

POTTER LEAGUE FOR ANIMALS POSITION ON COYOTE MANAGEMENT

The Potter League endorses actions and activities that promote the safe and peaceful co-existence with coyotes. As the lead organization for the Coyote Smarts initiative, the Potter League supports efforts to educate the community on how to synergistically co-exist with coyotes, raise awareness by creating a wider network for sharing information to protect pets and provide a better understanding of coyote behavior.

I. What Is It?

Coyote Management is the implementation of actions that contribute to humanely and effectively reducing threats and conflicts between coyotes, people and pets with the end goal of supporting respectful co-existence. Best Coyote Management practices result from an increased understanding of coyote behavior and how our relationships with these animals are directly affected by human behavior.

II. Why Do It/How to do it?

Coyote Management will help to ensure the future of coyotes as an integral part of the environment and urban/suburban ecosystems.

Implementation of co-existence practices can reduce conflicts and negative interactions with coyotes thereby helping to sustain their place in the ecosystem. The following are generally accepted Coyote Management best practices:

- *Do not feed coyotes, either intentionally or unintentionally – pick up trash, secure garbage, keep fallen fruit and birdseed off the ground, eliminate accessible water sources, feeds pets inside, and don't leave pets or food outside at night*
(Note: In Rhode Island, the feeding of coyotes is prohibited by regulation.)
- *Walk dogs on leashes – don't allow pets to roam and pick up your small dog if you see a coyote*
- *Avoid areas where there may be a potential den and/or pups*
- *If approached by a coyote, get big and loud, and don't run away*
- *Appreciate coyotes from a safe distance*

III. Pros

- *Coyotes help keep ecosystems healthy and clean by contributing to population control of rodents, rabbits, deer, and other species that may cause conflicts with people in urban areas. They are found also to benefit bird populations by preying on small mammals that feed on birds and their eggs*
- *Coyotes are nature's "clean-up service", removing carrion and thus contributing to the prevention of disease associated with carrion*
- *Many people enjoy seeing and/or hearing coyotes, widely considered the "song dogs"*

- *The implementation of humane best management practices with coyotes is a more effective means of population control than other more disruptive or lethal means (Trapping, relocation, and/or killing coyotes has been shown to result in increased birth and pup survival rates and encourages the movement of animals into vacant areas)*

IV. Cons

- *Bold and problematic behavior by coyotes is unusual but coyotes have been known to attack domestic pets and, in very rare cases, humans*
- *Coyotes may contract rabies, although documented cases are extremely rare. They can also be hosts and spread a wide variety of parasites, canine distemper, parvovirus and mange*

V. Conclusion

Coyotes are important to the ecosystem and help to keep the biological community healthy and vital. Both leading humane organizations and coyote research support best Coyote Management practices that advocate altering human behaviors to increase comfort and decrease conflicts among coyotes, people, and domestic pets, as they are the most effective way of co-existing with coyotes. Research also supports that more lethal means of population management are ineffective and encourage coyote population growth.

References:

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