

## Are You Attracting Coyotes To Your Yard?

**Never feed a wild animal!** Eliminate food attractants outdoors such as table scraps, fallen fruit, bird seed, pet food, unsecured compost, and sitting water. Secure garbage cans in animal-proof containers and place cans out the morning of collection.

**Close off crawl spaces under porches and sheds.** Coyotes and other animals use such areas for resting and raising young.



This brochure has been produced by the City of Sanibel's Natural Resource Department. Images provided are from the City of Sanibel's trail cameras, located in City parks across Sanibel. **Information updated: November 4th, 2019.**

## Coyote Myths

- 1. Coyotes are extremely dangerous: FALSE!**  
There have been very few reported cases of coyotes harming people in the U.S. The coyote's natural wariness of humans tends to keep them from getting too close.
- 2. Coyotes are a new problem: FALSE!**  
Although colonizing Sanibel more recently, coyotes have been in Florida since the decline of the red wolf population in the 1960's. Coyotes are highly adaptable scavengers, allowing them to thrive in urban, suburban, and rural areas.
- 3. Coyotes live in packs: FALSE!**  
Coyotes mate for life and live in small family units where both parents feed and care for young.
- 4. Coyotes can be totally eliminated: FALSE!**  
Removal of coyotes is an inefficient and ineffective method to control populations. Unsuccessful large-scale bounty programs and large hunts throughout North America have occurred since the mid-19th century, and coyotes have, in fact, expanded their range throughout the U.S. and Canada. New coyotes will move into areas where others have been removed, often increasing their litter size very quickly with additional resources to consume. Coyotes are naturally territorial and keep neighboring coyote populations in check.

### For more information:

Contact the City of Sanibel Natural Resources Department at (239) 472-3700 or e-mail [Veronica.Runge@mysanibel.com](mailto:Veronica.Runge@mysanibel.com).  
<http://www.mysanibel.com/Departments/Natural-Resources/Wildlife-Information/Coyotes>

Visit FWC's "Living with Coyotes" Website:  
<https://myfwc.com/conservation/you-serve/wildlife/coyotes/>



## A Guide to Living with Coyotes on Sanibel



City of Sanibel  
800 Dunlop Road  
(239) 472-3700



## About Coyotes

Coyotes are canines, closely related to domestic dogs and resembling a small German shepherd. This opportunistic omnivore helps maintain balanced ecosystems by controlling small mammal populations such as rats, mice, rabbits, and even dead animals. They also feed on fruiting plants, nuts, seeds, insects, frogs, and fish. Coyotes live in all 67 Florida counties and have adjusted to their shrinking habitat by living close to humans near residential areas and in Sanibel's abundant conservation land.

Coyotes are typically shy and elusive, hunting primarily between dusk and dawn. However, coyotes may also be observed during the daytime, often alone or in mating pairs migrating between habitats to find food. Coyotes mate for life and live in small family units where both parents feed and care for young. Coyotes communicate their emotions, much like domestic dogs, through body language, facial expressions, and numerous vocalizations.

## If A Coyote Approaches Too Closely

- Bring your pet close.
- Do not run or turn your back.
- Make yourself appear larger and be as loud as possible.
- Wave your arms and throw objects towards the coyote, but do not attempt to hurt it.
- Back away slowly while facing the coyote.



## Coyote Fast Facts

- Coyotes live throughout Florida and in every state but Hawaii.
- Coyotes eat whatever food is available, including fruits, seeds, small mammals, dead animals, garbage, pet food, and occasionally unattended pets. A coyote that has found food in one yard may learn to search for food in others.
- They typically weigh 15-30 pounds; males are slightly larger than females.
- Coyotes can breed every year with 2 to 12 pups per litter. Pups are raised by both parents in a sheltered den or burrow of dense vegetation.
- Coyote pairs maintain and defend territories, which leaves single coyotes constantly looking for new places to call home.

## What Should I Do If I See A Coyote?

Coyotes are generally timid and will run away if challenged, but coyotes can also be curious. A curious coyote is not necessarily an aggressive coyote, but it is important to make sure that coyotes don't learn to get comfortable around humans or in our neighborhoods.

### Don't let coyotes intimidate you!

Frighten away coyotes by making loud noises and by appearing larger by waving your arms aggressively. Carry safety devices such as a small air horn, whistle, shaker, a walking stick, golf club, deterrent spray, or rocks to throw. Convince the coyote that you are a potential danger to be avoided by "hazing" the coyote until he leaves.

### Never initiate a close encounter with a coyote.

- Don't try to pet a coyote and teach children not to approach or run from any unfamiliar animals. Coyotes can also be protective of their young.
- Report coyote sightings to the **Sanibel Police** non-emergency number at (239) 472-3111. Be on the look out for unusual coyote behavior such as coyotes approaching pets, or chasing joggers or bikers.



Coyote tracks (left) are narrower and more elongated than dog tracks (right). F: Front track / H: Hind track

## Coyotes and Pet Safety

- Coyotes can and do prey on small unattended domestic cats and dogs. Keep cats indoors.
- Do not allow your pets to roam freely. Obey Sanibel's leash law (8-ft. max.). Before letting pets out at night, make noise and flash lights to startle other wildlife that may be in your yard.
- Be cautious when walking your pet at dusk and dawn and in heavily vegetated areas where coyotes could be present.