

TOWARD A BETTER UNDERSTANDING OF COYOTES

APPEARANCE

1. The coyote is a canine native of North America.
2. It is smaller than a wolf but taller and larger than a fox. Coyotes are about the size of a medium-sized dog.
3. The adult coyote weighs 20-50 pounds and stands 2 feet tall. (These measurements are approximate.)
4. They have elongated snouts, lean bodies, yellow eyes, bushy tails and thick fur. The fur may be gray, white, tan or brown, depending on where they live. Coyotes that live in the mountains have darker coats.
5. They're quick creatures and can run up to 40 miles per hour.

HABITS

1. Coyotes howl and yip primarily to communicate with each other and to establish territory. They may bark if defending their den or an animal they have killed.
2. Coyotes usually travel and hunt alone or in loose pairs. When hunting deer, however, they use teamwork and form packs.
3. These animals live in family units.
4. Coyotes tend to be nocturnal (sleeping during the day), but they may be active in early morning or at sunset.
5. Coyotes are omnivores (meat and vegetable-eating). They consume smaller mammals, especially rodents and fawns; birds; livestock; small pets; fruits and vegetables; carrion and garbage.
6. Their territory typically ranges from 8 miles for females to 40 miles for males. **Note:** If the pack relies on a natural diet, its numbers tend to be smaller. If fed by humans, the size can be considerably larger. Therefore, please do not feed them or leave food out where they can see it.
7. A coyote's life span is about 12 years.
8. They will defend their dens. Their dens are typically well-hidden. In the unlikely event you come close to a den, walk away as slowly and calmly as possible but without turning your back on the coyote, Using loud noises as described in the next section is not advisable during breeding and pupping season.

COMMON SENSE GUIDELINES WHEN WALKING A PET

1. If you've heard neighbors report coyote sightings in a certain area, avoid walking your animal there. Staying on roads or trails in open spaces should give you plenty of time to spot and react to a coyote. Keeping a dog on a 6' leash is better than using a retractable one that allows a small dog to wander a dozen feet or more away from its owner. When in doubt, pick up and carry a small dog. This way, you maintain full control over your pet who might do something unwise if scared by an intruder.
2. If walking your dog during sunrise or sunset, be aware that it increases your chances of an interaction with a coyote.
3. If you come into close contact with a coyote, first ensure you have control of your animal. Then wildlife experts recommend that you use loud sounds, such as: yelling, stomping your feet, or vigorously shaking a jacket or other large article of clothing. Walk away slowly without turning your back on the coyote.