

Culver City Coyote Management Plan

**Culver City Animal Services
Culver City Police Department
4040 Duquesne Avenue
Culver City, California 90232
Phone: 310-253-6143
Fax: 310-253-6217**

TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION	2
BACKGROUND	3
DIFFICULTIES MANAGING WILDLIFE	4
WHAT ROLES DO COYOTES PLAY IN THE ENVIRONMENT?	5
HOW DO HUMANS PERCEIVE COYOTES?	5
HAVE COYOTE NUMBERS INCREASED IN CULVER CITY?	5
COYOTE MANAGEMENT PLAN	7
COYOTE ATTRACTANTS IN URBAN AREAS	8
HAZING AND BEHAVIORAL CHANGE	10
FOUNDATION OF HAZING	10
GOALS OF HAZING	10
GENERAL CONSIDERATIONS	10
TRAINING PROGRAM	12
PUBLIC HAZING TRAINING	12
ENFORCEMENT	14
RESPONSE PLAN	15
THREAT LEVEL TIERED RESPONSE	15
INCIDENT DEFINED	16
APPENDICES	
APPENDIX A – DEFINITIONS ON ENCOUNTERS WITH COYOTES	17
APPENDIX B – COYOTE BEHAVIOR, BEHAVIOR CLASSIFICATION	
AND RECOMMENDED RESPONSE	19
APPENDIX C – OVERVIEW OF HAZING	20
APPENDIX D – COYOTE YARD AUDIT CHECKLIST	21

Introduction

The intent of this plan is to provide guidance for dealing with coyotes in Culver City. Guidelines and provisions of this plan do not supersede federal, state and county regulations and policies. Furthermore, the provisions of this plan do not apply to Culver City residents, businesses or homeowner associations in pursuit of their legal rights in dealing with coyotes.

Background

In the middle part of 2015, the City, along with other municipalities in Southern California, began to experience an increase in the amount of coyote encounters. These encounters included numerous attacks on pets by coyotes that were off leash and in residential back yards, and an upsurge in sightings in areas populated by people (some were during day light hours). The encounters have caused a general sense of fear by Culver City residents and a desire to manage the increased coyote activity in neighborhoods.

Historically, coyotes have existed in and around Culver City, finding safe haven in areas including the Oil Fields backing Blair Hills, the Culver City Park and the Culver City Crest Neighborhood. Additionally, other areas within the City where dense brush is prevalent (hill sides, areas in and around the Ballona creek, etc.) also provide locales where coyotes can safely build dens and reproduce. It is also believed that the prolonged drought has limited potential food sources for the coyotes and thus drawn the coyotes to residential neighborhoods in search of food and water.

Coyotes are opportunistic, versatile carnivores that primarily eat small mammals, such as rabbits, ground squirrels, and mice, to name a few. Coyotes tend to prefer fresh meat, but will eat significant amounts of fruits and vegetables during the autumn and winter months when their prey is scarce. Part of the coyotes' success as a species is its dietary adaptability. This dietary flexibility, coupled with a lack of prey and closer proximity to residents, has led the coyotes to seek alternative food sources, including small pets, pet food, and fallen fruits and vegetables found in the backyards of homes. Generally, coyotes are reclusive animals who avoid human contact. However, with the urbanization of coyotes they have realized there are few real threats in suburban environments. This has resulted in coyotes approaching people and even feeling safe visiting yards when people are present.

In response to the rise of more aggressive coyote activity in neighborhoods, City staff researched response from surrounding communities, reviewed existing Coyote Management Plans, analyzed the Coyote Guidelines from the Humane Society of the United States, and researched coyote ecology to

better understand and to create an appropriate plan for Culver City. This Plan enables the City to manage the amplified presence of coyotes with an emphasis on education, hazing, and lastly employing lethal means of removal only when the safety of the public is at risk.

