

The Critter Report

Coyote Hazing / *by George Grace*

In reaction to expanding coyote populations in urban areas, many state, local, and private organizations have formed to provide information and advice on how to peacefully co-exist with the critters that the Navajo call the "song dog". What to do if you encounter a coyote, and how to keep coyotes away from specified areas is a subject easily researched on the internet, under the general topic "Coyote Hazing". Check out YouTube for the video "How to Haze a Coyote".

Project Coyote, a California organization fostering peaceful co-existence between humans and coyotes has an excellent Coyote Hazing Field Guide. that can be downloaded from their website at www.ProjectCoyote.org. Copies of the brochure will also be available at the FHRA Annual Meeting in June.

Two different types of hazing activities are described in the brochure, "Active" and "Passive". Active hazing involves how to handle a face-to-face encounter with a coyote. Passive hazing involves steps you can take to move/keep coyotes out of an area.

Active Hazing: Franklin Hills is coyote territory, so be prepared for an encounter at any time. As a general rule, **you** should haze every coyote you meet. Failing to do this can lead to "habituation" (loss of fear of humans) - a situation that can ultimately result in the coyote's death. The following list describes how to Haze a Coyote, but be aware that wily coyote is smart and may already be acclimated to some of them. **Don't depend on only one method of deterrence.**

1. Begin by acting "Big, Bad and Loud". Make eye contact. This will let him know that you are the source of danger and discomfort. Stand tall, wave your arms and yell at the coyote, maintaining eye contact and approaching it if necessary. Shaking a jacket, walking cane, umbrella, or large stick also makes you more threatening.
2. Throw something toward the coyote (don't try to actually hit him). I think this is the most effective deterrent, and have used it when walking my dogs. I carry dessicated limes (they can't hurt), but ordinary sticks, cans, rocks, balls, or similar also work. Coyotes hate having something thrown at them.
3. Carry a loud whistle. I haven't tried this, but FHRA gave extra loud whistles to last year's annual meeting attendees. If anyone has used one of them, please let me know.
4. Use a Coyote Shaker: A can containing coins which can be shaken and thrown at the coyote.
5. Use various noisemakers, such as bells, pots and pans banged together, air horns.
6. Other effective deterrents include: garden hoses, water guns with vinegar water.

After you successfully haze a coyote, he may return. If he does, haze him again. It usually only takes one or two times to haze a coyote away for good.

Passive Hazing:

Coyotes' principal diet is rodents, and they are instrumental in suppressing rodent infestations. However, they are omnivorous and always on the look-out for something to eat, including what is available in our yards. Deterrents - many just common sense - will help keep them away.

1. Remove food sources: Don't leave pet food outdoors. Clean up fallen fruit. Secure garbage can covers.
2. Fences. Coyotes are capable of scaling or jumping fences upwards of 5 1/2 feet in height. They can be deterred by increasing the fence height to at least 6 feet. Rollers can be attached to the tops making it harder to scale them. Keep fences free from vines and other vegetation that provide footing for them.
3. Close off crawl spaces under porches, decks and sheds that could be used for resting or denning.
4. Spray ammonia in your trash can several times a week to kill food odors.
5. Place mothballs, ammonia soaked rags or cayenne pepper at areas where coyotes can enter your yard.
6. Install motion-activated devices such as yard lights, strobe lights, sprinklers, or noise-makers. An internet search for "wildlife motion detector deterrent" returns links to product manufacturers.

You can see what your neighbors have to say about their coyote encounters. Link to our Coyote Sighting webpage and click on the link to over 350 comments from local residents....and please post your sighting so others can share your experience at: www.gmrnet.com/Coyotea.html ■

Commentary

How noble it is to rescue a dog from sad circumstances. But when you adopt one, it becomes a member of the family. When you shower affection on your pet, it continues to crave the attention. When you leave for work, or elsewhere, the dog only returns to the painful loss it experienced before. The consequence is barking, barking, and more barking.

For the life of me, I do not understand why canine sympathizers adopt a dog from the pound and then turn around and abandon it during the day. The rescued dog does not understand either and barks out of painful loss of its human companion.

While most of us work day hours and sleep at night, others, such as police officers, nurses, night-school teachers, etc., need to sleep during the day and are disturbed by dog barking.

Los Angeles City Council recognized this problem and there is now a law on the books that will impose a fine for barking dogs. This is a step in the right direction..

(Brenda Kilbourne is a current member of the FHRA Board of Directors and is a retired public school teacher.)



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