



# Coyote Management Plan

(Administrative Policy)

**City of Palos Verdes Estates**  
Palos Verdes Estates Police Department  
340 Palos Verdes Drive West  
Palos Verdes Estates, California 90274  
310-378-4211

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# **Coyote Management Plan**

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## **Introduction**

The intent of this plan is to provide guidance to the community and City staff for dealing with coyotes in Palos Verdes Estates. These guidelines adhere to federal, state, and county regulations in regards to coyote management. Provisions of this plan maintain the legal rights of Palos Verdes Estates residents, businesses, and/or homeowner's associations in protecting private property relative to coyote management practices. The Management Plan is based on research and best practices that include a full spectrum of tools to effectively respond to coyotes in an urban area.

## **Background**

The City of Palos Verdes Estates does not own or have any control of wild animals found within its boundaries, nor is the City responsible for the actions or damage caused by them. These animals are a common and integral part of our ecosystem, biosphere and the circle of life. The Palos Verdes Estates Police Department is responsible for coordinating animal control in the City of Palos Verdes Estates. The majority of animal control calls received are related to domestic pets. One other element of animal control/management is wildlife; namely coyotes.

In the beginning of 2016, South Bay cities, along with other municipalities in Southern California, began to experience an increase in the number of coyote encounters. These encounters included numerous attacks by coyotes on pets that were off leash and in residential back yards, and an upsurge in sightings in areas populated by people (some were during day light hours). The encounters have created a general sense of fear in Palos Verdes Estates residents and a desire to manage the increased coyote activity in neighborhoods.

Historically, coyotes have existed in Palos Verdes Estates and the South Bay, finding safe haven in our open space. Additionally, it is also believed that the prolonged drought has limited potential food sources for the coyotes and thus has drawn the coyotes to residential neighborhoods in search of food and water.

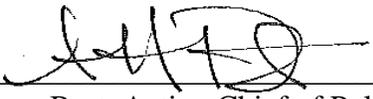
Coyotes are opportunistic, versatile carnivores that primarily eat small mammals, such as rabbits, ground squirrels, and mice, to name a few. Coyotes tend to prefer fresh meat, but will eat significant amounts of fruits and vegetables during the autumn and winter months when their prey is scarce. Part of the coyote's success as a species is its dietary adaptability. This dietary flexibility, coupled with a lack of prey and closer proximity to residents, has led the coyotes to seek alternative food sources, including small pets, pet food, and fallen fruits and vegetables found in the backyards of homes.

Generally, coyotes are reclusive animals who avoid human contact. As coyotes have become urbanized, however, they have realized there are few real threats in suburban environments. This has resulted in coyotes approaching people and even feeling safe visiting yards when people are present. In response to more reports of coyote activity in neighborhoods, City staff researched responses from surrounding communities, reviewed existing Coyote Management Plans, analyzed the Coyote Guidelines from the Humane Society of the United States, and researched coyote ecology to better understand and to enhance our existing Coyote Management Strategy and outreach efforts. This Plan enables the City to manage the amplified presence of coyotes with an emphasis on tracking data, education, hazing, and lastly consider employing lethal means of removal only when the safety of the public is at risk.

The Plan's **Guiding Principles:**

1. Human safety is a priority in managing human-coyote interactions.
2. Coyotes serve an important role in ecosystems by helping control the population of rodents.
3. Preventive practices such as reduction and removal of food attractants, habitat modification and responding appropriately when interacting with wildlife are key to minimizing potential interaction with coyotes.
4. Solutions for coyote conflicts must address both problematic coyote behaviors (such as aggression towards people and attacks on pets) and the problematic human behaviors (intentionally or unintentionally feeding coyotes and leaving pets outside unattended) that contribute to conflicts.
5. Non-selective coyote removal programs are ineffective for reducing coyote population sizes or preventing human-coyote conflicts.
6. A community-wide program that involves residents is necessary for achieving co-existence among people, coyotes and pets.
7. Emphasis of this management plan is placed on preventative measures and nonlethal controls.
8. Palos Verdes Estates management techniques and decisions are based on a thorough understanding of biology and ecology of urban wildlife species.

The suggested actions in the Plan are designed to increase residents' knowledge and understanding of how coyotes behave and make clear how such behavior can be managed to reduce or eliminate conflicts with coyotes. The Plan requires active participation on the part of the entire community including residents, homeowner associations, volunteers, and City staff.

  
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Tony Best, Acting Chief of Police

  
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Anton Dahlerbruch, City Manager

## **Difficulties Managing Wildlife**

Although Palos Verdes Estates places a high value on its wildlife, some species adapted to urban environments have the potential for problems and conflicts in specific situations. In addressing problems, Palos Verdes Estates promotes policies supporting prevention and implementation of remedial measures that do not harm the wildlife or their habitats.

A wildlife problem is defined as any situation that causes a health or safety issue to its residents. In cases where problems with wildlife are associated with human behavior (leaving garbage exposed or intentional wildlife feeding), ordinances and enforcement may be enacted to minimize conflict. In some cases, particular or traditional management tools are ineffective. For example, relocation of animals is not ecologically sound and is not allowed in California without permission from the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW). Generally, relocated animals do not survive the transfer. If they do, they rarely stay in the relocation area and tend to scatter to other locations where they may cause problems, be involved in territory disputes or introduce disease. In some instances, the dispersed wildlife, especially coyotes, will go to great lengths to return to their previous territory or adversely affect residents. For these reasons, the CDFW rarely allows relocation of wildlife.

