

Coyotes and Other Urban Wildlife



Throughout the community, Lake Oswego has habitat that supports wildlife - coyotes, raccoons, possums, squirrels, owls, ducks, geese, skunks, and others.

For more information about living with coyotes or other urban wildlife, please contact the following experts:

- [Audubon Society of Portland](#) - 503-292-6855
- [USDA APHIS Wildlife Services](#) - 503-326-2346 (Portland Office)
- [Wildlife Control Operator Businesses in Oregon](#)

If you would like to talk with a City representative, please call the Citizen Information Center at 503-635-0257.

Wildlife Reporting Form

To report unusual wildlife behavior in Lake Oswego, please complete the [online reporting form](#).

Aggressive animals should be immediately reported to the Lake Oswego Police Department at 911.

Coyotes - Things You Should Know

All of us, at one time or another, are probably going to experience the excitement of seeing a coyote or other urban wildlife. And although such experiences are wonderful and quite memorable, sometimes they can also cause concern.

Coyotes are an extremely adaptable wildlife species that survive well in urban environments, including Lake Oswego.

Why do we have coyotes in Lake Oswego?

Some people believe coyotes live in Lake Oswego because their habitat has been reduced as a result of development, but actually we have created habitat for coyotes by expanding our urban areas. Large rodent populations, accessible garbage and plenty of green spaces are all reasons why coyotes call urban areas home.

What do coyotes look like?

- Large erect ears, narrow muzzles and golden brown eyes
- Bushy tails held down when in motion
- Reddish-yellow, tan or gray general appearance
- Bib-like patch of white fur around lower jaw and neck
- Darker gray and black hairs on upper body and lighter cream-colored undersides
- Coyotes in our region weigh between 25 and 35 pounds
- They often appear heavier due to a thick, double coat of fur

What do they eat?

In rural wild environments, up to 70 percent of a coyote's diet consists of small mammals (mice, rats, rabbits, moles, squirrels, etc.). The remaining 30 percent is a combination of fruits, vegetables, insects, fish, birds, eggs and other available items.

In urban areas coyotes will also eat garbage, yard fruit, and pet food. They will continue to eat small mammals including small domestic pets.

When are coyotes most active?

Coyotes can be active anytime of day or night. An increase in sightings may occur in the spring and summer months. Coyote young are born in the spring and food requirements of nursing females and growing young remain high through late summer.

Conflicts with coyotes in Lake Oswego

Conflicts between people and coyotes in Lake Oswego are very rare. There are hundreds of animal bites reported in Oregon each year, however, none of these bites have been attributed to a coyote (as reported by the Lake Oswego Police Department and Audubon Society).

Do not feed coyotes

Coyotes in the urban environment have an adequate food supply and are capable of surviving in this environment without our help. Feeding coyotes (either directly or indirectly by keeping pet food or garbage accessible) can put yourself, your neighbors and the coyote at risk. A coyote that becomes dependent on humans for food may become too bold around humans and have to be destroyed.

When are coyotes a risk to people?

Although naturally curious, coyotes are usually timid animals and normally run away if challenged. Coyotes can be a risk to people if they have become comfortable around humans, usually as the result of feeding.

It is not normal for coyotes to attack or pursue humans, especially adults; it is a learned response to human behavior. You can discourage coyotes from feeling comfortable around you by responding to their presence and eliminating coyote attractants (food sources) from your yard and neighborhood.

Remove coyote attractants in your area

Coyotes should not feel comfortable around people or their homes. If you see a coyote in your neighborhood, you should do your best to make it feel unwelcome. You can discourage coyotes from hanging around your home by scaring coyotes off your property and by removing coyote attractants, such as:

- Accessible garbage or compost, including fruit that has fallen from trees or shrubs

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- Outdoor pet food and water
- Rodent habitat such as neglected yards, garages or sheds

Work with your neighbors to make sure they have removed attractants as well.

Be prepared

If a coyote is too close to you, be as big, mean and loud as possible:

- Make yourself appear larger (stand up if sitting)
- Wave your arms, throw objects (not food) at the coyote and use your deterrent
- Shout in a deep, loud and aggressive voice
- If the coyote continues to approach, **DO NOT RUN** or turn your back on the coyote.
- Continue to exaggerate the above gestures while maintaining eye contact and moving toward an area of human activity

Keeping our pets safe

If you own a cat: The only way to guarantee your cat's safety is to keep it indoors. Outdoor cats face potential death from cars, diseases, parasites, raccoons and dogs, in addition to coyotes.

If you own a small dog: If you are aware of coyotes in your neighborhood, you can greatly reduce the risk of conflict if you:

- Keep your dog on a short leash when going for a walk
- Supervise your dog when it is off-leash in the yard

Dogs are required to be on a leash in all public areas unless in designated off-leash parks.

Why co-exist with coyotes?

Coyotes play an important role in maintaining healthy ecosystems. The majority of coyotes feed primarily on mice, rats and other rodent pests in Lake Oswego's parks, backyards, cemeteries, and golf courses and open space. They are just one part of our diverse ecosystem.

Eradication and trapping

Eradication programs in North American cities have proven to be expensive failures. While eradication may remove (kill) an individual coyote, if the coyote habitat - habitats that satisfy their need for food and water, a place to rest and sleep, cover for rearing young, and protection from predators - remains, it will be filled by other coyotes.

Cougars

Occasionally, other uncommon wildlife wonder into the city. Most recently, there have been cougar sightings.

If you see a cougar, the Lake Oswego Police Department asks that you call 911 and follow the tips listed below (from the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife):

- Cougars often will retreat if given the opportunity. Leave the animal a way to escape.
- Stay calm and stand your ground.
- Maintain direct eye contact.
- Pick up children, but do so without bending down or turning your back on the cougar.
- Back away slowly.

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- Do not run. Running triggers a chase response in cougars, which could lead to an attack.
- Raise your voice and speak firmly.
- If the cougar seems aggressive, raise your arms to make yourself look larger and clap your hands.
- If in the very unusual event that a cougar attacks you, fight back with rocks, sticks, tools or any items available.

More information on cougars can be found on the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife website, www.dfw.state.or.us/wildlife/living_with/cougars.asp.

Aggressive Coyotes or Other Wildlife

Report aggressive coyotes

If a wild or domestic animal behaves aggressively toward humans it needs to be reported immediately reported to the Lake Oswego Police Department at 911.

The City of Lake Oswego reports patterns of behavior that raise concern and reports of aggressive behavior to the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife. The City consults with ODFW on if action is needed to locate and eliminate a coyote.

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Web Links

[Wildlife Reporting Form](#)

Directions

Lake Oswego, OR
See map: [Google Maps](#)

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