Wildlife Care of Ventura County

A WILD ANIMAL REHABILITATION AND RELEASE ORGANIZATION

KEEP IT WILD!

RESCUE - REHABILITATE - RELEASE

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WILDLIFE CARE of VENTURA COUNTY

The organization, founded in 1994, is a non-profit, all volunteer organization holding permits through the California Department of Fish and Game, United States Fish and Wildlife, and USDA.

The organization is permitted to rehabilitate all native wildlife; with the exception of bear, mountain lion, and deer.

Our volunteers specialize in one or more species, and operate as a team of dedicated, and highly trained individuals.

We work very closely with veterinarians who provide medical care, x-rays, surgery and humane euthanasia when necessary.

Beyond the immediate benefits of helping wildlife in need, WCVC provides a valuable service to the entire community by making help accessible to those who find wildlife in distress.

Our mission is to rescue, rehabilitate, and release, as well as educate the public on how to coexist with our wild neighbors.

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Griffith Park Ca Sept 2009

"An unidentified man who said he was sleeping on a grassy area near Travel Town about 5 p.m. last Wednesday said he was awakened when a coyote nibbled at his foot. When he woke up, the coyote was sitting there," said Capt. Wendell Bowers of the Los Angeles Department of Animal Services. "Coyotes nip at each other when they want to be fed. This one was waiting for something to eat. It wasn't trying to eat the man's foot. It nipped at him."
LATimes

The coyote behavior, as described in this article, was not aggressive, or challenging behavior. Young coyotes will nip at the adults chin to get them to regurgitate food. Older coyotes nip to get a reaction, to engage in play, or if they want something from you. It is a form of communication originating out of curiosity. Although the coyotes behavior itself was not challenging and/or threatening, it does indicate that the coyote did not fear the man. When you have a wild animal that identifies with you, and does not fear you, it's only a matter of time, as that wild animal matures, that he will become more aggressive. WCVC 2009

As a result of that 1 complaint, and the adventure of 1 curious coyote ...8 coyotes lost their lives that day by the authorities. The 8 coyotes that were targeted, were out in the open unafraid, and begging for food... just another day for them. Most likely coyotes that regular park goers encounter daily, enjoy seeing, and really had no problem with.

So who is at fault here? The coyote, for behaving like a coyote; Law enforcement, for killing the coyotes, and doing their job to protect the people, or do we blame the people? Who, over time, created the behavior in the coyote, by providing him with food, in turn causing him to form a false sense of trust and dependacy, with by which, he eventually would hang himself? Before we start casting stones ...the responsibility and stewardship for the animals in our midst, belongs to all of us.

Our behavior and actions have serious repercutions on those we claim to be helping ...**Feeding the Coyotes will get them killed. wcvc**

Wildlife Care of Ventura County

WCVC rehabilitates a number of coyotes through out the year. We receive them from Santa Barbara all the way down to San Diego.

They come with all kinds of stories; from someone finding a lone pup on their property that has been separated from the mother (which should have been left alone), to a situation where the property owner shot the mother and dug the pups out of their den, to a case where the people actually raised the pup for 4 months and when he started acting like a wild canine, they decided to tie him to a tree in the park and abandon him. One adult coyote actually got hung up by her leg in an apple tree (she accomplished that one all by herself). Another adult was caught in an illegal steel leg-hold trap. They come to us from animal control, other wildlife facilities, or directly from the general public.

The Point being - the coyotes are here to stay and are adapting to life among us, and they are not going to go away. They are adapting to life in the city in order to survive. So we need to adapt to their presence and educate ourselves on how to live with them, and to learn what potentially harmful behaviors and actions we are exhibiting, that are contributing to the problems we are encountering with them.

We frequently receive calls from the general public enquiring how to trap and relocate these animals back to the "wild". Our response ...what wild?

