

COYOTE INTERACTION ASSESSMENT

Assessing coyote interactions is important to identify if action is necessary, what actions should be taken, and which authorities should be contacted. If a coyote(s) is exhibiting normal coyote behavior (green), no action is necessary, but the observation or sighting may be reported to the RIDEM/DFW by submitting a Coyote Activity Report. Coyote(s) exhibiting habituated behavior (yellow) may pose a threat to unattended pets or livestock; if seen in the yard, remove or secure attractants and employ coyote deterrents and hazing techniques. Occurrences of aggressive coyote behavior without an attack (orange) should be reported to the RIDEM/DFW to assess if it is a dangerous coyote, or if this behavior is situational (e.g.- a person unknowingly walks past a coyote den with pups and the female is attempting to defend them). A coyote that attacks a human (red), whether provoked or unprovoked, should be immediately reported to the RIDEM Division of Law Enforcement and the local Animal Control Officer (ACO).

Coyote Behavior	CLASSIFICATION	RESPONSE	AUTHORITY
Coyote(s) heard, scat and/or prints seen	Observation	Normal coyote behavior: no response necessary	May report observation to RIDEM/DFW
Coyote seen moving through area (day or night)	Sighting	Normal coyote behavior: no response necessary	May report sighting to RIDEM/DFW
Coyote seen resting in open space area (day or night)	Sighting	Normal coyote behavior: no response necessary	May report sighting to RIDEM/DFW
Coyote seen entering a yard (no person present outside)	Sighting	Normal coyote behavior. Employ coyote deterrents and hazing techniques	May report sighting to RIDEM/DFW
Coyote entering yard with people or pets present, no pet attack	Encounter	Employ hazing techniques and pet safety measures	May report encounter to RIDEM/DFW
Coyote following or approaching a person with no incident	Encounter	Employ hazing techniques and pet safety measures	Report encounter to RIDEM/DFW
Coyote injures or kills unattended pet in yard or in open space area (humans farther than 6 feet from pet)	Unattended Pet Attack	Report encounter to RIDEM/DFW. Employ hazing techniques and pet safety measures. Coyote may be lethally controlled if legal by state & local law	Report encounter to RIDEM/DFW
Coyote injures or kills outdoor pets/livestock	Livestock Loss/Predation	Report to RIDEM/DFW. Employ hazing techniques and livestock enclosure improvements. Coyote(s) may be lethally controlled if legal by state & local laws	Report encounter to RIDEM/DFW
Coyote acts aggressively toward human(s); baring teeth, back fur raised, lunging forward, nipping without physical contact	Incident	Report to RIDEM/DFW. Employ hazing techniques and pet safety measures if safe to do so. Coyote(s) may be lethally controlled if legal by state & local laws	Report to RIDEM/DFW and RIDEM/Law Enforcement
Coyote injures or kills pet on leash <u>within 6 feet of human</u>	Attended Pet Attack	Report to authorities immediately. Coyote will be euthanized by Law Enforcement and tested for rabies	Report to ACO or RIDEM Law Enforcement
Coyote bites human (human encouraged coyote to engage by feeding it, approaching a coyote with pups, intervening during a pet/livestock attack)	Provoked Human Attack	Report to authorities immediately. Coyote will be euthanized by Law Enforcement and tested for rabies	Report to RIDEM Law Enforcement
Coyote bites human (human did not encourage coyote to engage)	Unprovoked Human Attack	Report to authorities immediately. Coyote will be euthanized by Law Enforcement and tested for rabies	Report to RIDEM Law Enforcement

REPRODUCTION: BREEDING & REARING OF YOUNG

- Coyotes breed in winter to late spring
- Do not maintain a den all year and leave when pups are big enough to travel with family

Female coyotes become sexually receptive (come into “heat”) once per year, usually during January or February. Coyotes are largely monogamous and maintain pair bonds for several years but not necessarily for life. Gestation lasts for approximately 63 days. In Rhode Island, pups are typically born in April. Litter sizes typically range between four and seven, varying due to factors such as resource availability and the female’s age and health. Pups are born blind and helpless (altricial), and generally weigh between 8 and 10 ounces. The pups’ eyes open at about 14 days. The mother nurses the pups for the first two weeks, after which they are fed regurgitated food by the adults. The young begin eating solid food at three weeks and are weaned around seven weeks of age. The young begin to emerge from the den after about three weeks, and after weaning, will gradually move farther from the den, eventually following the adults on forays for food.

