



Coyote Management Plan

Purpose

The purpose of this plan is to provide guidelines for responses to conflicts with coyotes, particularly to resolve and reduce human-coyote conflicts in a consistent and expedient manner. Public safety is the primary concern of the City, and coyotes and other wildlife will be managed with human safety as a priority. The plan also seeks to identify and achieve a balance between the importance of human safety and the native ecology of the region. There is an environmental benefit to maintaining and encouraging natural wildlife populations that are self regulating and that are beneficial to maintaining and/or developing natural ecosystems.

Specifically, the purpose of this plan is to:

- Provide essential standardized definitions and vocabulary related to coyote management.
- Outline a consistent, organized and detailed reporting and tracking process for human-coyote interactions.
- Outline a consistent, organized and detailed response process for human-coyote and coyote management related reports.

Definitions

The following definitions will be used in obtaining information from the public, to identify specific coyote behaviors. Using these definitions will help to standardize the recordkeeping and will assist in communicating coyote behaviors, both internally as well as with external agencies such as Colorado Division of Wildlife (CDOW), the Douglas County Sheriff's Office (DCSO), and Tri-County Health Department:

Definitions listed in order of interactions between humans and coyotes:

Observation – The act of noticing or taking note of tracks, scat or vocalizations.

Sighting – A visual observation of one or more coyotes.

Encounter - An unexpected direct meeting between a human and one or more coyotes without incident.

Incident – A conflict between a human and a coyote where a coyote exhibited behavior creating an unsafe situation, but the human was uninjured.

An example of this would be where a coyote attacks a dog that was on a leash and the human was uninjured, but was in an unsafe situation.

Attack – An aggressive action by a coyote where a human is injured or killed.

Descriptions of coyote behavior:

Nuisance

Habituated – A coyote that appears to frequently associate with humans or human related food sources, and exhibits little wariness of the presence of people.

Depredating – A coyote that is preying on pets or livestock.

Menacing – A coyote that exhibits aggravated abnormal behavior; however such coyote does not display the characteristics of a “dangerous coyote”. This may include

coyote incidents and or encounters where a coyote or group of coyotes could potentially endanger public safety.

Dangerous – a coyote that has attacked a person, exhibits aggressive behavior towards a human(s) and or poses a significant threat to human safety.

Aggressive behavior is defined as a coyote that bares its teeth, growls, lunges or charges at a human(s).

General Definitions

Coexistence – To exist together at the same time. Coexistence is not passive, but active on the human’s part, including actions such as removing specific coyote habitats, and employing hazing methods. Coexistence provides a mechanism by which humans obtain and maintain a high level of knowledge and understanding of coyote ecology, behaviors and appropriate responses.

Hazing – An activity or series of activities that is conducted in an attempt to change the behaviors of habituated coyotes or to instill a healthy fear of people back into the local coyote populations. Hazing is not intended to physically damage the coyote, property or humans.

Aggressive Hazing – Aggressive hazing techniques, e.g. paint balls, pepper balls, slingshots, etc., may be employed on a situational basis and with regard to substantiated cases only. This activity shall only be carried out by uniformed officers of DCSO or CDOW, or other State agencies or individuals designated by City Council to perform such activities.

Strategic Plan

This plan includes three key strategies:

- Create and implement a plan to educate the community about coyotes including methods to safely co-exist through informational handout materials, media outreach, HOA meetings, and community presentations.

- Implement a coyote hazing education program for residents, to try and change the behaviors of habituated coyotes or to instill a healthy fear of people back into the local coyote populations. This component of the plan includes only those techniques that can safely be implemented by residents or CDOW volunteers. The more aggressive techniques will only be implemented by trained personnel and may include paintball guns, fire cracker type guns or other projectile weapons or instruments. This policy does not encourage, support, or suggest that residents shall engage in any aggressive hazing techniques.
- Implement a program of lethal control, **only** when the interactions between humans and coyotes change from *encounters* and *incidents* to *attacks* or the coyote behavior changes from *nuisance* to *dangerous*, as determined by the City, DCSO or CDOW.

Reporting and Tracking

Reporting

It is imperative that the City has efficient and consistent reporting of human-coyote interactions. In all cases, the City staff should use a Coyote Report Form to document and record all reports. Completed coyote report forms will be used to establish a database and GIS mapping of coyote incidents. Citizens can report coyote incidents through the City's web site via an online report form or call the City to report any coyote incidents.

In addition, reports regarding dangerous coyote behavior should be reported to the DCSO and CDOW.

Tracking

The City will track all observations, sightings, encounters, incidents, and attacks that are reported through a city hosted database and associated GIS mapping. In addition, the City will also track pet-attacks, pet-loss, intentional feeding, unsecured trash, and active den sites that are reported.

Tracking reports will allow City staff to identify "hot spots" where additional signs, education or habitat investigations might be needed.

Responding to Coyote Conflicts

Observations, Sightings and Encounters

City staff will complete a coyote report form, and will add to the database and GIS map. City staff will also provide educational materials emphasizing pet safety, low-level hazing techniques, and habitat modification for the resident or HOA.