Humans have built their establishments around all the wild natural lakes and ponds, in all the lushest of forests, flanking every inch of coastline.The animals needs are the same as ours ...food, water, and shelter. We have taken over their territory, so they are here trying to adapt to ours.

Coyotes to close for comfort

Coyotes are smart, curious, and very timid animals. They will not enter into a situation that they are not already familiar with, and generally will run away if challenged.

However, city coyotes are becoming desensitized to people and their establishments. In the process, learning that we are not to be feared, and we are an easy means to food, water, and shelter.

Where coyote encounters occur regularly, as in Griffith Park, the coyotes have become familiar with a large number of people feeding them continuously through out the day, intentional or not, makes no difference to the coyote.

(Park regulars have said they have seen visitors fling uneaten sandwiches, and other food, out of car windows; in park pullouts and along Zoo Drive. One man regularly scatters bread ...some picnickers routinely toss scraps for coyotes to eat.)

It's all about associations. The coyote is associating good things with people, which makes him unafraid, and WANT to come closer. But it also makes him very unpredictable, which makes him dangerous.

Within the park confines, people develop a false sense of security. Because it IS a park situation, people tend not feel as threatened by the closeness of the coyotes, or if they do, they don't know how to respond to the approaching coyote.

When people are intimidated by his approach, they throw their food on the ground and leave, this is reinforcing to the coyote that he is the ALPHA, or the one in charge.
Basically what is happening ...the coyotes are being conditioned or "trained" by people "to approach for a positive reinforcement", which is food. The solution, people need to be more aggressive and turn that positive, into a negative reinforcement. If you are going into an area where you know there are going to be encounters take props with you .

Be prepared ...
Coyotes are very sound sensitive so keep noisemaking and other scare devices nearby. They also become desensitized quickly to repetitiveness, so be prepared with various tactics. An airhorn (used at ball games), a vinegar-filled "Super-Soaker", or a powerful spray of water from a hose. Construct a "clapper", take 2 pieces of wood and clap together, a small can filled with small pebbles or nails, and shake, or pepper spray. All are powerful deterrents at close range.

During the daylight hours, if a coyote approaches too closely, pick up small children or pets immediately. Act aggressively toward the animal; wave your arms, throw stones, and shout at the coyote. If necessary, make yourself appear larger by standing up (if sitting), or stepping up onto a rock, stump, table or stair. Gather surrounding people together to make an even larger group.The idea is to convince the coyote that you are not prey, but a potential danger and have nothing that he wants.
However if the coyote is only passing through, and is not close enough to be a threat ...just leave him alone.

As in all situations it is better to be proactive in preventing unwanted behavior. Once the behavior is established, and the coyote is no longer afraid of scare tactics, there is not much that can be done. Usually the behavior is not reversible, and now you have a wild animal that is NOT afraid of people. The authorities only have one option when this situation occurs, and their job is to protect the public, not the coyote. So we all need to take responsibility for the animals among us, keep them wild ...to keep them alive.

....Coyotes really are magnificently smart, playful, loyal, curious animals.

"Proactive people take the initiative and responsibility to make things happen. They cause action rather than being victims of circumstance." ~ Chris MacAllister

Where to See "Coyotes"

Sightings of coyotes are most likely during the hours just after sunset and before sunrise. When they are usually on their way back to their dens or at least out of town. Coyotes are not noctural as most people think .They have adapted those hours to avoid contact with humans. Coyotes frequent well-used trails, A coyote will often come down the trail the same time every morning or evening..

Normal wild Coyotes
Are extremely wary. Their sense of smell is remarkable, and their senses of sight and hearing are exceptionally well developed. If you see a coyote out during the day and he is not moving off or away from you, then you can be pretty sure that he is not threatened by your presence, because if he was he would be hiding or visibly trying to leave the area.

