

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**
- **Spray with pepper spray** - This is a last resort approach and is designed more to discourage or stop an attack.

In the case of an attack, fight back! **Kick, Punch, Poke**

Make sure to target sensitive areas such as the eyes, nose, and throat. A large prey item that fights back is not a desirable target for a coyote. Make sure children have a plan that involves the aggression tactics described above in case they have an encounter with a coyote. Small children should be supervised and told to yell out “coyote” repeatedly until an adult responds.

Report an attack 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.