As a last resort, lethal control measures, when employed, are controversial and non-selective. It is extremely difficult to ensure that problem-causing coyote(s) will be the ones located and killed. Since firearms are usually unsafe to use in urban and suburban areas, traps are generally the method used. Most traps are notoriously indiscriminate, capturing almost any animal that triggers them. Sometimes called "trash" animals by trappers, non-target species that have been found in traps include threatened and endangered species, birds, domestic dogs and cats. These animals can sustain the same injuries as the target species. Even if released, they may perish later from internal injuries or reduced ability to hunt or forage for food. If they are used, traps must be humane and in compliance with federal and state laws.

It is not economically, ecologically or in other ways efficient to attempt to remove all coyotes from the urban ecosystem. Attempts made by local, state and federal agencies as well as private organizations over the past century to eradicate coyotes have proven to be ineffective. Moreover, during the past century coyotes have expanded their territories to include every state except Hawaii.

## The Coyote (*Canis latrans*)

### Where are coyotes from?

Coyotes are originally native to California and several other western states. Due to their intelligence, adaptability, the decline of larger animals and urban sprawl, coyotes have successfully expanded their range. They are now found in all states except Hawaii and have successfully established themselves in every urban ecosystem across North America.

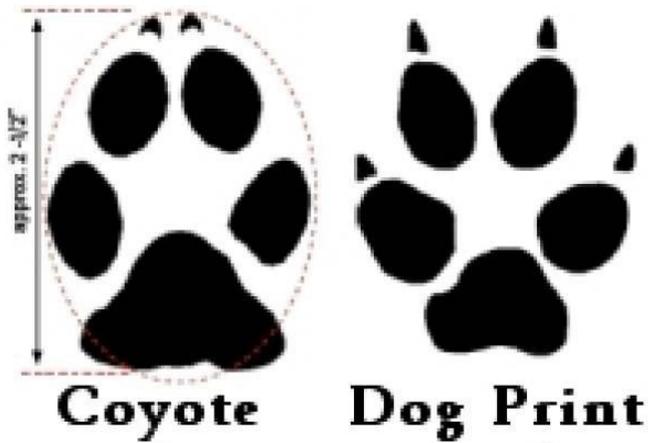


**What do coyotes look like?**

On the upper parts of their body, coyote pelts vary from gray-brown to yellow-gray. Their backs have tawny-colored under fur and long overcoats with black-tipped guardhairs. The latter forms a dorsal stripe and dark band over their shoulders. Throat and bellies tend to be buff or white. Forelegs, sides of the head, muzzle and feet are reddish brown. Coyotes have long legs, small paws, large pointed ears and a pointed snout. Weighing between 15 to 40 pounds, their long legs and thick fur make them appear larger.

**How do you know where coyotes are?**

If you do not directly see a coyote, you may notice paw prints or scat (feces) left behind or may even hear them. Their prints are similar to dogs and difficult to tell apart. However, unlike dogs, their scat is rope-like and typically filled with hair, seeds and bones. Coyotes use scat to communicate and often deposit it in the middle of a trail or edge of their territory where it is easily seen. Coyotes howl, bark or whine – usually to communicate with each other.



**How and where do coyotes live?**

Coyotes may live alone, in pairs, or in family groups with one breeding pair, generally mating once a year, usually January through February. Social organization and group size are highly correlated with food availability. The rest of the group is comprised of multiple generations of offspring. Pups are born March through May. The entire group protects the pups though pup mortality averages between 50 and 70% in the first year. Litter size depends on available resources and the number of coyotes in the area.

Although a litter varies from two to 12 pups, the average is six or seven. Pups remain in the den the first six weeks and then travel with the adults. By the end of summer; they are more independent, yet, may still travel with parents and siblings.



Because coyotes are socially organized, the group raises the young and defends their territory from other coyotes. Territories do not overlap. Although they generally live in groups, coyotes often travel alone or in pairs.

In the urban areas, most coyotes live in large parks, golf courses, greenways and natural open space where they find food and cover. Thus, their territory may follow the park or open space boundaries. They are extremely adaptable in creating territories under a wide range of urban conditions.

### **What role do coyotes play in the environment?**

Coyotes play an important role in the urban ecosystem. They are predators of geese eggs, squirrels, mice, rabbits, rats, gophers and other small animals. Rodents make up a majority of their diet.

### **How do humans perceive coyotes?**

People respond to coyotes in various ways. Some observe them with enjoyment, others with indifference and some with fear or concern. Personal experiences with coyotes may influence their perceptions. Experiences range from animal sightings without incident to stalking, killing of pets or, at the extreme, an attack on a person.

Because wild animals conjure up fear, actual sightings and perceptions may become exaggerated or misconstrued (see Appendix A for description of types of coyote encounters). The wide range in perceptions of urban coyotes from Palos Verdes Estates residents supports the need for strong and consistent educational messages to clarify management techniques.

### **How do humans affect coyote behavior?**

Cities may support larger populations of animals in close proximity to people for the following reasons:

1. Increased access to food. People provide easy access to large supplies of food by leaving pet food, bird seed, unsecure compost or trash and fallen fruits in yards. Unintentional and intentional feeding of coyotes may encourage bold behavior and increase aggression towards people and pets. Intentional feeding can lead coyotes to see people as a source of food.
2. Increased access to water. Year round water supplies in cities from man-made ponds, lakes, irrigation, pet water dishes, etc. increase water for prey animals and coyotes.
3. Increased potential shelter. Parks, open spaces, golf course buildings, vehicles, sheds, decks, crawl spaces, among others increase the amount and variability of coyote shelters. They can safely and easily remain close to people, pets, homes and businesses without detection.
4. Increased exposure to pets. Pets are a normal part of an urban landscape and to urban coyotes, they are considered other animals in their habitats. Pets can be considered potential prey or a potential competitor in coyote territory.

