



CITY OF BELVEDERE

COYOTE RESPONSE PLAN



CONTACT INFORMATION:

CITY OF BELVEDERE
(415) 435-3838

INTRODUCTION

The City of Belvedere's strategy for managing coyotes is based on prioritizing public safety while balancing respect for wildlife. The purpose of Belvedere's Coyote Response Plan is to provide direction and guidance for the City and community on how to best respond to the presence of coyotes, with the understanding that coyotes are and will continue to be present in the landscape throughout Marin County.

The plan's multi-focused approach includes a robust reporting and response system, and an educational component designed to increase citizens' knowledge of coyotes and how the community, by working together, can manage and reshape coyote behavior.

This Coyote Response Plan is guided by the following principles:

1. Community safety is the top priority.
2. Strategies for addressing human-coyote conflict must be science-based.
3. Preventive measures, such as reducing food attractants, property modification, and responding appropriately when interacting with wildlife are key to minimizing the potential for conflicts.
4. Solutions must aim to address both inappropriate human and coyote behavior.
5. Vigilant monitoring of coyote activity and early intervention is key to preventing problem situations from escalating.
6. An effective response strategy includes provision of supplemental aversion conditioning to reshape coyote behavior, and not just rely on citizens' efforts.
7. Indiscriminate removal of coyotes is ineffective in preventing conflicts or reducing coyote populations.

The response strategy will be adaptive and this Coyote Response Plan will be considered a living document meant to be updated as new science and or best practices are discovered.

This plan does not supersede federal, state, county, and city regulations and policies.

RESPONSE PROGRAM

Reporting

Monitoring coyote activity and responding quickly and proficiently when necessary and as appropriate is an essential, fundamental component of an effective response plan.

To aid in tracking coyote activity, the City has implemented a streamlined system for residents to report coyote sightings and encounters, including an online non-emergency reporting form and dedicated hotline, 415-435-8942. Both the hotline and online form alert officials via email. Residents requiring immediate assistance are encouraged to call 911.

Sightings, encounters and interactions between humans and coyotes will be recorded and archived in a centralized database of reports and tracked on an internal mapping system to aid responders in identifying potential 'hot spots' of activity.

Response

The City will maintain a trained coyote response team. The team will be responsible for investigating coyote sightings and complaints which may include follow-up phone calls and in-field evidence gathering, as needed.

To ensure proficient response, official responders will be provided training on coyote biology and the most current preventive strategies to mitigate human-coyote conflict. In addition to city personnel, the team may include community volunteers, who will be trained and supervised by experts.

Response to reported coyote sightings and encounters will be guided by a comprehensive Response Guide, which identifies different levels of human-coyote interactions with recommendations on incident-specific responses for residents and City officials.

The City may retain the services of a professional human-wildlife conflict specialist to assist with complaint investigations and aversion conditioning (humane hazing).

Additional Support

Upon request, and when feasible, the City may provide additional assistance to residents with yard audits and identifying conditions on their property that might attract coyotes or other wildlife, and offer suggestions on deterrents and fencing options to help protect their yards and pets.

Trapping and Removal: A Last Resort

The City of Belvedere prioritizes the use of non-lethal and preventive strategies to address human-wildlife conflict. However, it is understood and agreed that the City of Belvedere first responders may use lethal intervention in an emergency to protect human life. It is further understood and accepted that a wild coyote may be removed under the following conditions:

- a. Where a coyote is injured, sick, or otherwise debilitated, and where the animal is not able to be rehabilitated, humane euthanasia may be provided.
- b. Where it has been confirmed by officials that a coyote has bitten a human.
- c. After all non-lethal mitigative measures have been utilized, a coyote has been deemed a bona fide risk to public safety.

Removal will be determined through an investigation by the City of Belvedere which may include consultation with the California Department of Fish and Wildlife, one or more wildlife partners, and/or other wildlife professionals.

Should lethal removal be warranted, the City will take all reasonable measures to identify the specific problematic coyote(s) to avoid indiscriminate removal of animals.

