



COEXISTING WITH COYOTES

GENERAL TIPS

FACTS

- Coyotes have been on Vashon since at least 2005. Research is underway, but there appear to be 3 groups on Vashon. Maury surveys have not yet been conducted, but from scat, howls & encounters, we know coyotes are present there.
- Coyotes are members of the dog family. They are curious, adaptable, and learn quickly. They weigh 18-35# in the west.
- Coyotes have multiple dens and move between them, and are typically wary of people and avoid us. Bold behavior is indicative of habituation, dog presence, or defending young. See our hazing guide for tips to keep them wary.
- Coyotes are opportunistic omnivores that eat mostly rodents and also raccoons. Other foods observed in coyote scat on Vashon include: olive pits, salmonberry, gray squirrel, seeds and deer fawn. Domestic animal hair has not been found but there are a few confirmed cases of coyotes taking sheep & some unconfirmed reports of small pets being taken.
- Where coyotes are hunted and trapped, females produce more pups per litter than in areas where they are protected. (WDFW 2015)

SAFETY TIPS

- **Appreciate coyotes from a distance.** If approached, don't run. Wave your arms and be big, bad and loud until the coyote is scared away. Do not approach a coyote den.
- **Don't feed coyotes.** Feed pets inside, secure garbage and compost, pick up fallen fruit.
- **Keep your dogs on leash and keep cats inside for safety.** Coyotes will defend their pups from wandering pets. Pick up small dogs if you see coyotes.
- **Coexistence is an active neighborhood effort.** If you often see a coyote near your home, a neighbor may be inadvertently feeding it or providing it shelter. Share your knowledge with your neighbors and work together to keep coyotes wary (see hazing guide).
- **Know coyote's life cycle.** You will see coyotes more October-December when pups disperse. Coyotes will be more aggressive April-August during pup rearing.

Citations:
WDFW 2015. wdfw.wa.gov/living/coyotes.html



Vashon
COYOTE
WORKING GROUP



Vashon Nature Center, LLC

Breeding	Dec-Feb
Denning	Feb-Apr
Birthing	Apr-May
Raising pups	Apr-Aug
Range expansion	Jul-Oct
Pup dispersal	Oct-Dec

Vashon islanders are familiar with raccoons, deer, and river otters, but coyotes are relatively new neighbors. We can learn to live in harmony with coyotes and it is easy when you know what to do. Keeping coyotes wary of people is the key to avoiding conflict and existing in harmony with them. See the Hazing Guide to learn when and how to use a powerful technique that reinforces a coyote's natural instinct of wariness towards humans.



ECOLOGICAL ROLE OF COYOTES

Like other top predators, coyotes play a critical role in keeping natural areas healthy. Coyotes have a regulatory effect on smaller predator populations which allows prey of the smaller predators to survive. For example, songbird populations and native amphibian populations have been shown to increase in areas with coyotes. By exerting a top-down regulation of other species, coyotes help maintain the balance in the food web below and around them. On Vashon, we may see them help control populations of rodents, raccoons, and deer as has been observed in other locations where they have been studied over time.

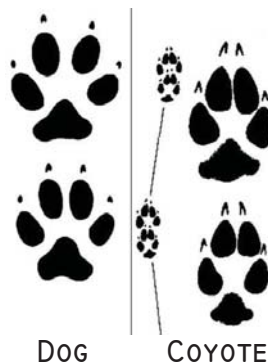


HOW TO OBSERVE COYOTES

- **From a distance!** Use binoculars, spotting scopes and telephoto lenses for photography.
- Sightings of coyotes are most often just after sunset and just before sunrise..
- Look for coyote tracks in mud, sand, dust or snow often found along draws, fence lines, roads, or on game trails.
- Coyote scat is variable in size, shape and composition and can be found in conspicuous places on trails. Droppings average 2-3 inches long and 1 inch diameter.
- Look for coyote hairs on wire fences or under fallen logs on trail.
- Listen for coyote calls, which include a range of vocalizations. Visit: www.soundboard.com/sb/wild_coyote_sounds to hear audio of various calls.

COYOTE VS. DOG FOOTPRINTS

- Pads closer together on coyote.
- Coyote tracks are longer and more elongated than dog.
- Coyote front tracks slightly larger whereas dog tracks usually close in size.
- Coyote tracks are usually in a very straight line.
- Track usually 2" long by 2-1/2" wide.
- Toenails leave imprints.



To learn more, obtain the hazing guide or other handouts, or to report sightings visit: vashonnaturecenter.org/coyotes/