While human attacks are very rare, urban landscape development, habituation through intentional and unintentional feeding, pet related incidents and media attention have led some urban residents to fear coyotes. Steps must be taken to address safety concerns, misconceptions, and to provide appropriate responses to potential threats to human safety. It is important to keep in mind that coyotes have been in and around Los Angeles (and other parts of Southern California), interacting with and being seen by people, for as long as the city has existed.

### **Have coyote numbers increased in Palos Verdes Estates?**

Since the Spring of 2016, reported coyote activities have averaged 4-6 per month, with the majority of them being sightings. It is difficult to exactly know the number of coyotes in the area, since many go unreported. In addition, it is expensive and difficult to track coyotes given their relatively short life span and migratory habits. A single coyote covering a relatively large territorial area may be seen three or four times in a 24 hour period giving the impression that there are a larger number of coyotes.

What is known is that coyotes can become habituated if they are intentionally or unintentionally fed, which can lead to bolder behavior when coyotes lose their fear of people. Coyotes, like all predators, will stabilize their populations if they are not constantly exploited. In general, coyotes regularly roam an area of about

2-5 square miles or whatever it takes to get enough food for the pack members. Normally, each coyote family group is territorial and varies in number from 3 to 10 individuals. A portion of the area the family inhabits is the pack's territory, which they defend from other coyotes. The number of mature coyotes in the family is linked to the amount of food resources in the territory. The family system keeps coyotes from getting too numerous because the families defend the area they need to survive.

A coyote family usually has one breeding (or alpha) female. This female produces more pups than are ultimately wanted in the family. Young coyotes may leave the family at about 9-11 months of age but dispersal patterns are highly variable. These coyotes become transients. Other types of transients include older individuals that can no longer defend their role as upper level family members and leave the family.

Transients move all over in narrow undefended zones that exist between territories searching for an open habitat to occupy or group to join. They often die before they succeed (many are hit by cars). It is largely because of these transients, that coyote eradication programs are unsuccessful.

Removing a group of territorial coyotes will create an undefended area into which the transient coyotes will flow. At all times of the year, numbers of transients are immediately available to replenish any voids created by killing the resident coyotes. Further, if either the alpha male or alpha female in a pack is killed, that may result in ovulation in other breeding-age females in the family and an increase in the number of litters as well as the number of pups per litter.

## **Coyote Management Strategy**

The city's strategy for managing coyotes is based on balancing respect and protection for wildlife and their habitats without compromising public safety. The main strategy is based on four key areas to support coexistence with urban coyotes using tracking data, education, behavior modification, and a response plan. This plan requires active participation on the part of the entire community including residents, homeowners associations, businesses, volunteers and the Palos Verdes Estates Police Department.

### **Tracking Data**

The police departments encourages its residents to report coyote activity and provide detailed information about the coyote and its behavior. Monitoring and data collection are critical components of an effective coyote management plan. This information allows the police department to better monitor human-coyote interactions and to identify human-coyote hotspots. Gathering specific data on incidents will allow for targeted educational campaigns and conflict mitigation efforts, as well as the ability to measure success in reducing conflicts over time.

Reports of coyote activity can be made by:

- Calling the Palos Verdes Estates Police Department at 310-378-4211
- Email: [PDSe@pvestates.org](mailto:PDSe@pvestates.org)
- Website: Peninsula Cities Coyote Sighting Report website:  
<http://cityofrpv.maps.arcgis.com/apps/GeoForm/index.html?appid=819077a4e67f4e5dbc0c79a3d4004760>
- Mobile Phone Application: Palos Verdes Estates PD
- For emergencies call 9-1-1

After a report is received, a member of the Palos Verdes Estates Police Department will contact you to follow-up and/or to provide additional information and resources.

### **Education**

Education is the key to having residents make appropriate decisions regarding their safety or managing their property and pets. This involves decreasing attractants, increasing pet safety and creating reasonable expectations of normal coyote behavior. In addition, it is equally important to educate the public on the fact that coyotes are indigenous to the area and play an important role in the ecosystem.

Learning how to respond to a coyote encounter empowers residents and supports reshaping undesired coyote behavior. The public should understand what normal coyote behavior is when living in close proximity with coyotes. Education and outreach includes:

- a) Understanding human safety, pet safety, coyote attractants, deterrents to coyotes on private property, including appropriate fencing, “what to/and not to do” tips, and information on appropriate hazing techniques.
- b) Dissemination of information to residents, businesses, and schools through the City’s website, media, flyers, handouts, and police department’s volunteer programs.
- c) Partnering with agencies like the California Department of Fish and Wildlife and the Los Angeles County Department of Agriculture to provide public education material, programs and expertise.

### **Coyote attractants in urban areas**

While attacks on humans are very rare, urban landscape development, habituation through intentional and unintentional feeding, pet related incidents, and media attention have led some urban residents to fear coyotes. It is important to note that attacks on free-roaming and unattended small pets are normal coyote behavior and do not necessarily indicate a danger for people.

Coyotes usually become habituated when they learn and associate people and/or neighborhoods with sources of food. We reinforce this behavior by not reacting appropriately when we see a coyote. Steps must be taken to address safety concerns and misconceptions and to ensure appropriate responses to potential threats to human safety. It is important to keep in mind that coyotes have been in and around Palos Verdes Estates (and other parts of Southern California), for a very long time.

