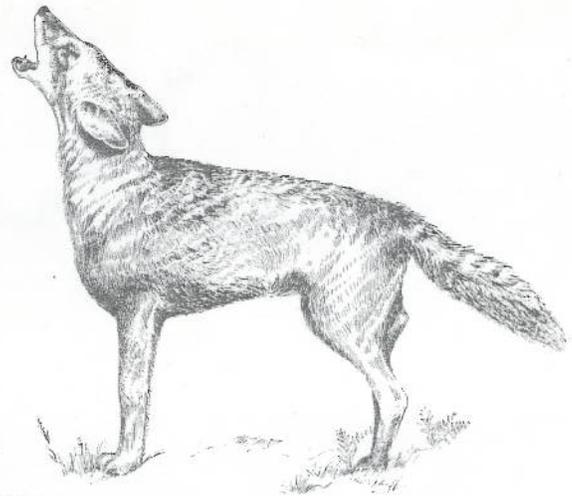


THE EASTERN COYOTE

IN MASSACHUSETTS



It is very likely that coyotes currently live within your community. To make your property less attractive and to avoid having problems with them, here are some basic steps that you should follow:

-  **Don't feed coyotes!** Feeding ultimately alters the animals' behavior. They become dependent upon and less wary of humans. This can lead to potential problems (bites, scratches, encounters with pets).
-  **Don't leave pet food outdoors!** If you must feed pets outside the home, provide only the amount that your pet will finish in one feeding.
-  **Don't approach or try to pet coyotes!** Don't provoke an encounter with a coyote by coming too close or restricting its free movement.
-  **Do secure your garbage!** Coyotes knock over trash cans or tear open trash bags left in the open. Don't provide potential meals.
-  **Do secure your pets!** Although free roaming pets are more likely to be killed by automobiles than by wild animals, coyotes and foxes do view pets as potential food. For the safety of your pet, keep it restrained at all times.
-  **Do protect livestock and produce!** Consult with the Division of Fisheries and Wildlife for appropriate ways to protect property and stock animals from wildlife.

MORE COYOTE INFORMATION

Range and historical background of coyotes in Massachusetts: Coyotes originally moved into the central and western regions of Massachusetts in the 1950s, and they have been in the eastern sections and Cape Cod since the 1970s. This species is well established statewide.

Description: Coyotes are the size of a medium-sized dog, but with longer, thicker fur. Coyotes have a long, bushy, black-tipped tail that is usually carried pointed down. Their snout is long and slender, and their ears are pointed and erect. The pelts of coyotes in Massachusetts range from grayish-black to blonds, light tan, dark tan, or even all black. Females weigh 33-40 lbs and males are slightly larger (34-47 lbs). Coyotes can attain weights of 50-60 lbs. Because of their thick fur, weights of coyotes can easily be over-estimated.

Habits: Coyotes are usually shy and elusive. Male and female coyotes pair up, establish a territory, and breed in February or March; 4 to 8 pups are born in April or May. Activity is variable; they can be active night or day, and sightings at dawn or dusk are common. They remain active all year-round

and do not hibernate. Coyotes are often seen individually, in pairs, or in small groups. The area a coyote uses may vary from 4 to 30 square miles.

Food: They are opportunistic feeders and their primary foods include small rodents, rabbits, deer, birds, snakes, frogs, and insects. They will also eat fruits, berries, vegetables, garbage, and pet food left outdoors. In some areas they prey upon unprotected pets, including house cats, and have been known to attack domestic dogs. Because coyotes utilize so many different food sources, they have adapted to and live in a variety of habitats including urban and heavily populated areas.

Coyotes are an important natural resource in Massachusetts. They are classified as a furbearer species, for which an established harvest season and management program exists. If you are experiencing problems with, or have any questions regarding coyotes, contact the nearest regional office of Massachusetts Division of Fisheries and Wildlife.



MASSACHUSETTS DIVISION
OF FISHERIES AND WILDLIFE

UNIVERSITY OF MASSACHUSETTS
COOPERATIVE EXTENSION SYSTEM



FOR FURTHER INFORMATION, CALL MASSACHUSETTS DIVISION OF FISHERIES AND WILDLIFE AT:

Acton 508/263-4347 • West Boylston 508/835-3607 • Pittsfield 413/447-9789 • Bourne 508/759-3406 • Belchertown 413/323-7632

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