



## Wildlife in Halton Hills: Coyotes

### Coyotes in your parks & neighbourhoods

Coyotes are a common sighting in cities and towns across Canada. It is typical to see a coyote in a park, ravine, other green space and even on your street, at any time of the day or night year-round. Coyotes have adapted very well to life in urban landscapes. Food and shelter are plentiful and natural predators are limited, so these animals will continue to live near us.

### Coyote behaviour and your dog

Most interactions with coyotes in Halton Hills are the result of a nearby, regular food source (especially when intentionally fed by people) or the presence of a dog.

Coyotes can behave in a defensive manner around dogs which is often interpreted as aggression. These negative interactions between dogs and coyotes are usually caused by bold behaviour from the dog. Coyotes are naturally timid, but they will defend their territory and their family group, including their pups.



For this reason, interactions between your dog and a coyote can be scary, but there are simple ways to avoid any real conflict:

- **NEVER feed coyotes, either deliberately or inadvertently.** Ensure all food you may have with you (human snacks or dog treats) are packed away securely.
- Keep your dog close to you and on a leash, especially in areas where coyotes are known to live. In an off-leash area, ensure your dog has good recall and stand/walk with others with dogs.
- Be aware of your surroundings and what your dog is doing.
- Don't let your dog chase or play with a coyote.
- Don't walk your dog in ravine habitats, especially in the spring when coyotes have pups.



### When coyotes get too close

- Maintain eye contact with the coyote.
- Ensure your dog is leashed and behind you. Pick up your small dog.
- Do not run; use aversion techniques to scare the coyote away.
- If the coyote doesn't leave, you may be near its den or food source. Do not run; back away slowly while maintaining eye contact and leave the area.

### Aversion techniques

- Assertively open and close an umbrella or snap open a large plastic garbage bag – these sights and sounds can be scary to a coyote (garbage bags are light-weight and easy to carry in your pockets).
- Wave your arms above your head, maintain eye contact and loudly say “Go away coyote!” Repeat until the coyote leaves.
- Carry and use a whistle or other noise maker and throw objects in the coyote's direction to scare it away. **NEVER** hit or injure a coyote with an object.
- If a coyote poses an immediate threat or danger to public safety – **call 911.**

### Coyotes at home

Coyotes may be near or at your house because there is a nearby food source – maybe even on your own property.

- **NEVER feed a coyote.** Deliberate feeding of coyotes is irresponsible and causes coyotes to adapt more easily to living and foraging for food around houses and yards.
- Keep your cat indoors or supervise your cat closely while outside. You can do this by using a harness and leash or a fully enclosed outdoor area for your cat.
- Do not feed your pets outside.
- Keep your garbage bin, blue bin and green bin in a secure location where wild animals cannot access them. Move them to the curb the morning of pick up instead of the night before.
- Use motion sensor lights or noise makers on your property to scare coyotes off your property.
- If coyotes continue to visit your property, use the same aversion techniques you would in a public space.
- Talk to your neighbours and share this fact sheet with them.

### Normal urban coyote behaviour

- Active during all seasons, day and night.
- Watching or following you and your dog from a comfortable distance – coyotes are very curious.
- Sitting somewhere in plain view or relaxing or playing in a field or park, either alone or with other coyotes.
- Walking and ignoring you – it's natural to see coyotes walking on a road or sidewalk in a neighbourhood.
- Hesitating and looking back when you're trying to scare it away. Keep scaring the coyote until it leaves.
- Yipping and howling.
- Hunting.



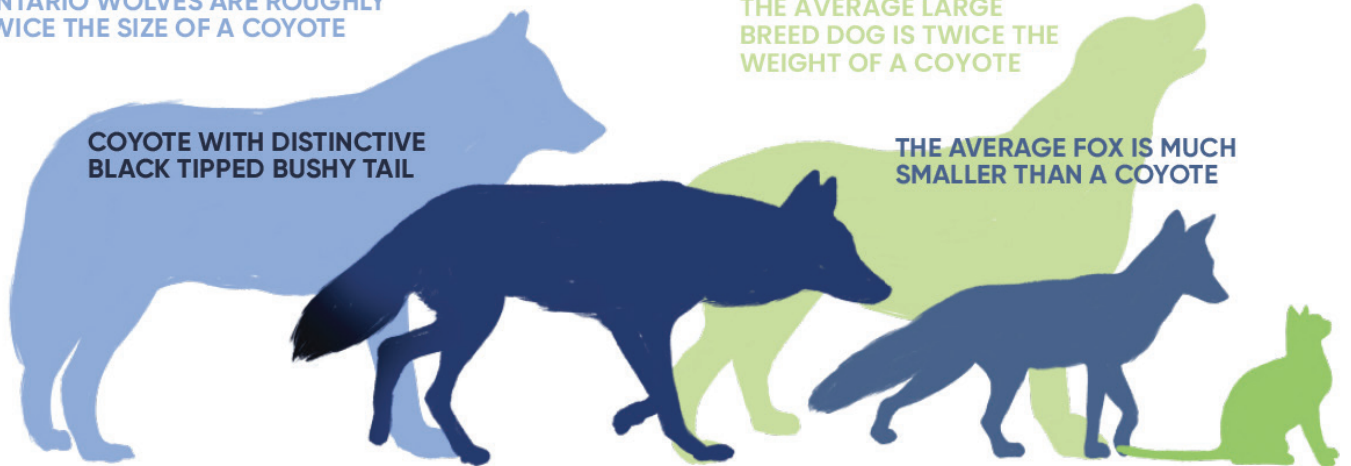
### Report coyote sightings:

Contact Service Halton Hills at 905-873-2600 or [servicehh@haltonhills.ca](mailto:servicehh@haltonhills.ca)

### Coyote size comparison

ONTARIO WOLVES ARE ROUGHLY TWICE THE SIZE OF A COYOTE

THE AVERAGE LARGE BREED DOG IS TWICE THE WEIGHT OF A COYOTE



COYOTE WITH DISTINCTIVE BLACK TIPPED BUSHY TAIL

THE AVERAGE FOX IS MUCH SMALLER THAN A COYOTE

DOMESTIC CATS CAN APPEAR AS PREY

Source: [City of Toronto coyote fact sheet](#)

### Myth busters:

**MYTH: Coyotes are a major threat to humans**

**FACT:** Statistically, coyotes are not a significant threat to the safety of humans. Coyote bites to humans are very rare.

**MYTH: Some coyotes are half wolf – you can tell by their size and colouring!**

**FACT:** Coyotes in Eastern Canada have some wolf DNA and this has been the case for many decades. A “Coywolf” does not exist – it’s just a nickname. Coyotes in Halton Hills are the same coyotes that have always been here.

**MYTH: If you see a coyote out during the day, they are likely rabid.**

**FACT:** Coyotes are crepuscular, meaning they’re generally most active at dawn and dusk. However, coyotes are also opportunistic which means they will pursue a food source when the opportunity presents itself. Though sickly or rabid animals will often behave abnormally, simply being out during the day is not confirmation enough that there is something wrong.

**MYTH: Coyotes actively search for and hunt cats**

**FACT:** Coyotes are not a significant predator of cats. Urban coyote diet studies show that they generally eat small rodents, fruit, insects and animals that were already dead. However, coyotes occasionally hunt cats, so take safety precautions.