Coyotes are drawn to urban and suburban areas for the following reasons:

1. **Food** – Urban areas provide a bounty of natural food choices for coyotes that primarily eat rodents such as mice and rats. However, coyotes can be further attracted into suburban neighborhoods by human-associated food such as pet food, unsecured compost or trash, and fallen fruit in yards. Intentional and unintentional feeding can lead coyotes to associate humans with sources of food, which can result in negative interactions among coyotes, people and pets. To reduce food attractants in urban and suburban areas:
  - a) Never hand-feed or otherwise deliberately feed a coyote.
  - b) Avoid feeding pets outside. Remove sources of pet food and water. If feeding pets outside is necessary, remove the bowl and any leftover food promptly.
  - c) Never compost any meat or dairy (unless the compost is fully secured).
  - d) Maintain good housekeeping, such as regularly raking areas around bird feeders, to help discourage coyote activity near residences.
  - e) Remove fallen fruit from the ground.

- f) Keep trash in high-quality containers with tight-fitting lids. Only place the cans curbside the morning of collection. If left out overnight, trashcans are more likely to be tipped over and broken into.
  - g) Bag especially attractive food waste such as meat scraps or leftover pet food before discarding.
2. **Water** – Urban areas provide a year-round supply of water in the form of storm water impoundments and channels, artificial lakes, irrigation, pet water dishes, etc., which support both coyotes and their prey. In dry conditions, water can be as alluring as food, so remove water bowls set outside for pets and make watering cans unavailable.
3. **Access to Shelter** – Parks, greenbelts, open spaces, sumps, golf courses, buildings, sheds, decks and crawl spaces, etc., increase the amount and variability of cover for coyotes. They allow coyotes to safely and easily remain close to people, pets, homes and businesses without detection. In the spring, when coyotes give birth and begin to raise their young, they concentrate their activities around dens or burrows in which their young are sheltered. Coyotes may take advantage of available spaces under sheds or decks for use as a den, bringing them into close contact with people and pets.
4. **Unattended Pets** – Coyotes primarily eat small mammals such as mice and rats, but will also prey on slightly larger mammals such as rabbits and groundhogs. Animals that are approximately the same size as a groundhog or rabbit, unattended outdoor pets, especially cats and small dogs, may attract coyotes into neighborhoods.
- a) The best way to minimize risk to pets from coyotes (and the other dangers of outdoor life such as cars, disease, dogs and other wildlife) is to keep small pets indoors (or only let them outside in a secure enclosure or when accompanied by a person and under the control of a leash and harness).
  - b) It is important to either keep dogs on a leash six feet long or shorter when outdoors or to stay within six feet of them when outside. (Coyotes may view a dog on a leash longer than six feet as an unattended pet.) Attacks on free-roaming small cats or dogs are normal coyote behavior and do not indicate a danger for people. A free-roaming pet is considered an unattended domestic pet outside of its enclosed yard or area.
  - c) Although attacks on larger dogs are rare, coyotes will sometimes go after a large dog when they feel that their territory is threatened.

This generally occurs during the coyote breeding season, which takes place from January through March. During this time, it is especially important not to let dogs outside unattended and to keep them on leashes (six feet long or less) when in public areas.

Other domestic animals kept outside, such as rabbits, may also be viewed as prey by coyotes. Protect outdoor animals from coyotes (and other predators) with protective fencing, by ensuring that they are confined in sturdy cages each evening.

Residents are encouraged to use the Yard Audit Checklist (Appendix D) as a tool to help recognize and remove attractants in their yards and neighborhoods.

### **Behavior Modification (Hazing)**

Some coyotes have become too comfortable in the close proximity of people. To safely coexist, it is important to modify this behavior and attitude in resident coyote populations. Habituated coyote behavior needs to be reshaped to encourage coyotes to avoid contact with humans and pets.

Hazing – also known as “fear conditioning” is the process that facilitates this change and is by necessity a community response to negative encounters with coyotes. The more often an individual animal is hazed, the more effective hazing is in changing coyote behavior.

Hazing employs immediate use of deterrents to move an animal out of an area or discourage undesirable behavior or activity. Deterrents include loud noises, spraying water, bright lights, throwing objects, and shouting. Hazing can help maintain a coyote’s fear of humans and discourage them from neighborhoods such as backyards and play areas. Hazing does not harm or damage animals, humans or property.

Police Department personnel who are trained in basic and advanced hazing techniques are available to provide proactive hazing teams.

Behavioral change also involves human activities such as how to identify and remove attractants and how to responsibly protect pets.

### **Foundation of Hazing**

- a) It is not economically, ecologically or in other ways efficient to try and eradicate coyotes from the urban ecosystem.
- b) Hazing is one piece of a long-term plan in creating safe and acceptable living situations, increase understanding and reduce conflict between coyotes and people.

## **Goals of Hazing**

- a) To reshape coyote behavior to avoid human contact in an urban setting. Human behavior can shape animal behavior, in either a negative or positive manner. People living in close proximity to coyotes can remove coyote attractants, identify potentially dangerous situations for their pets and themselves, and respond in a manner designed to change coyote behavior.
- b) To provide residents information and tools to actively engage in reshaping coyote behavior and to support feeling safe in their parks and neighborhoods. This can be accomplished by teaching residents hazing techniques.
- c) To model hazing behavior and share accurate information about coyotes among other residents, friends and family.
- d) Monitor hazing to assess its effectiveness and determine if further action or more aggressive hazing is needed.
- e) Develop long-term community based hazing programs.

