

Avoiding Coyote Conflict

Coyotes are a natural scavenger and predator in Wetaskiwin County, and they play a beneficial role in the food chain by eating mice and other small rodents.

As human habitation and activities expand to coyotes' natural habitat, many coyotes have made behavioral adaptations to look to inhabited areas for sources of easy foraging.

Coyotes have learned to seek food from human garbage, gardens, compost piles, fruit trees, accessible pet food and small, unattended pets. While coyotes will usually avoid human contact, those that learn people are a source of food can become a nuisance.

Other sources of interest for coyotes include unsprayed female dogs (especially in-season), horse manure and poultry. It is recommended that horse manure be regularly harrowed or picked up in paddocks and poultry should remain in securely fenced enclosures. Information on reducing predation risks for poultry can be found on Alberta Agriculture and Forestry's website.

Efforts to remove coyotes from population-dense areas, such as hamlets and acreage subdivisions, are problematic. Methods that may be implemented in sparsely populated areas on agricultural lands pose



significant risks when used in proximity to people and their pets. Conflicts with coyotes can be minimized by eliminating food sources, reducing access to spaces that could be utilized as shelter and making an effort to frighten off coyotes.

For more information on coyotes, please call the Alberta Environment and Parks Coyote Information Hotline at **780-644-5744** or Wetaskiwin County Agricultural Services at **780-361-6226**.

Rodent disease management

Coyotes and foxes feed primarily on abundant rodent species, which serves a purpose in reducing infestations of mice, ground squirrels and pocket gophers. Rodents are destructive to buildings, can contaminate livestock feed and grains in storage and wreak havoc on pasturelands and hayfields.

Rodents also have the potential to carry diseases and parasites that can be harmful, and even fatal, if transmitted to humans. Pets that hunt rodents can introduce risk to their humans through their feces, if they have consumed infected or diseased rodents.

Good sanitation practices when cleaning rodent-contaminated areas and when cleaning up after pets — including conscientious hand washing and a regular deworming regime for pets — are important to you and your family's health.

Please contact your public health unit or veterinarian's office for more information.

DO NOT:

- Feed coyotes
- Leave garbage out where coyotes and other animals can access
- Leave fallen fruit from trees, or bird seed spilled from feeders on the ground
- Leave pet food out where it is accessible to coyotes
- Leave small dogs unattended or leave cats to roam
- Leave unsprayed female dogs unattended

DO:

- Close off spaces under decks and outbuildings to eliminate access for shelter
- Practice aversive conditioning; if you encounter a coyote, make the experience unpleasant for the animal by waving your arms overhead, shouting in a loud voice, blasting a safety air horn, or utilizing motion sensor lights and sprinklers
- Utilize secure mesh fencing or a pen enclosure for pet and small livestock safety