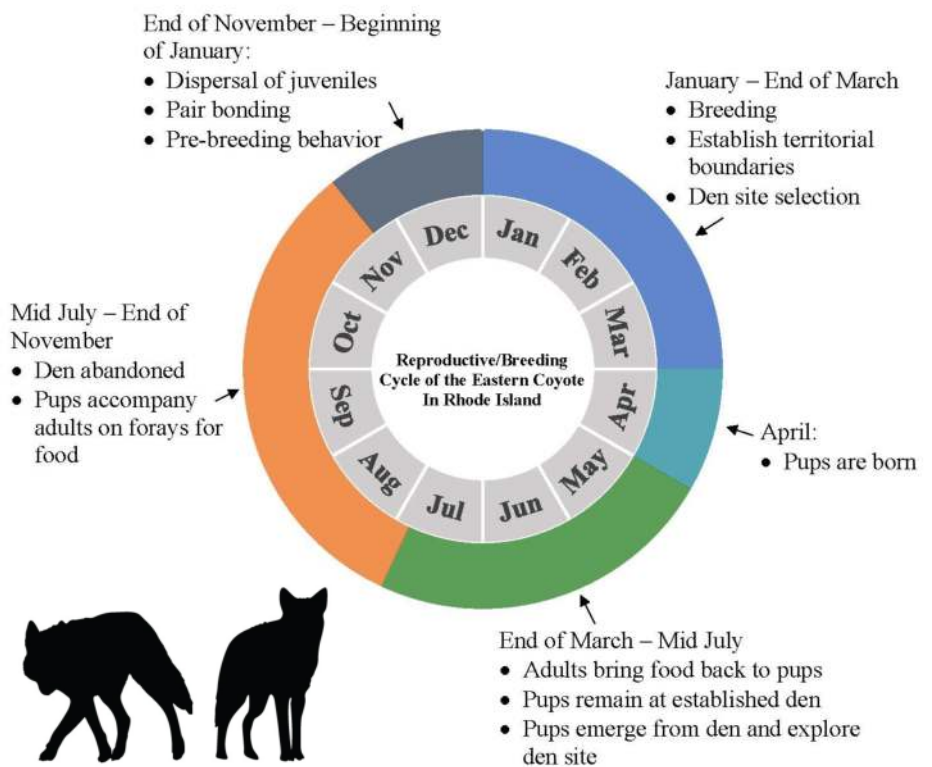
Occasionally other individuals, usually one or more offspring from the previous year’s litter, assist the parents with rearing the pups. After weaning, the den is abandoned, and the pups are taught to hunt by the adults and older siblings. Pups reach adult weight at about nine months. The family (pack) stays together until mid to late winter, after which time the young coyotes begin to disperse. Sometimes the young will remain with the adults through the following year.

Coyotes den in a variety of locations, including holes dug into embankments, rock piles or ledges, and dense thickets or under piles of debris, preferably in areas that are free from human disturbance. The same den may be used from year to year; however, coyotes do not



Photo: USFWS

maintain a den throughout the year. Instead, the family abandons it once the pups are large enough to travel with the adults. Moving pups from one den to another because of disturbance or parasite infections is common.



Identifying Attractants in your Yard

Conducting A Yard Audit

The purpose of a yard audit is to identify any attractants which may be bringing coyotes into your yard or neighborhood so that they can be removed, secured, or avoided in order to minimize the chance of precipitating nuisance wildlife issues. It may not be your yard, but a neighbor's yard, or a local business. Talk to your neighbors and community about coyote issues; they may not know their actions are attracting coyotes.

Attractant	Prevention/Mitigation
FOOD SOURCES	NEVER hand feed or intentionally feed coyotes. It leads to habituation and dangerous coyote behavior that can endanger people and pets.
	Do not feed wildlife or feral animals
Pet Food	Do not feed pets outside, store pet food inside
Livestock Feed	Store animal feed securely inside or in a wildlife-proof container
Bird Feeder/Bird Seed	Take down bird feeders and/or clean up bird seed off ground
Garden	Install wildlife-proof fencing around gardens that is at least 6 feet high and buried 12 inches to prevent wildlife from going over/under fence
Fruit Trees/Bushes	Clean up dropped fruit around trees/bushes
Compost	Secure compost piles in enclosure. Do not compost meat, dairy or eggs
Garbage	Secure garbage in wildlife-proof containers. Only put out on garbage pickup day
Grills/Patios	Remove all food and clean grills, grilling equipment, and outdoor eating areas completely after use. Store recycling in a secure container.
SHELTER/STRUCTURES	Secure outbuildings such as barns and garages when not in use
Sheds/Outbuildings	Install fencing or construction cloth around bottom edge of shed at least 12" down to restrict access and prevent wildlife from burrowing underneath
Porches	Install fencing around underside of porch to restrict access and prevent wildlife from denning underneath
FENCING	Install fencing at least 6 feet high around gardens and livestock enclosures to keep wildlife out. Frequently check fencing for holes, breaches or other access points.
LANDSCAPING	Remove or cover brush piles to reduce potential denning sites
PETS & LIVESTOCK	DO NOT leave pets outside unattended, even for a short amount of time.
	Keep cats indoors
	Fully enclose and secure outdoor pet and livestock enclosures
	Keep dogs on leash 6 ft. or less when outside