Hunting
Coyotes are opportunists, both as hunters and as scavengers. They eat any small animal they can capture, including mice, rats, gophers, mountain beavers, rabbits, and squirrels, also snakes, lizards, frogs, fish, birds, and carrion (animal carcasses) small pets, Grass, fruits, and berries are eaten during summer and fall. Grasshoppers and other insects are important to juvenile coyotes learning the stalk-and pounce method of hunting.Pairs of coyotes or family groups using the relay method pursue small deer and antelope. These mammals are important food in winter; fawns may be eaten in spring. They are known to eat pet food, garbage, garden crops, livestock and poultry, if they are available. Most hunting activity takes place at night. Undisturbed hungry coyotes and coyotes that are desensitized to human activity within the city will hunt during daylight hours. Coyotes occasionally kill domestic dogs (and foxes) that they consider territorial intruders.

Note: The list of killers of domestic cats and dogs also includes other dogs and cats, vehicles, bears, cougars, disease, and furious neighbors! Coyotes are also very protective of their young and will attack dogs that get too close to their den and pups.

Calls
Coyotes create a variety of vocalizations. Woofs and growls are short-distance threat and alarm calls; barks and bark-howls are long-distance threat and alarm calls; whines are used in greetings; lone and group howls are given between separated group members when food has been found or to locate a member; and a yip-howl is often done when a group reunites.

Mortality
Coyote numbers are controlled by social stress, diseases, parasites, competition for food, and predators. Predators include humans, cougars, bears, and other coyotes. Eagles, dogs, and adult coyotes kill some coyote pups. Where coyotes are hunted and trapped, females produce more pups per litter. Never approach an occupied coyote den. A mother's protective instincts can make her dangerous if she has young in or nearby the den. Unfamiliar or new human activity close to the den, especially within one-quarter mile, will often cause coyotes to move, particularly if the pups are older, if the adults see you, or if the den is in an open area with little protective cover. Coyotes can have multiple den sites within their territory. Coyotes in captivity live as long as 18 years. In the wild, few coyotes live more than four years; the majority of pups die during their first year.

PROACTIVE Solutions... to PREVENT Problems

From 1988 to 1997 in southern California, 53 coyote attacks on humans -- resulting in 21 injuries -- were documented by a University of California Wildlife Extension Specialist. A study of those incidents indicated that human behavior contributed to the problem.

Humans increase the likelihood of conflicts with coyotes by deliberately or inadvertently feeding the animals, whether by handouts or by providing access to food sources such as garbage, pet food or livestock carcasses. When people provide food, coyotes quickly lose their natural fear of humans and become increasingly aggressive. They also become dependent on the easy food source people provide . Once a coyote stops hunting on its own and loses its fear of people, it becomes dangerous and may attack without warning. Prevention is the best tool for minimizing conflicts with coyotes and other wildlife. To prevent conflicts with coyotes, use the following management strategies around your property and encourage your neighbors to do the same.

Don't leave small children unattended where coyotes are frequently seen or heard.
If there are coyote sightings in your area, prepare your children for a possible encounter. Explain the reasons why coyotes live there (habitat/food source/ species adaptability) and what they should do if one approaches them (don't run, be as big, mean, and loud as possible). By shouting a set phrase such as "go away coyote" when they encounter one, children will inform nearby adults of the coyote's presence as opposed to a general scream. Demonstrate and rehearse encounter behavior with the children.

Never feed coyotes.
Coyotes that are fed by people will lose their fear of humans and develop a territorial attitude that may lead to aggressive behavior. Try to educate your friends and neighbors about the problems associated with feeding coyotes. If you belong to a homeowner's association or neighborhood watch, bring up the subject during one of the meetings. Don't give coyotes access to garbage. Keep garbage can lids on tight by securing them with rope, chain, bungee cords, or weights. Better yet, buy quality garbage cans with clamps or other mechanisms that hold lids on. To prevent tipping, secure the side handles to metal or wooden stakes driven into the ground. Or keep your cans in tight-fitting bins, a shed, or a garage .Prevent access to fruit and compost. Keep fruit trees fenced, or pick up fruit that falls to the ground. Keep compost piles within a fenced area or securely covered. Cover new compost material with soil or lime to prevent it from smelling. Never include animal matter in your compost; it attracts coyotes. If burying food scraps, cover them with at least 12 inches of soil, and don't leave any garbage above ground in the area—including the stinky shovel.