## **General Considerations**

1. Levels of hazing need to be appropriately relevant to coyote activity.
  - a) Coyotes live in open spaces and the best practice is to leave them alone and educate the public on personal safety.
  - b) Coyotes are often out late at night when few people are present. This is normal acceptable behavior. Hazing may not be necessary.
  - c) Exceptions: In early stages of hazing, programs should still engage animals. Coyotes that associate danger in the presence of people under all circumstances will be reinforced to avoid contact.
2. Hazing must be more exaggerated, aggressive and consistent when first beginning a program of hazing. As coyotes “learn” appropriate responses to hazing, it will take less effort from hazers. Early in the process, it is extremely common for coyotes not to respond to hazing techniques. Without a history of hazing, they do not have the relevant context to respond in the desired outcome (to leave).
3. Techniques and tools can be used in the same manner for one or multiple coyotes. Usually there is a dominant coyote in a group who will respond – others will follow its lead. DO NOT ignore, turn your back or avoid hazing because there are multiple coyotes instead of a single individual.
4. The more often an individual coyote is hazed by a variety of tools and techniques and a variety of people, the more effective hazing will be in changing that animal’s future behavior.
5. Hazing must be directly associated with the person involved in the hazing actions. The coyote must be aware of where the potential threat is coming

from and identify the person.

6. Coyotes can and do recognize individual people and animals in their territories. They can learn to avoid or harass specific individuals in response to behavior of the person and/or pet.
7. Coyotes can be routine in habit. Identifying their normal habits can help target which habits to change. For example, the coyote patrols the same bike path at the same time in the morning three to five days a week. Hazers should concentrate on that time and place to encourage the animal to adapt its routine to decrease contact with people.
8. Certain levels of hazing must always be maintained so that future generations of coyotes do not learn or return to unacceptable habits related to habituation to people.
9. Human behavior must change to support hazing and continued identification and, if necessary, remove possible attractants.
10. Education about exclusion techniques including how to identify and remove attractants, personal responsibility in pet safety and having reasonable expectations are critical parts of a coyote hazing plan.
11. Coyotes are skittish by nature. Habituated behavior is learned and reinforced by human behavior. Coyotes as a rule DO NOT act aggressively towards aggressive people. The one exception is a sick or injured animal. Engaging a sick or injured animal can result in unpredictable behavior. If this is suspected, people should not engage and remove themselves from the situation, then immediately contact the Palos Verdes Estates Police Department at 310-378-4211.
12. Individuals involved in hazing need to be trained in explaining hazing to residents who witness the process. They also need to explain the difference between hazing and harassment of wildlife and goals of appropriate behavior for coexistence.

### **Training Program**

Because coexisting with wildlife involves the community, initiating the hazing training programs and hazing activities by volunteers must be supervised by experts. Without this support, the programs will ultimately fail. Information should include basic training on background, coyote ecology information, overview of hazing, and examples of techniques. Materials should be provided such as handouts, contact information and resources when questions, comments and concerns come up relating to coyotes.

Volunteers need to learn about coyote behavior and be aware of realistic expectations, understanding normal versus abnormal coyote behavior and having a consistent response to residents' concerns and comments.

Behavioral change and hazing includes the following:

- a) Pet owners need to protect pets. Off-leash, unattended, and free-roaming cats and dogs attract coyotes (as well as pet food).
- b) Residents need to learn hazing effectiveness and techniques. A hazing program must be instituted and maintained on a regular basis.
- c) Hazing needs to be active for a sustained period of time to achieve the desired change for the highest possible long-term success.
- d) Hazing requires monitoring to assess its effectiveness and to determine if further action or more aggressive hazing is needed.

### **Public hazing training**

Hazing requires, by necessity, community involvement, understanding, and support. Residents are best equipped to respond consistently and at the most opportune times in their own neighborhoods, parks and open spaces.

1. Locations of trainings offered shall be based on data accumulated from the public on coyote activity in specific neighborhoods, parks or open space or proactively when requested by neighborhood community or volunteer groups.
2. Trainings are free to the public.
3. Topics to be covered include but are not limited to:
  - a) Basic coyote information
  - b) Discussion on why coyotes are in the City
  - c) Normal and abnormal coyote behavior
  - d) Seasonal behavior changes-breeding season, pups, denning behavior
  - e) Reality of dangers towards people vs. danger towards pets
  - f) Children and coyotes
  - g) How human behavior influences coyote behavior
  - h) Attractants
  - i) Tips on deterring animals from entering private property
  - j) Appropriate response when encountering a coyote
  - k) What is hazing, goals, how to engage
  - l) Appropriate hazing techniques and tools
  - m) Pet safety tips
4. Updates, additional coyote information, electronic flyers and handouts distributed to participants. Information is encouraged to be passed on to others.
5. Participants will be notified of "hot spots" and asked to haze in the area.
6. Ask for feedback on hazing training and use of hazing techniques.
7. Participants must email detailed accounts of encounters and hazing (Hazing interaction reports) to volunteer hazers for evaluation of program,

progress, successful tools and techniques being used, techniques and tools needed.

- a) Date, location, time of day, number of coyotes
- b) Initial coyote behavior, hazing behavior, coyote response
- c) Effectiveness ratings
- d) Tools and techniques used
- e) Additional details/comments

### **Response Plan**

A response plan has been developed and used to provide a mechanism for identifying and classifying different levels of human and coyote interactions. This plan allows the PVEPD to classify the coyote behavior and determine the most appropriate response.

