

Coyote Conflicts

The Eastern coyote is firmly established in New York. They live in New York as an integral part of our ecosystems. People and coyotes can usually coexist if coyotes' natural fear of people is maintained. Coyotes provide many benefits to New Yorkers through observation, photography, hunting, and trapping; however, not all interactions are positive. While most coyotes avoid interacting with people, some coyotes in suburbia become emboldened and appear to have lost their fear of people. This can result in a dangerous situation with pets and young children at the greatest risk.

Below are steps you should take to reduce and prevent coyote problems from occurring. For additional information see our [nuisance wildlife species](#) page.

Coyote Encounters

A coyote that does not flee from people should be considered dangerous. Coyotes in residential areas can be attracted to garbage, pet food, and other human-created sources of food. Coyotes can associate people with these food attractants. In some cases human behavior is perceived to be non-threatening by coyotes (running into your home after seeing a coyote is behaving like prey). In short, people may unintentionally attract coyotes with food and people may behave like prey. Add to the mix people intentionally feeding coyotes and the potential for a coyote attack becomes very real.

How to handle coyote encounters:

- Do not let a coyote approach anyone.
- If you see a coyote, **be aggressive** in your behavior-stand tall and hold arms out to look large. If a coyote lingers for too long, then make loud noises, wave your arms, or throw sticks and stones.
- Contact your local police department and DEC regional office for assistance if you notice that coyotes are exhibiting "bold" behaviors and have little or no fear of people.
- Teach children to appreciate coyotes from a distance. Children are at greatest risk of being injured by coyotes. If a coyote has been observed repeatedly near an area where children frequent, be watchful.

Potential does exist for coyote attacks in New York. However, a little perspective may be in order. On average, 650 people are hospitalized and one person killed by dogs each year in New York State. Nationwide, only a handful of coyote attacks occur annually. Nevertheless, these conflicts are bad for people, pets, and coyotes.

Make your Yard Less Hospitable

Unintentional food sources attract coyotes and other wildlife, as well as increase risks to people and pets.

To reduce risks:

- Do not feed coyotes and discourage others from doing so. Visit our [Do Not Feed Wildlife: Why Feeding Wildlife Does More Harm Than Good](#) page.
- Do not feed pets outside.
- Make any garbage inaccessible to coyotes and other animals.
- Eliminate availability of bird seed. Concentrations of birds and rodents that come to feeders can attract coyotes.

Protect your Pets

Take action:

- Do not allow coyotes to approach people or pets.
- Do not allow pets to run free. Supervise all outdoor pets to keep them safe from coyotes and other wildlife, especially at sunset and at night.
- Fencing your yard may deter coyotes. The fence should be tight to the ground, preferably extending 6 inches below ground level, and taller than 4 feet.
- Remove brush and tall grass from around your property to reduce protective cover for coyotes. Coyotes are typically secretive and like areas where they can hide. See our [Tips to Eliminate Wildlife Conflicts](#) page for more information.
- Be alert of your surroundings and take precautions such as carrying a flashlight or a walking stick to deter coyotes.

Dogs

Do dog owners need to be concerned about coyotes? The answer is maybe. Conflicts between dogs and coyotes can happen any time of the year, but are more likely in the months of March and April. It is during this time that coyotes are setting up their denning areas for their soon-to-arrive pups. Coyotes become exceptionally territorial around these den sites in an attempt to create a safe place for their young. In general, coyotes view other canines (dogs) as a threat. Essentially, it comes down to a territorial dispute between your dog and the coyote. Both believe that your yard is their territory.

Owners of large and medium sized dogs have less to worry about, but should still take precautions. Owners of small dogs have cause for concern. Small dogs are of greatest risk of being harmed or killed by coyotes. Small dogs are at risk when left unattended in backyards at night and should be supervised by owners. Coyotes have attacked and killed small dogs unattended in backyards. Coyotes may approach small dogs along streets at night near natural areas, even in the presence of dog owners.

Cats

Do coyotes kill cats? Absolutely, but so do foxes, dogs, bobcats, vehicles, and even great horned owls. Cat owners need to be aware that cats allowed to roam free are at risk from many different factors. To protect your cat, keep it indoors, or allow it outside only under supervision. Coyotes in some areas appear to become specialists at catching and killing cats.

Livestock Risk

Problems with coyotes and livestock do occur in New York. Most problems involve sheep or free ranging chickens and ducks. Most problems can be avoided with proper husbandry techniques. It is much easier to prevent depredation from occurring than it is to stop it once it starts.

Coyote Incident Standard Operating Procedures (SOP)

The New York State Coyote Incident Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) have been developed for use primarily by DEC staff who routinely handle phone calls pertaining to coyotes but may be a valuable reference document for other entities interacting with public experiencing conflicts with coyotes (e.g., municipal law enforcement and animal control officers).

View the [New York State Coyote Incident Standard Operating Procedures \(Revised 2018\)](#) (PDF).

Contacts

- [Regional DEC Wildlife Office](#)
- USDA APHIS
1930 Route 9, Castleton NY 12033
Phone: (518) 477-4837
- [Wildlife Damage website](#) (leaves DEC website)
- Find a [Nuisance Wildlife Control Operator](#) (NWCO)

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