Feed dogs and cats indoors. If you must feed your pets outside, do so in the morning or at midday, and pick up food, water bowls, leftovers, and spilled food well before dark every day.

Don't feed feral cats
Coyotes prey on these cats as well as any feed you leave out for the feral cats. Prevent the buildup of feeder foods under bird feeders. Coyotes will eat bird food and are attracted to the many birds and rodents that come to feeders.

Keep dogs and cats indoors,
especially from dusk to dawn. If left outside at night in an unprotected area, cats and small to mid-size dogs may be killed by coyotes. Pets can be easy prey for coyotes. Being raised by humans leaves them unsuspecting once they leave the safety of your home. If you suspect losing a dog or cat to a coyote, notify your neighbors. Once a coyote finds easy prey it will continually hunt in the area. If you see missing cat signs in your area chances are there are coyotes in the area.

Modify the landscape around children's play areas. Shrubs and trees should be pruned several feet above ground level so coyotes can't hide in them. Keep deterrents nearby in times of increased sightings. An old hockey stick, broom, a can filled with stones (to shake)or a pile of stones near the play area can help prepare children for an encounter and will remind them of effective encounter behavior.

Build a coyote-proof fence. Coyotes don't leap fences in a single bound but, like domestic dogs, they grip the top with their front paws and kick themselves upward and over with the back legs. Their tendency to climb will depend on the individual animal and its motivation. .However, all coyotes are excellent diggers, and an effective fence needs to extend at least 8 inchesbelow the surface, or have a galvanized-wire apron that extends out from the fence at least 15 inches Electric fences can also keep coyotes out of an enclosed area. Such a fence doesn't need to be as high as a woven-wire fence because a coyote's first instinct will be to pass through the wires instead of jumping over them. Digging under electric fences usually doesn't occur if the bottom wire is electrified. Adapted from "Living with Wildlife in the Pacific Northwest" (see http://wdfw.wa.gov/wlm/living.htm) Written by: Russell Link, Urban Wildlife Biologist

Helping Homeless Wildlife in The Aftermath of California Fires

The recent fires have left many concerned citizens in Southern California wondering what they can do to help displaced wildlife searching for new suitable habitat. In most cases, it's best to leave nature to its own devices since plants and animals are more resilient and resourceful than most people think. However there are a few things homeowners can do to make their landscape wildlife-friendly during this time of exceptional stress, and a few things they should avoid doing.

National Wildlife Federation recommend you:

Provide clean water sources on your property. Make water available in shallow containers-- tubs, dishes, and existing birdbaths,and pools to assist wildlife in moving from areas of destroyed habitat to areas continuing to offer some food,water and cover.

This bobcat came from the Station Fire 2009 with minimal injuries and was progressing very well for the first 3 weeks and then she started to go down hill. It was determined after her exam and blood work that she was suffering from anticoagulant poisoning and bleeding internally. Apparently feeding on rats that had been poisoned. .There are things we can do to help the animals...and not do. Think about what our yards provide, how we care for them ... and the wildlife that need them to survive.

> To avoid an opportunity for mosquitoes carrying West Nile Virus to breed in these shallow water areas, be vigilant and change the water supply every two days or so. You may also use "mosquito dunks" consisting of the bacterium which keeps the mosquito population at bay.

> Make additional bird food available, such as suet, sunflower, niger and good quality mixed bird seed, fruit and nectar, in bird feeders and trays. Clean and disinfect feeders regularly, with one part liquid chlorine household bleach in nine parts of tepid water (a 10% solution), to decrease the possibility of spreading infectious diseases among birds visiting the feeders.