Definitions of coyote encounters are listed in Appendix A. Appendix B provides a chart detailing coyote behavior, behavior classification, and recommended responses.

In some instances, and only as a last resort, trapping is required. In these cases, the police department will consult with other agencies such as the Los Angeles County Department of Agriculture (LACDA) and/or the California Department of Fish and Wildlife to determine if the offending animal has become a public safety issue. If a trapping plan is instituted and a coyote(s) is caught, it must be euthanized per California State Law.

Documentation will be kept and reviewed periodically to make sure everything has been done to save the animal before a decision is made to remove it.

Since coyotes are considered “non-game wildlife” any resident or Homeowner’s Association Board of Directors can initiate, at their own expense, action to protect themselves and their **private property** from coyote attacks.

### **Threat Level Tiered Response**

**Level Green:** Behavior – A coyote is seen or heard in an area. Sighting may be during the day or night. Coyote may be seen moving through the area.

- Response – Education and hazing needed.

**Level Yellow:** Behavior – A coyote appears to frequently associate with humans or human related food sources, and exhibits little wariness of human presence. Coyote is seen during the day resting or continuously moving through an area frequented by people.

- Response – Education and aggressive hazing needed, volunteer hazing team created, and yard audits.

**Level Orange:** Behavior – A coyote is involved in an incident where there is an

attended or unattended domestic animal loss; or a coyote biting or injuring an unattended pet on a leash of 6' or less. Several level orange incidents in the same general area may indicate the presence of a habituated coyote(s).

- Response – Education and aggressive hazing needed, volunteer hazing team created, and public awareness of incident(s) and circumstances discussed. Consult with CDFW/LACDA. If multiple level orange incidents have occurred in the same vicinity within a short amount of time, lethal removal may be considered.

Level Red: Behavior – A coyote that has been involved in an investigated and documented provoked or unprovoked close encounter or attack on humans; or a coyote biting or injuring an attended pet on a leash of 6' or less.

- Response – Consult with CDFW/LACDA. Palos Verdes Estates Police Department may contract work out to lethally remove the responsible coyote(s) after a thorough investigation of the incident(s). If there is a bite on a human, upon notification, CDFW will identify and remove the offending animal(s) after a complete and thorough investigation.

### **Incident Defined**

An incident is described as a conflict between a human and a coyote where the coyote exhibits the following behavior: coyote approaches a human and growls, bares teeth, or lunges; injures or kills an escorted/on-leash pet. This includes attended pet loss, but not human injury. When human injury occurs, it is defined as an “attack.” The California Department of Fish and Game will investigate the incident if a human is physically injured.

### **Circumstances determine the response**

If an attack is unprovoked indicating a continued threat to human safety, the Palos Verdes Estates Police Department will determine a course of action and consulting with CDFW/LACDA, potentially including a permit for trapping. The Palos Verdes Estates Police Department will not engage in any attempts of general culling. Only specific animals will be targeted.

In a provoked attack, the Palos Verdes Estates Police Department will determine if circumstances, consult with CDFW/LACDA, and indicate a continued threat to human safety. The Palos Verdes Estates Police Department will determine initial response which may range from targeted education up to lethal removal of the involved animal.

Continued response will depend on specific details of the attack. The level of threat to human safety will determine if continued action is needed. Continued activity may include increased educational materials such as flyers, mailers or press releases, public meetings, and/or potentially applying for a trapping permit.

If snares are determined to be necessary, the Palos Verdes Estates Police Department will coordinate with the contract trappers and advise the California Department of Fish and Wildlife on location, duration and details of trapping attempts.

Trapping will generally not extend beyond one month except in extenuating circumstances.

If there is immediate danger that requires shooting, the Palos Verdes Estates Police Department will respond. No private individual will be authorized to discharge a firearm within the City of Palos Verdes Estates.

If a coyote is lethally removed, the Palos Verdes Estates Police Department and CDFW/LACDA will evaluate and determine what educational measures and hazing techniques need to be modified in order to decrease any reoccurrence.

## **Additional Information**

### **Feeding Coyotes**

The act of feeding wildlife is known to lead to an increase in wildlife activity. Feeding can attract coyotes and their prey to an area leading to an increased likelihood of creating a habituated coyote(s) resulting in increases in coyote and human interactions. California law prohibits feeding wildlife. The Palos Verdes Estates Police Department will strictly enforce the State law(s) pertaining to this activity.

### **CALIFORNIA CODE OF REGULATIONS TITLE 14**

#### **§251.1 – Harassment of Animals**

Except as otherwise authorized in these regulations or in the Fish & Game Code, no person shall harass, herd or drive any game or nongame bird or mammal or furbearing mammal. For the purposes of this section, harass is defined as an intentional act which disrupts an animal's normal behavior patterns, which includes, but is not limited to, breeding, feeding or sheltering.

### **Other information on local agencies**

The Los Angeles County Animal Control and Care will only respond to injured/dead coyotes and will not respond to assist with coyote management.

The Los Angeles County Department of Agriculture (LACDA) manages the County's coyote population for unincorporated areas of the County and cities that contract for Predatory Animal Services. This service is not available to the City of Palos Verdes Estates. Although the LACDA does not trap in the City, they will provide educational resources, training, and limited fieldwork upon request.

The California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) manages to State's fish and wildlife programs. In addition, they provide education and resources to assist with wildlife issues. CDFW will provide training and support for the police department's Wildlife Watch Program.

