

# Safely Coexisting with Coyotes & Wildlife



Emery Sadkin

Animal Protection Officer- Wildlife

City of Austin Animal Services

(737)-330-5556

Email: [emery.sadkin@austintexas.gov](mailto:emery.sadkin@austintexas.gov)



---

# Austin Animal Protection

*The City of Austin does not remove or relocate healthy wildlife*

- Work with public to keep pets safe & at home
  - Investigate rabies exposure
  - Rehome non-native species
  - Assist sick and injured wildlife
    - Austin Wildlife Rescue
  - Assess wildlife behavior
  - Work with residents to address the root cause of conflict
    - Suggest methods for humane exclusion (denning)
      - Encourage the animal to move on its own
  - Game cameras, site visits, yard audits, identification
  - Presentations, education, outreach
-



# City of Austin Coyote Policy

- November 2014, City Council approved a Coyote Management Policy through a resolution for City of Austin
- The goal is to help maintain a balance of public safety concerns and humane treatment for all animals
- Work towards non-lethal management tools for a healthy ecosystem
- Policy based on ecology and current research
  - Reshape behavior *of the individual* through hazing
  - Determine public safety threat
- Education
  - Address root cause of conflict
  - Offer tailored solutions

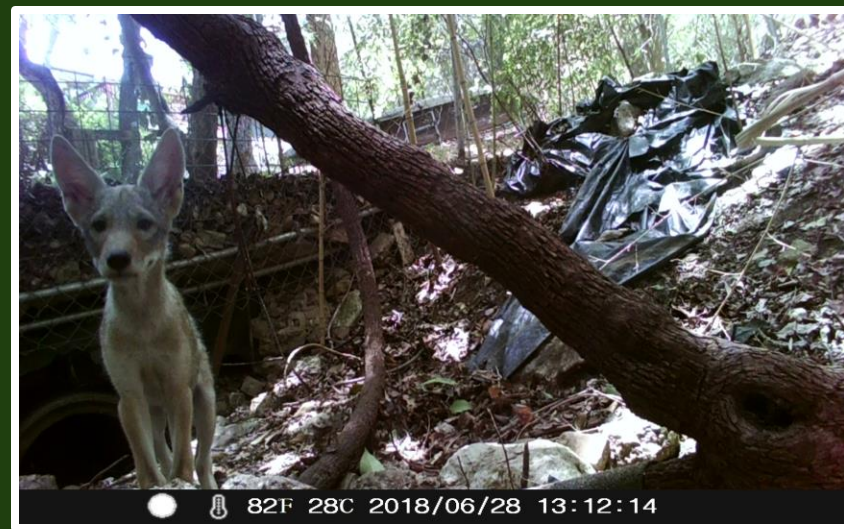
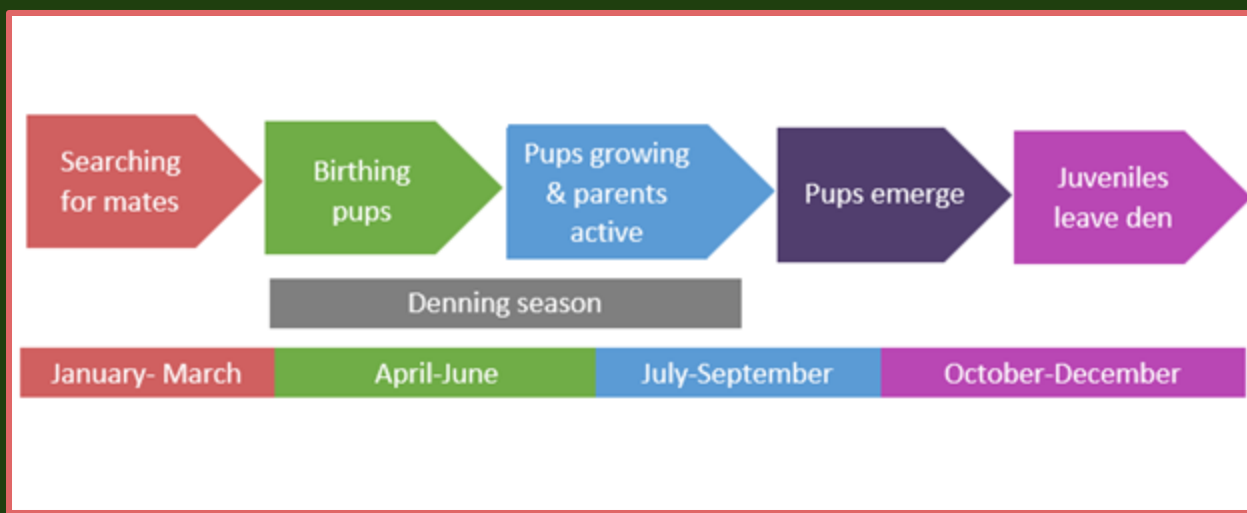
# FOX VS. COYOTE



