

Living with Coyotes

Frequently Asked Questions

Thank you for attending or watching the recording of Living with Coyotes. This goal of holding this presentation was to empower residents with the knowledge and confidence to live safely alongside coyotes. Due to the volume of questions, we were unable to answer all questions submitted during the Q&A segment. We have provided this addition FAQ sheet to answer many of the remaining questions. Learn more about coyotes visit Mass Wildlife Coyote page.

<https://www.mass.gov/service-details/learn-about-coyotes>

1. How is the Town responding to recent coyote attacks?

- a. The MA Environmental Police have been spending time in Arlington assisting the Police and Animal Control with trying to locate the coyote responsible for the attacks. Although all parties are actively searching, the coyote has not been located. Community coyote sightings can be reported to the Arlington Police at 781-643-1212. They are available 24/7 and will respond to any calls even if it is the middle of the night. Due to recent encounters, any sightings will be responded to, to observe the Coyote and see if the behavior is normal.

2. How have the Environmental Police been responding to recent coyote attacks?

- a. The Environmental Police have jurisdiction in the entire state. APD had requested their assistance in August and September after the coyote encounters and they've spent a great deal of time assisting APD in locating the suspected coyote. While they do not need to notify APD of their ongoing actions, APD has seen them continuing to work in Town. The Animal Control Officer works with the EP to provide updates on any sightings.

3. Is it normal behavior to have multiple coyote interactions in the same area?

- a. The behavior seen in Arlington is very abnormal behavior for coyotes. As naturally shy animals, coyotes will avoid contact with humans. Coyote attacks on humans are very rare, and do not typically occur in the same area.

4. Where can I report a coyote sighting?

- a. Call the Arlington Police Department non-emergency line at 781-643-1212. It is staffed 24/7

5. How many coyotes live in the area?

- a. There are an estimated 10,000 coyotes in Massachusetts. Studies have shown that the average home range is 3.5-5 square miles in suburban areas. In

Arlington, there is one known family unit consisting of the male and female and they had four pups this year. Coyotes from other towns may come into different areas of Arlington.

6. How many coyotes are in a family group?

- a. A family group, or pack, consists of a mated alpha pair, a pup or two from their previous years litter, and this year's litter which averages at six pups. This means that a family can be between 2 and 10 coyotes at any one time.

7. Are coyotes only active during a certain time of day?

- a. Coyotes have adapted to the urban environment and may be active during day or night. When walking pets during any time of day, keep them leashed and in sight. The greatest deterrent between and pet and a coyote is you.

8. Why can't we eliminate coyotes from our environment?

- a. Coyotes prey on rats, raccoons, skunks, turkeys and so many rodents. This helps boost biodiversity. It is important to haze and reinforce the message to stay away from humans and human activity. Science has proven that trying to remove or cull coyote populations doesn't work and often creates the opposite effect by [disrupting the group hierarchy](#). This would allow more coyotes to reproduce, encourage larger litter sizes, and increase pup survival rates.

9. How do I properly scare away a coyote?

- a. Coyotes are naturally shy animals. If you come across a coyote experts suggest hazing coyotes. Hazing means scaring a coyotes away from you, your yard, or your neighborhood. Learn the right way to haze by checking out the Living with Coyotes presentation or viewing this [Coyote Hazing Field Guide](#). Hazing is most effective when done regularly as a community. Talk with your neighbors about the right way to haze coyotes.

10. Is it safe to feed coyotes?

- a. Never feed coyotes or other wildlife. This includes hand feeding and leaving food outside. It's important to ensure coyotes are not finding food sources like pet food left outside or trash that is not securely placed in a barrel. If they come across a human without food, it may cause abnormal aggressive behavior.

11. How do I keep my children or pets safe in my back yard?

- a. Your presence is the number one deterrent for coyote interaction. Keep children and pets close when outdoors. Remember proper hazing techniques if a coyote does enter the yard.

12. Are larger dogs safe from coyotes?

- a. Large dogs are seen as competitors in coyote territories. There have been reports of attacks on dogs as large as German Shepards. Regardless of how large

your dog is, we recommend keeping them on a close leash at all times when outdoors.

13. How can I protect my yard from coyotes?

- a. Removing attractants to make your yard less welcoming can help keep coyotes away. Remove any food sources by cleaning around bird feeders, ensuring your trash barrels have secure lids, and never feeding pets outdoors. Motion activated lights or sprinklers may also be a deterrent. A 6ft tall fence that is buried at least 6 inches below the ground may also be helpful. [Learn more about how to protect your yard.](#)

14. Is it legal to trap or hunt coyotes in Arlington?

- a. Hunting and trapping is regulated by the MA Division of Fisheries and Wildlife and requires proper licensure and permits. [Find more information on hunting and trapping here.](#) Questions about trapping or hunting should be addressed to MassWildlife at (508) 389-6300 or mass.wildlife@mass.gov.

15. Do coyotes hunt in groups?

- a. According to the [Urban Coyote Research Project](#), although coyotes live in family groups, they usually travel and hunt alone or in loose pairs.

16. What does a den look like? Can they be disturbed to discourage coyotes living in urban areas?

- a. Coyotes can make a den just about anywhere such as a hollowed-out tree stump, rock outcrop or existing burrow made by another animal. Coyotes may also build dens from scratch by digging a hole. They typically prefer some protective cover. In urban areas with less selection they may use existing structures near buildings or roads. Dens should not be disturbed as coyotes are protective of their litter and may act aggressively.

17. How might a neighborhood group help address coyote activity?

- a. Hazing coyotes to discourage interaction with humans is most effective when done consistently. Joining together with your neighbors to learn proper hazing techniques and work together to consistently haze coyotes the right way may help discourage interaction. [Learn more about hazing from Project Coyote.](#)

18. How does coyote behavior change after pups have left the den?

- a. Coyotes are territorial animals and are protective of their dens. Once pups have left, there tends to be a decrease in coyote aggression. While pups are living in the den, coyotes may exhibit aggressive behavior towards dogs and humans if they are near a den. By mid-June coyotes are no longer tied to the den and may begin to move throughout their territory. The pups will remain with their parents until fall when they begin to disperse and try to find territories of their own.

19. Do coyotes become more aggressive in the winter as food scarcity increases?

- a. This is not commonly seen. Coyotes are very good at hunting rabbits, squirrels, and other rodents. In urban areas like Arlington, coyotes can also take advantage of all the food sources people provide like pet food left out and unsecured trash.