Additional Resources can be found on the City's website at [www.pvestates.org](http://www.pvestates.org) under the Police Department tab.

## Appendix A

### Definitions of Encounters with Coyotes

**Active coexistence:** Humans and coyotes exist together. Communities decide on community space, such as open spaces, where coyotes are appropriate and do not haze, feed, or interact with them in these areas. Humans take an active role in keeping coyotes wild by learning about coyote ecology and behavior, removing attractants, taking responsibility for pet safety, and hazing coyotes in neighborhood or community spaces (except for predetermined coyote appropriate areas).

**Attack:** – A human is injured or killed by a coyote.

**Provoked** - A human-provoked attack or incident where the human involved encourages the coyote to engage. Examples include dog off-leash in an on-leash area; dog on leash longer than 6' in length, or a human intentionally approaches or feeds the coyote.

**Unprovoked** - An unprovoked attack or incident where the human involved does not encourage the coyote to engage.

#### **Pet Attack:**

**Attended animal loss or injury** - When a person is within 6' of the pet and the pet is on leash and is attacked and injured by a coyote.

**Domestic animal loss or injury** - A coyote injures or kills a pet. Also includes "depredation" - predation on domestic pets. Free-roaming animal loss or injury is normal behavior for a coyote.

**Encounter:** An unexpected, direct meeting between a human and a coyote that is without incident.

#### **Feeding:**

**Intentional feeding** - A resident or business actively and intentionally feeds coyotes including intentionally leaving food out for animals in the coyote food chain.

**Unintentional feeding** - A resident or business is unintentionally providing access to food. Examples such as accessible compost, fallen fruit from trees, left open sheds and doors, pet food left outdoors, among others.

**Unintentional feeding** – bird feeders: A resident or business with bird feeders that may provide food for coyotes, e.g. birds, bird food, rodents, squirrels. Birdfeeders must be kept high enough from the ground so a coyote is unable to reach the feeding animals. The area under the bird feeder must be kept clean and free of residual bird food.

**Hazing:** Training method that employs immediate use of deterrents to move an animal out of an area or discourage an undesirable behavior or activity. Hazing techniques include loud noises, spraying water, bright lights, throwing objects, and shouting. Hazing can help maintain a coyote's fear of humans and deter them from neighborhood spaces such as backyards and play spaces. Hazing does not damage animals, humans or property.

**Threat Incident:** A conflict between a human and a coyote where the coyote exhibits the following behavior: approaches a human and growls, bares teeth, or lunges; injures or kills an attended domestic animal. A human is not injured.

**Stalking Incident:** A conflict between a human and a coyote where the coyote exhibits the following behavior: follows a person with or without an attended pet on leash. A human is not injured.

**Observation:** The act of noticing or taking note of tracks, scat or vocalizations.

**Sighting:** A visual observation of a coyote(s). A sighting may occur at any time of the day or night.

**Unsecured Trash:** Trash that is accessible to wildlife, e.g. individual garbage cans, bags or uncovered or open dumpsters or trashcans over-flowing or where trash scattered is outside the receptacle.

## Appendix B

### Coyote Behavior, Behavior Classification and Recommended Response

Coyote Action	Classification	Response
Coyote heard	Level Green	Provide educational materials and info on normal coyote behavior
Coyote seen moving in area	Level Green	Provide education materials and info on normal coyote behavior
Coyote seen resting in area	Level Green	Educate on hazing techniques, what to do tips
Coyote seen resting in a public area with people present	Level Yellow	If area frequented by people, educate on normal behavior and haze to encourage coyote to leave. Look for and eliminate attractants.
Coyote entering a yard to a home without pets	Level Yellow	Educate on coyote attractants, yard audit, provide hazing info
Coyote entering a yard to a home with pets	Level Yellow	Educate on coyote attractants, yard audit, hazing info, pet safety
Coyote entering a yard to a home and injuring or killing attended or unattended pet	Level Orange	Develop hazing team in area, gather info on specific animals involved, report on circumstances, educate on coyote attractants, yard and neighborhood audits, and pet safety. Consult with CDFW/LACDA-Lethal removal may be considered.
Coyote biting or injuring unattended pet/pet on leash longer than 6'	Level Orange	Gather info on specific animals involved, report circumstances, educate on coyote attractants, yard/neighborhood audits, hazing, and pet safety. Consult with CDFW/LACDA-Lethal removal may be considered.
Coyote following or approaching a person w/o pet (Stalking)	Level Red	Educate on hazing techniques and what to do tips. Consult with CDFW/LACDA-Lethal removal may be considered.
Coyote following or approaching a person & pet (Stalking)	Level Red	Educate on hazing techniques and what to do tips and pet safety. Consult with CDFW/LACDA-Lethal removal may be considered.
Coyote entering yard or home with people & pets, no injury occurring	Level Red	Gather info on specific animals involved, document circumstances, educate on coyote attractants, yard/neighborhood audits, hazing, pet safety. Consult with CDFW/LACDA-Lethal removal will be considered.
Coyote biting or injuring attended pet / pet on leash 6' or less	Level Red	Gather info on specific animals involved, document circumstances, educate on coyote attractants, yard/neighborhood audits, hazing, pet safety. Consult with CDFW/LACDA-Lethal removal will be considered.
Coyote aggressive, showing teeth, back fur raised, lunging, nipping w/o contact with or w/o pets	Level Red	Gather info on specific animals involved, report circumstances, educate on coyote attractants, yard/neighborhood audits, aggressive hazing, pet safety. Consult with CDFW/LACDA-Lethal removal recommended.
Coyote biting or injuring person	Level Red	Identify and gather information on specific animal involved, report circumstances, educate on coyote attractants, yard/neighborhood audits, hazing, and pet safety. City staff will immediately inform the California Department of Fish and Wildlife. Lethal removal recommended.

