

## COYOTES IN NEW JERSEY

The coyote has firmly established itself in our area through its extremely adaptable nature. Coyotes adjust well to their surroundings and can survive on whatever food is available. Coyotes primarily hunt rodents and rabbits for food, but will take advantage of whatever is available, including garbage, pet food and domestic animals that are left unattended. They also consume carrion (decaying tissue).

Coyotes play an important role in the ecosystem, helping to keep rodent populations under control.

The coyote closely resembles a small German shepherd with the exception of a long snout and bushy, black-tipped tail. The coyote has a habit of holding its tail in a horizontal position or lower while standing, walking and running.

They are tolerant of human activities and rapidly adapt to changes in their environment. They are by nature wary of humans.

In suburban and urban areas, coyotes have occasionally attacked small pets. Attacks on humans are extremely rare, as with any predatory animal they can occur. Conflicts between coyotes and humans are most likely to develop as adults forage for food for the pups in the spring and summer.

### *Coyote Precautions*

The following guidelines can help reduce the likelihood of conflicts with coyotes:

- Feeding pet cats and/or feral (wild) cats outdoors can attract coyotes. The coyotes feed on the pet food and also prey upon the cats.
- Avoid attracting rodents and other coyote prey, put away bird feeders, pick up fallen fruit and cover compost piles.
- Provide secure enclosures for rabbits, poultry, and other farm animals.
- Clear brush and dense weeds from your property. Coyotes, as well as other predators, are attracted to areas where rodents are concentrated like woodpiles
- Bring pets in at night.
- Put garbage in tightly closed containers that cannot be tipped over.
- Remove sources of water, especially in dry conditions.
- Install motion-sensitive lighting around the house.
- Allowing coyotes access to human food and garbage is irresponsible and can lead to problems. They lose caution and fear.
- If coyotes are present, make sure they know they're not welcome. Make loud noises, blast a canned air siren, throw rocks, or spray them with a garden hose. If you observe coyotes in the daytime that show no fear of humans or if a coyote attacks a person, immediately contact your local police and the Division of Fish and Wildlife at 908-735-8793; outside of normal business hours call the DEP Hotline at 877-WARN-DEP.

