

Coyotes in our Neighborhoods

Anderson Township Park District Executive Director, Ken Kushner, has received questions recently about coyote sightings in Anderson Township. Mr. Kushner says, "Our staff has seen coyotes in the parks for several years now. This is a versatile creature that can make a home just about anywhere".

"Park neighbors have asked us (the ATPD) to keep the deer and the coyotes in the parks", says Mr. Kushner. "Unfortunately, wild animals don't observe the property lines humans draw. If their migration area includes the parks in Anderson, then that area will also include your yard".

The majority of coyotes are gray, though some show a rusty, brown or off-white coloration. The coyote stands about one and one half to two feet tall and is between 41 to 53 inches in length. Males of this species are larger than the females and weigh anywhere from 20 to 50 pounds.

The Coyote At-a-Glance:

- Canis latrans: means "barking dog"
- Mating: monogamous (male & female pair for life)
- Peak Breeding Activity: January through March
- Gestation Period: Approximately 63 days
- Litter Size: 1-12 pups
- Number of Litters per Year: 1
- Young are Born: April and May and are helpless; begin leaving the den with parents at 3 weeks of age.
- Migration Patters: Year-round resident; juveniles will break from the family unit and establish their own territory anywhere from 10-100 miles away.
- Feeding Periods: Prefers nocturnal activity, but in a secure environment, will hunt during the daylight hours.
- Typical Foods: Omnivorous (will eat what's available); small mammals (voles, shrews, rabbits, mice), vegetables, nuts and carrion. Unchecked, they will eat livestock, particularly sheep and chickens.

Coyotes are normally shy, reclusive and avoid exposure to humans. On occasion, coyotes do kill small dogs and cats left unattended. People living in areas with coyotes should not leave small dogs or cats outside and unattended at night. Park visitors are advised to avoid contact with wildlife, including feeding or pursuing animals. If you encounter a coyote, do not confront or try to "shoo" it away, instead, walk away in the opposite direction. Another piece of advice from Mr. Kushner is, "Don't leave pet food out overnight."

This information is compliments of the Ohio Department of Natural Resources (ODNR) website. For additional information about coyotes, visit www.dnr.state.oh.us and click on Fish & Wildlife, then A-Z Guide to Ohio Species.

According to Mr. Kushner, "We (the ATPD) refer to the ODNR site often for information on species in our parks, but it's also a really great site for kids."