Pet Injuries or loss resulting from Coyotes

City staff will complete a coyote report form and will add to the database and GIS map. City staff may provide the pet owner with educational materials emphasizing pet safety, low-level hazing techniques, and habitat modification suggestions. In the event that a coyote continues to return to the same property, a uniformed officer (or other approved agency or individual) may carry out aggressive hazing techniques (see below).

Incidents and Attacks to Humans

Notify Colorado Division of Wildlife District Manager (DWM) immediately.

CDOW staff will respond to incidents involving dangerous coyotes and make a management decision based on the interest of public safety. The DCSO and CDOW will be notified immediately and a decision will be made regarding the use of aggressive hazing or lethal control. City staff will work with DCSO and CDOW staff to notify residents in the area of the incident. City staff will log information on a coyote report form and enter information into City's database and GIS maps. City staff may provide educational materials, low-level hazing techniques, reporting intentional feeding, and habitat modification to area residents, homeowners associations' and schools (if in the area).

CDOW Contact Information:

Regular business hours: (303) 291-7227

After hours contact, Colorado State Patrol: (303) 239-4501. Colorado State Patrol will contact the on-call Wildlife Officer.

Coyote Hazing Effort

Hazing

The City staff will make available CDOW's educational program for residents regarding coyote hazing. This educational program will include the benefits of coyote hazing and demonstrate suggested techniques. This educational program will be helpful anytime interactions between the humans and coyotes changes from observations and sightings to encounters and incidents.

The following are some examples of low-level hazing/adverse conditioning methods that have been found to be effective:

- **Human behavior:** Yelling, waving arms, and act threatening towards coyotes. However, be safe and never corner a coyote or approach one with young nearby.
- **Sound devices:** Using a device that makes a loud popping sound, air horns, banging pans, whistles, or any other noise maker.
- **Motion activated devices:** Spotlights, strobe lights, motion activated water sprinklers. These devices tend to be most effective when sound is also incorporated.
- **Projectiles:** Throwing or using a slingshot to lob rocks, golf balls or marbles at coyotes.

Aggressive Hazing

This technique will be carried out only by trained personnel of the City, DCSO or CDOW. This method will be used for a coyote or group of coyotes that have been determined by City officials, DCSO or CDOW to be menacing or dangerous. If the officers use hazing tools which launch any type of projectile, such as pepper balls, paint balls or bear spray, such a tool and its projectile may only be used on public property unless a private property owner has given permission to use these tools on their property.

Lethal Control

The City may implement a program of lethal control when the interactions between humans and coyotes changes from encounters and incidents to attacks or the coyote behavior changes from nuisance to dangerous. Information on the behavior of the coyotes will be obtained through the reports received by the City and in conjunction with CDOW. Lethal control may be utilized when education and hazing techniques have been employed and are not effective in changing the behavior of a habituated coyote, and that coyote has become dangerous or if the City determines that a coyote poses an immediate danger to humans.

When an attack on a human by a coyote has occurred, the City will immediately contact CDOW and CDOW will send a Division of Wildlife District Manager immediately to try and locate and destroy the offending

coyote, subject to their policies and procedures. If CDOW is unsuccessful in destroying the offending coyote, the City will need to decide if it is feasible to apply for a trapping exemption, through Tri-County Health Department, and hire a private trapper.

In any event, if a human has been bitten or is otherwise being attacked, or imminent threat of attack on a human by a coyote is occurring, and time will not permit the contact of CDOW, the DCSO may act immediately, according to their training, and remove such threat.

Lethal control measures will not be used indiscriminately against the coyote population.

Additional Laws Associated with Coyote Management

The following is a summary of laws related to wildlife management. Residents are advised to become familiar with all laws and regulations associated with coyote management and wildlife. This management plan is not intended to provide legal advice regarding coyote management, hazing lethal control, or other measures that may be employed by residents.

Wildlife Commission Regulation 303(A) Prohibits the relocation of coyotes without a permit. The Colorado Division of Wildlife (CDOW) generally will not authorize the relocation of coyotes due to risks associated with handling of predators and disease concerns. In addition, studies have shown that relocation is not effective.

Wildlife Commission Regulation 021(C) It is unlawful for persons to use food or any other substance to attract or entice coyotes or foxes into an area where the discharge of firearms is precluded by law.

Wildlife Commission Regulation 021(D) It is unlawful for any person to fail to take remedial action to eliminate any attractant (including trash and pet food) once they have been notified that coyotes or foxes are in the area.

Colorado Constitutional Amendment 14 (passed by voters in 1996) prohibits the use of leg hold and Conibear type traps, snares and poisons for the killing or removal of wildlife. Two of the exemptions to this amendment are

agricultural damage by wildlife and issues concerning human health and safety.

Section 33-1-105(1)(h), Colorado Revised Statutes, gives the Wildlife Commission the authority to provide for destruction of any wildlife that poses a threat to public health, safety or welfare.

Section 33-1-106, Colorado Revised Statutes, gives the Wildlife Commission the authority to regulate the circumstances under which wildlife may be taken, and to determine the disposition of usable portions of wildlife.

Section 33-6-205, Colorado Revised Statutes, gives federal, state, county or municipal departments of health the ability to grant an exemption to Amendment 14 to take (by use of leg hold traps, snares, instant kill body-gripping design traps, or poisons) wildlife for purpose of protecting human health and safety.