# General Ecology

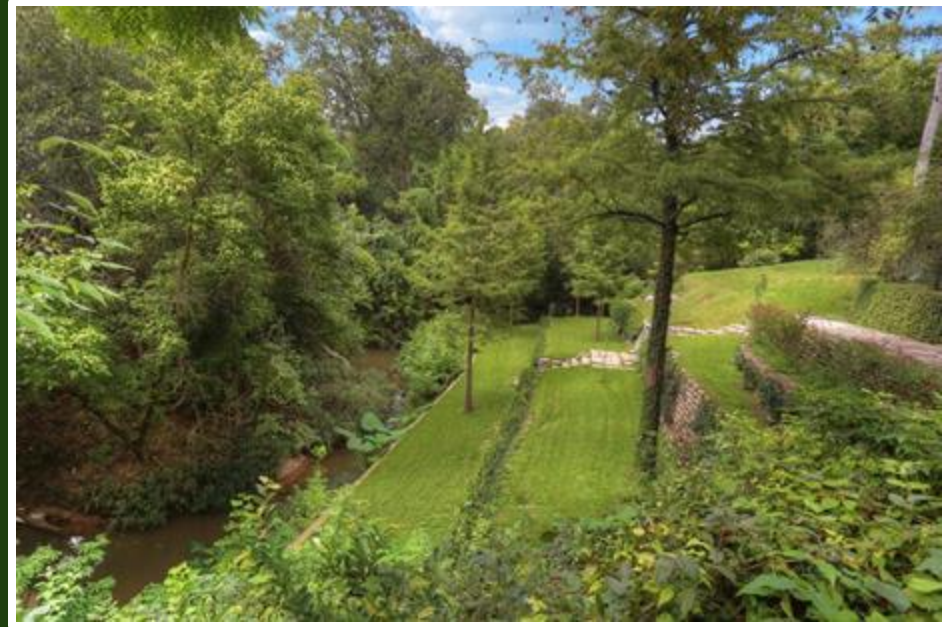
- Omnivores: Rabbits, rodents, deer, insects, snakes, reptiles, frogs, grass, fruit
- Behavior and activity change due to seasons and circumstances
- Most active at dawn and dusk
- Litter size: 5-16\* pups (5-7 average)
- Territory size: .25- 40 miles
- Adaptable, opportunistic, intelligent





# Why are they here?

- Coyotes have always been here whether residents realize it or not
- Residential areas provide plenty of food (pet food, birdseed compost) water, and shelter



# ATTRACTANTS





# What draws them in?

- Unsecured trash or recycle
- Open compost piles
- Feeding pets and wildlife outdoors
- Owned outside cats and feral cat colonies
- Dirty BBQ grills
- Fruit and nut trees
- Brush piles
- WATER BOWLS



# Their Ecology Shapes our Policy

- We have tried population control for the last 150 years
  - They don't respond like most species (wolves)
- There is no apex predator besides humans
- We already kill 500,000 a year ~ approx. 1 per minute in North America
- We would have to kill 75% consistently each year for 50 years to see a dent
- They compensate for population reduction by:
  - Having larger litter size (up to 16 pups)
  - Pups will breed at earlier age
  - Pups have higher survival rate
- → There is no season & no bag limit

# A solitary coyote can fill the void in as little as 2-3 weeks



Healthy coyote from Montopolis

Healthy coyote from East Riverside



# PET SAFETY



# Pet Safety Considerations

- Do not let cats roam the neighborhood: they will be the main reason coyotes are in the neighborhood
- Keep pets on a 4–6-foot leash
  - Avoid extendable leashes
- Keep small pets indoors and always monitor while outside
- Don't let pets explore dense vegetation
- If you need to feed your pets outdoors, pick up leftovers, so you do not tempt wildlife

# Reasons to keep your cat indoors

- Hit by a car
- Getting lost or being stolen
- Fights with other cats, coyotes, raccoons, and dogs
- Extreme temperatures
- Getting infections/diseases
- They kill approximately 2.4 billion birds every year
- Contributed to the extinction of 63 species of birds, mammals, and reptiles



# Coexistence is not blind tolerance



*We want to share space with coyotes, but NOT time*

# OUR BEHAVIOR SHAPES COYOTE BEHAVIOR

## “HAZING”

Encourage coyotes to avoid contact with people:

- Maintain eye contact
- Do not run or turn your back
- Be exaggerated, assertive, and persistent
  - Do this every single time you see a coyote in the neighborhood
- Use voice, arms, air horn, whistle, noisemaker, megaphone, hose, **non-edible** items thrown *in direction of*, repellant
- Enforce negative consequences for being around people





