

Was that a coyote?

Follow a few simple guidelines to prevent or reduce conflicts

AKRON — Winter weather not only brings snow but with dropping temperatures comes increased coyote activity in northeast Ohio according to the Ohio Department of Natural Resources (ODNR).

If you spot a coyote in your neighborhood, this isn't an immediate cause for alarm. Coyotes are common animals across Ohio's landscape and even in patch-work green spaces throughout developed areas.

Coyote activity builds in January and continues through March due to breeding season. During the months of April and May, coyotes tend to actively protect their litters as well which could lead to potential conflicts with humans and pets.

Keep these five factors in mind

1. Understand that coyotes are established in all of Ohio's 88 counties and are regularly spotted within city limits. Read more about coyotes at wildohio.gov. Wolves are not a species found in the wild in Ohio.

2. If you spot a coyote on your property, make sure to remove all "attractants" to deter the coyote from returning. "Stash your trash" by properly securing garbage and removing outside pet food primarily before nightfall. Remember to clean up around the grill as well. Do not feed coyotes directly.

3. Typical foods consumed by coyotes include small mammals (voles, shrews, rabbits, mice), plant matter, nuts and dead animals such as road-kill. However, interactions with domestic pets do occur sometimes. Keep small dogs and cats inside (especially at night) or on a six-foot leash when outside. Retractable leashes are of little help since it is very difficult to reel a dog back if it is far ahead. Coyotes may attack dogs in defense of themselves or their territory so keeping control of domestic dogs is crucial for a pet's safety.

4. Occasionally, an inquisitive coyote will stay put and watch you curiously. Make noise. Clap your hands, stomp your feet, and shout; the coyote will likely move on at this point. If it doesn't, pop an umbrella open and closed, toss rocks in its direction or use a noise maker. A coyote that loses its fear of humans can potentially become a threat.

5. If a coyote visiting your yard does not respond to harassment techniques such as loud noises or it is presenting a conflict even after attractants are removed, contact a licensed nuisance trapper. You can locate a trapper at wildohio.gov or by calling the ODNR Division of Wildlife at 1-800-WILDLIFE. Nuisance trappers use highly-regulated techniques to target individual animals consequently reducing urban wildlife conflicts. Coyote populations in rural areas can be managed through legal hunting and trapping methods. Consult the yearly "Ohio Hunting and Trapping Regulations" digest for more information.

— ODNR