> Provide additional shelter for wildlife. Types of shelter include birdhouses, stone walls and rock piles, log piles. overgrown shrubs (placed at least 30 feet from your house) and layered native shrubs.

> Add native plants to your landscape. Unlike most plant species from other parts of the world, plants native to your area in Southern California best serve the needs of local wildlife. If your landscape is large enough, consider adding one or more small native trees or shrubs away from your house. Native plants provide the entire range of seasonal habitat benefits, including food, shelter, and a place to raise their young.

> Never intentionally feed wildlife but if planting native shrubs you will attract a natural plethora of wildlife to your yard and the larger predatorial animals will prey on the smaller prey species keeping them in check.

>Do not use poison that can secondarily kill our wildlife

> If you do encounter a wild animal in your yard and he is not injured then just leave him alone until he gets his bearings and finds a habitat suitable and large enough to support him. If he is predatorial then keep small pets inside.

Use the U.S. Forest Service Fire Effects Information System database, at www.fs.fed.us/database/feis/ to learn more about how plant and animals species respond to fire.

California State Regulations

In California, all wildlife is considered property of the state. Individuals are not permitted to keep wild animals as pets. Hunters, trappers and rehabilitators are all licensed by the State of California, and the California Department of Fish and Game (CDF & G) is the government agency responsible for monitoring how wild animals are treated.

Please Help!

Your tax deductible donation goes directly to the rehabilitation and release of the wild animals in our care. It is extremely expensive to care for injured and orphaned wild animals. We are only able to provide this service because of generous donations like yours. We greatly appreciate your help!

Baby Coyote

Volunteers
Transporters
Cash donations

Gift Cards:
Home Depot
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Sponges
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Potted Plants
Astro turf (perches)

Food Supplies:
Science Diet Puppy
Pedigree dog food
Cat food (kibble)
Nuts & Seeds
Wild bird seed
Pigeon seed
Monkey Chow (zupreem)
Baby Food (Beef)
Pedialyte
Esbilac (puppy formula)
KMR (kitten formula)
Exact (hand feeding baby formula)

Your donation of $25.00 or more will entitle you to continue to receive our semi-annual newsletter.

WCVC is a non-profit and all volunteer organization and all contributions are tax-deductible.

$25.00 _____ $35.00 _____
$50.00 _____ $100.00 _____
$_____ Other Amount

JOIN OUR TEAM and be a part of the solution!

_____ I would like to help care for wild birds or small mammals in my home.
_____ I would like to assist other rehabbers a few hours a week.
_____ I would enjoy transporting animals within my work route from local agencies to rehabilitators.

NAME: _____
ADDRESS: _____
_____ _____
PHONE NUMBER: _____

Please mail to: WCVC
P.O.BOX 941476
SIMI VALLEY CA 93065

Thank you to everyone who continue to support the animals and our efforts!

To make a tax deductible donation please call:

Simi Valley 805-581-3911
or
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Syringes:(sterile)
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Feeding tubes and Urethral catheter
Kendall Sovereign French size 3,5,10,12,

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Neosporin
Non steroid eye ointment
Gentamicin ophthalmic drops
Injectable Baytril 100mg/ml
Baytril 22.7 mg/ml inj. + tabs
Panacur paste or granules
Injectable Ivermectin
Bactrim
Metacam Oral suspension

Wildlife Care of Ventura County
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THANK -YOU FRIENDS OF WCVC FOR ALL YOUR CONTINUED SUPPORT!

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Rhys & Elizabeth Hunt
Karen Kamaka King
Al Butler

If you have found an injured or orphaned wild animal:

- Keep them warm, dark, and quiet
- Do not feed or offer the animal water
- Call a Rehabilitator

805-498-2794

STATE AND FEDERALLY PERMITTED - ALL VOLUNTEER ORGANIZATION