Assessment

The City will conduct at least one assessment of the various aspects of the program annually to determine overall success of the Response Plan and the effectiveness of specific strategies. This assessment will allow us to make appropriate adjustments as we gain more knowledge and/or circumstances change over time. The overall goal of the assessment will be to determine if we have fewer reported sightings and encounters over time.

COYOTE BEHAVIOR & RESPONSE GUIDE

Coyote Behavior	Level	Resident Action	City Action
Sick or injured coyote.	4	Report incident and alert WildCare.	Alert WildCare.
Coyote(s) heard or seen moving through the area, day or night.	4	Report incident.	If there have been multiple reports from the same area, a field response may be warranted. Distribute educational material as needed.
Coyote(s) seen resting or loitering in one area.	4	Report incident.	A field response may be warranted to assess the animal's condition and to conduct hazing if appropriate. Post signage.
			If multiple reports, conduct a neighborhood audit looking for attractants. Increase patrols and or surveillance. Wildlife partners may be consulted.
Coyote enters a fenced yard with NO people and or pets present. No altercation.	4	Report incident. Haze animal out of yard.	Provide yard audit and educational material. Offer a hazing kit and assist with hazing if requested. If there have been multiple reports in the area, a field response may be warranted.
Coyote following a person with or without a dog. No altercation.	3	Report incident. Haze to discourage behavior if safe and practical to do so.	Offer a hazing kit and educational materials. Assist with hazing, if requested.
			If multiple reports, respond to assess the situation, post signage, increase patrols. Wildlife partners may be consulted on hazing strategies.
Coyote entering a fenced yard with people and pets present (outdoors). No injury occurring.	3	Report incident. Haze animal out of yard. Look for and eliminate attractants.	Conduct field investigation. Provide educational materials and yard audit. Educate on pet safety and aversion conditioning options.

Continued from above.			If multiple reports within the same area, post signage, distribute educational materials to neighbors, increase patrols or surveillance, consult with wildlife partners.
Coyote seen injuring or killing an unattended dog (off leash and or beyond 6' from person)	2	Contact Belvedere Police Department immediately.	Conduct field investigation and survey the immediate area. Post signage, distribute educational materials to neighbors, increase patrols and or surveillance. Consult with wildlife partners. Deployment of professional / trained hazing team may be warranted.
Coyote seen injuring or killing an attended dog or cat (on a 6' leash or within 6' of person).	2	Contact Belvedere Police Department immediately.	Conduct immediate field investigation and survey of immediate area. Post signage, distribute educational materials, increase patrols or surveillance. Consult with wildlife partners. Deployment of professional / trained hazing team may be warranted.
Coyote approaches a person with or without a dog, displaying one or more of the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Showing teeth • Hackles raised • Lunging or nipping without contact. (not predatory)	2	Contact Belvedere Police Department immediately or 911.	Conduct an immediate survey of the area. Post signage. Area may be cordoned off to avoid additional interaction with the animal(s). Consult wildlife partners on strategies. Intensive hazing by professional team may be recommended.
Coyote bites or otherwise physically injures a person, unprovoked.	1	Call 911 immediately.	Alert Dept of Fish & Wildlife Conduct field investigation to identify specific coyote involved and circumstances around the altercation (including action of victim before / after). Lethal removal recommended.
			If the altercation was provoked by the person, in addition to the above, officials may issue a citation and or levy fines for feeding or otherwise harassing wildlife. Lethal removal may be recommended.

EDUCATION AND OUTREACH

The City's education and outreach program will be ongoing and seasonally appropriate, based on expected changes in coyote activity.

In order for residents to make informed decisions about their safety and regarding their pets and property, they must have an understanding of normal coyote behavior, including how their own actions can influence coyote behavior. This knowledge can empower residents to be proactive and take preventive measures to avoid conflicts and reshape undesirable coyote behavior.

To increase awareness about coyotes and how to prevent conflicts, the City will provide information for residents through the City's website, in City newsletters, through printed materials and videos. Key information will include an Expanded Yard Audit Checklist to help residents identify and reduce attractants in their yards and make their properties less welcoming and hospitable for coyotes, Frequently Asked Questions, information and instruction on aversion conditioning (humane hazing) techniques, and other information as needed.