger dogs as competition and smaller dogs and cats as food.

Install motion activated lighting and/or sprinklers.

Remove their hiding spaces. Keep shrubs trimmed up. Remove tall vegetation or brush piles in

your yard. Enclose areas under decks or sheds.

Haze (scare) the coyote.

- Yell and wave your arms while approaching the coyote. Never run away from a coyote. If the coyote acts aggressive, back away slowly.
- Use a noisemaker (e.g. air horn, whistle, pots and pans banged together, soda cans filled with rocks or pennies, your voice).
- Throw a projectile (e.g. sticks, small stones, tennis balls, rubber balls).
- Try a different repellent (e.g. water hose, water guns with vinegar water, spray bottles with vinegar water, pepper spray, bear repellent, walking sticks).
- Keep hazing until the coyote leaves – try mixing different methods until it runs away. It may take a couple of hazing attempts until the coyote stops visiting.
- Make sure your neighbors are hazing the coyotes too! Hazing is more effective when the neighborhood works together.
- Never haze a coyote if it is injured, trapped, or if it has pups with it. They are more unpredictable in those situations and may bite.

What should I do if I see a coyote while I am walking my dog?

There are some great tools for repelling coyotes while you are walking a dog. Remember to always have your dog on a leash for its safety. The leash should be 6 foot long or less. This helps you move your dog near you quickly in a dangerous situation. If you see a coyote, pick up your dog (if possible) or place yourself between your dog and the coyote. Then use the tools below and haze the coyote.

Some tools to keep you and your pet safe while on a walk:

- A walking stick
- A whistle or air horn
- A homemade noisemaker (e.g. pennies in a pop can sealed with duct tape)
- Pepper spray

If a coyote is acting aggressively (e.g. snarling, growling, biting) around you or your pet, call Animal Control at 367-7000.