HAZE

HAZE



# DO NOT HAZE



DO NOT HAZE

Matagorda

# Flushing- There is a den nearby and they want your dog gone



Do NOT haze, simply just walk away



# Mange in Coyotes

- What is mange?
  - An infestation of a burrowing mite that can cause hair loss, itching, and secondary infections
- Some coyotes will pass away faster depending how severe the mange is, while some coyotes can last months with mange
- Please do not feed coyotes with mange!!!
- Even though a coyote with mange is not considered “healthy” wildlife, we will not set traps for the coyote
  - Once the coyote becomes immobile, laying down and not moving when approached, Animal Protection will respond to pick them up.



Coyotes with mange in Austin are very common

# Coyote Myths

- Coyotes are strictly nocturnal
  - Coyotes can be seen at all times of the day
- Coyotes are as big as German Shepherd's
  - Coyotes on average weigh 25-40 pounds, with the largest being in Canada
- Coyotes are actively looking to eat your pets
  - Coyotes are opportunistic hunters, meaning they will go after the easiest meal as it reveals itself
- Packs will send in a single coyote to lure a household pet away so the pack can attack together
  - Coyotes hunt for themselves (or pups if they're parents). Their main objective is to take down their prey and eat it themselves

# Austin Animal Protection does not service private traps

- We do not remove or relocate healthy native wildlife
- If a resident purposely or accidentally traps wildlife, we will not service them
- The type of wildlife will determine what the resident can do
  - If the wildlife is a rabies vector species, the resident will need to release on property or contact a pest control company to remove and relocate ([Title 25, Section 169.34 of the Texas Administrative Code](#))
  - If the wildlife is a non-rabies vector species (opossum, ring-tailed cat, squirrel), they can relocate elsewhere nearby



# Texas Wild Animal Transport Restrictions / Rabies Quarantine

- [Title 25, Section 169.34 of the Texas Administrative Code](#)
- Statewide quarantine. The area is defined by the borders of the State of Texas.
- It is illegal to transport animals subject to the statewide rabies quarantine from, to, or within the State of Texas
- Animals subject to the statewide rabies quarantine include any live species of fox, skunk, coyote, or raccoon indigenous or naturalized to North America
- Transport exceptions. Animals subject to the statewide rabies quarantine may be transported by peace officers and individuals hired or contracted by local, state, or federal government agencies to deal with stray animals when such transport is a part of their official duty

# Wildlife Ordinances – City of Austin

## § 3-2-4 - HUNTING AND TRAPPING WILD ANIMALS

Except as provided in Subsection (B), a person may not knowingly shoot, kill, or hunt a wild animal; or use a steel-jawed spring trap or any other type of trap that could injure a trapped animal or person.

## § 9-6-7 - FIREARM DISCHARGE RESTRICTED

Except as provided in Subsection (B), a person may not discharge a firearm in city limits.

## § 10-8-3 - FEEDING OF DEER PROHIBITED

Except as provided in subsection (C), a person commits an offense if the person intentionally feeds deer or makes food available for consumption by deer on private or public property within the territorial limits of the city.

# Please do not feed wildlife

- The native wildlife in Austin need nature's diet to be healthy
  - Human food is considered “junk food”
- Well intentioned handouts may cause disease, injury, and even death
- Providing human food encourages wildlife to congregate in large numbers, leading to territorial fights and diseases being spread
- Native animals who eat human food:
  - May bite, scratch, or threaten visitors
  - May come into conflict with your pets
  - May spread disease



# Respect wildlife and do not touch them

- Wildlife can pass diseases to people
  - Armadillos carry leprosy – a chronic infectious disease
  - If you are bitten by a rabies vector species, you will have to receive post exposure rabies shots
- Repeatedly touched wildlife can lose their fear of humans
  - A wild animal could walk up to a person who may not be as nice as the last
- If you touch a rabies vector species, that animal will have to be euthanized and submitted for rabies testing
  - If you find abandoned young, use gloves and immediately call 311

# Avian Influenza confirmed in Austin, Texas

- Specifically, several ducks at the Arboretum Shopping Center ponds
- Has not been known to transfer from person to person, but **CAN** transmit from bird to person
- High Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI) symptoms in birds:
  - Lack of coordination, coughing, sneezing, eye and nose discharge, sudden death
  - They can also sometimes be asymptomatic
- What can residents do to stop the spread?
  - Limit unnecessary contact with wild birds and waterfowl
  - Avoid feeding or causing waterfowl to congregate (this does not mean forever)
  - Do not handle any sick or dead wildlife or allow any pets to consume any wild carcasses



Questions?