## Appendix C

### Overview of Hazing

Human behavior can shape animal behavior, in either a negative or positive manner. People living in close proximity to coyotes can remove coyote attractants, identify potentially dangerous situations for their pets and themselves, and respond in a manner designed to change coyote behavior.

**Hazing is a process** whereby individuals and volunteers respond in like manner to make a coyote uncomfortable and choose to leave a situation where their presence is unwanted.

**Basic hazing** consists of standing your ground, never ignoring or turning your back to a coyote(s), yelling and making unpleasant and frightening noises until the animal(s) choose to leave.

**More aggressive hazing** consists of approaching an animal quickly and aggressively, throwing projectiles, spraying with a hose or water gun, and the strategic safe use of paintball guns, all of which are used for creating fear of contact so the animal leaves the situation.

**Hazing must continue once it begins until the animal leaves**, otherwise, the coyote will learn to “wait” until the person gives up. Not following through with hazing will create an animal more resistant to hazing instead of reinforcing the image that “people are scary.”

**Hazing should never injure the animal.** An injured animal becomes less predictable versus a normal, healthy one who responds in a consistent and predictable manner to hazing.

**Hazing should be conducted in a manner that allows the coyote to return to its normal habitat** in a direction that would minimize harm to the animal. Hazing the animal in the direction of other houses and busy streets should be avoided.

**Hazing uses a variety of different hazing tools.** This is critical as coyotes get used to individual items and sounds.

- Noisemaker: Voice, whistles, air horns, bells, “shaker” cans, pots, pie pans
- Projectiles: sticks, small rocks, cans, tennis balls, rubber balls
- Deterrents: hoses, spray bottles with vinegar, pepper spray, bear repellent, walking sticks

A common concern with hazing involves potential danger to the hazer. A coyote's basic nature is very skittish and the nature of the species is what makes this technique successful. A normal, healthy coyote will not escalate a situation with an aggressive person. Hazing is NOT successful with every species of wild animal because different types of animals have different traits.

## Appendix D



### Palos Verdes Estates Police Department

340 Palos Verdes Drive West, Palos Verdes Estates, CA 90274 (310)378-4211 www.pvestates.org



### HOME & YARD CHECKLIST FOR COYOTE ATTRACTANTS

Complete the checklist to identify areas on your property that may need improvements to reduce Coyote populations in your area; improve any condition for which you answer "Yes." Take steps toward eliminating attractants on your property in order to minimize conflicts with Coyotes. Share this information with your friends and neighbors because minimizing conflicts is most effective when the entire neighborhood works together.

*Report Coyote sightings to the Palos Verdes Estates Police Department at 310-378-4211*

COMMON ATTRACTANTS	Yes	No	CONDITIONS OR HABITS THAT MAY ATTRACTION COYOTES
<b>FOOD SOURCES</b>			
Never hand-feed or intentionally feed a coyote!			
Pet Food	Circle one		Do you feed your pet outside or leave pet food outside unattended? Do you leave dog treats or bones out?
	Yes	No	
Water Sources	Yes	No	Do you have pet water bowls or unnecessary water sources on your property, or fish ponds without nets covering the water?
Bird Feeders	Yes	No	Do you have bird feeders with fallen seed on the ground which could attract bird for Coyotes to prey on?
Fallen Fruit	Yes	No	Do you have fallen fruit around trees that can be a food source?
Compost	Yes	No	Do you include meat or dairy products within compost contents that could attract or feed Coyotes? Other food attractants?
BBQ Grills	Yes	No	Is your barbeque grill uncleaned with food or wrappers left out?
Trash	Yes	No	Do you leave your trash containers out? With lids open? (Periodically clean cans to reduce residual food or trash odors)
<b>LANDSCAPING</b>			
Trim vegetation to reduce hiding places and potential denning sites.			
Structures and Out Buildings	Yes	No	Do you have an access space under a house, deck or shed, or around woodpiles, or any other structure that can provide cover or denning sites for Coyotes or their prey?
<b>FENCING</b>			
Enclose property with an 6-foot fence to deter Coyotes from entering your yard. Ensure that there are no gaps, and that the bottom of the fence extends underground 6 inches or is fitted with a metal mesh apron to deter Coyotes from digging underneath.			
Fencing Around Yards	Yes	No	Do low fences, walls, or gates enable Coyotes to enter your yard?
Gates	Yes	No	Do you leave gates open through which a Coyote can enter your yard?
<b>PETS</b>			
Never leave pets unattended outside			
Pet/Coyote Interaction	Yes	No	Do you permit your pets to "play" or interact with Coyotes?
Kennels	Yes	No	Do you have an outdoor pet kennel that is not fully enclosed?
Walking Pets on Leash	Yes	No	Do you sometimes walk your pet on a long leash or no leash? (Pets can be snatched by Coyotes if not watched, on a short leash)
Animal Waste	Yes	No	At home, do you sometimes or often fail to clean up after your pet or leave animal waste in your yard? (Coyotes are attracted to areas where animal waste is present because of the potential food source of the waste producing animal.)

Rev. 5-16

We encourage you to take steps to eliminate attractants on your property in order to minimize conflicts with coyotes. We also urge you to share this information with friends and neighbors because minimizing conflicts is most effective when the entire neighborhood works together.