

What Should I Do When I Encounter a Coyote?

Seeing a coyote is not a bad thing. Often, hikers, hunters, bird watchers, etc, will encounter coyotes in the field simply because their activities put them in places that coyotes call home. However, to reduce the likelihood of bad interactions with coyotes, the simple answer to the question “what should I do when I see a coyote?” is to make it fear you. This is especially important when we see coyotes in areas that are commonly used by people, especially children, such as parks, playgrounds, and schoolyards. We cannot change the fact that coyotes do exist, and will continue to exist in suburban and urban areas. We can, however, condition them to not want to encounter people. Here are a couple of techniques that may help with this. Keep in mind that not all of these techniques instill fear in coyotes, but simply disturb or annoy them in hopes of discouraging them from hanging around a particular area.

- **Sound an air horn**
- **Spray the coyote with a hose**
- **Use visual and/or auditory scare devices** - A number of products exist that use a motion sensor to activate a spot light and radio or some other noise intended to chase off undesired animals.
- **Yell, wave your arms, and make yourself look big and scary** - Use body language to reinforce your aggression. Make sure that your voice and body language are as aggressive as possible. Taking a step or making a quick, sudden movement toward the coyote can make this approach more effective.
- **Throw rocks or sticks if necessary**
- **Act as aggressively as possible** without putting yourself in harms way. Remember, the intent is to make the coyote fear people so that it will be discouraged from approaching them or even hanging around areas when people are present.

To further protect against negative interactions with coyotes, small children should be educated about their presence and given clear instructions as to how to react if they see one. First, do not turn and run. Instead, yell “coyote” to get the attention of an adult. Small children should be supervised at all times when playing outdoors in areas with coyotes. Adults should respond aggressively to scare the coyote off.

Report any aggressive behavior to your local police agency immediately. Follow up with a call to DEC so that we, in conjunction with local law enforcement can act accordingly. Contact your New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) **Region 3 Wildlife Office** at **(845)256-3098** to report any other undesirable interactions with coyotes.



New York State Department of Environmental Conservation
Division of Fish, Wildlife and Marine Resources
Bureau of Wildlife