The Plan is guided by the following principles:

1. Human safety is a priority in managing human-coyote interactions.
2. Coyotes serve an important role in ecosystems by helping control the population of rodents.
3. Preventive practices such as reduction and removal of food attractants, habitat modification and responding appropriately when interacting with wildlife are key to minimizing potential interaction with coyotes.
4. Solutions for coyote conflicts must address both problematic coyote behaviors (such as aggression towards people and attacks on pets) and the problematic human behaviors (intentionally or unintentionally feeding coyotes and letting pets outside unattended) that contribute to conflicts.
5. Non-selective coyote removal programs are ineffective for reducing coyote population sizes or preventing human-coyote conflicts.
6. A community-wide program that involves residents is necessary for achieving co-existence among people, coyotes and pets.

The suggested actions in the Plan are designed to increase citizens' knowledge and understanding of how coyotes behave and make clear how such behavior can be managed to reduce or eliminate conflicts with coyotes. The Plan requires active participation on the part of the entire community including residents, homeowner associations, volunteers, and City staff.

The City of Culver City does not own or have any control of wild animals found within its boundaries, nor is the City responsible for the actions or damage caused by them. These animals are a common and important part of our ecosystem.

Difficulties Managing Wildlife

Although Culver City places a high value on its wildlife, some species adapted to urban environments have the potential for problems and conflicts in specific situations. In addressing problems, Culver City promotes policies supporting prevention and implementation of remedial measures that do not harm the wildlife or their habitats.

A wildlife problem is defined as any situation that causes a health or safety issue to its residents. In cases where problems with wildlife are associated with human behavior (leaving garbage exposed or intentional wildlife feeding), ordinances and enforcement may be enacted to minimize conflict. In some cases, particular or traditional management tools are ineffective. For example, relocation of animals is not ecologically sound and is not allowed in California without permission from the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (DFW). Generally, relocated animals do not survive the transfer. If they do, they rarely stay in the relocation area and tend to scatter to other locations where

they may cause problems, be involved in territory disputes or introduce disease. In some instances, the dispersed wildlife, especially coyotes, will go to great lengths to return to its previous territory or adversely affect residents. For these reasons, the CDFW rarely allows relocation of wildlife.

As a last resort, lethal control measures, when employed, are controversial and non-selective. It is extremely difficult to ensure that problem-causing coyote(s) will be the ones located and killed. Since firearms are usually unsafe to use in urban and suburban areas, traps are generally the method used. Most traps are notoriously indiscriminate, capturing almost any animal that triggers them. Sometimes called "trash" animals by trappers, non-target species that have been found in traps include threatened and endangered species, birds, domestic dogs and cats. These animals can sustain the same injuries as target species. Even if released, they may perish later from internal injuries or reduced ability to hunt or forage for food. If they are used, traps must be humane and in compliance with federal and state laws.

It is not economically, ecologically or in other ways efficient to attempt to remove all coyotes from the urban ecosystem. Attempts made by local, state and federal agencies as well as private organizations over the past century to eradicate coyotes have proven to be ineffective. Moreover, during the past century coyotes have expanded their territories to include every state except Hawaii.

What Role do Coyotes Play in the Environment?

Coyotes play an important role in the urban ecosystem. They are predators of geese, eggs, squirrels, mice, rabbits, rats, gophers and other small animals. Rodents make up a majority of their diet.

How do Humans Perceive Coyotes?

People respond to coyotes in various ways. Some observe them with enjoyment, others with indifference and some with fear or concern. Personal experiences with coyotes may influence their perceptions. Experiences range from animal sightings without incident to stalking, killing of pets or, at the extreme, an attack on a person.

Because wild animals conjure up fear, actual sightings and perceptions may become exaggerated or misconstrued (see Appendix A for coyote description encounters). The wide range in perceptions of urban coyotes from Culver City residents supports the need for strong and consistent educational messages to clarify management techniques.

Have Coyote Numbers Increased in Culver City?

Without tracking and updated inventories, it is difficult to know if the number of coyotes has increased in an area. What is known is that coyotes can become habituated if they are intentionally or unintentionally fed, which can lead to bolder behavior when coyotes lose their fear of people. Coyotes - like all predators - will stabilize their populations if they are not constantly exploited. In general, coyotes regularly roam an area of about 2-5 square miles or whatever it takes to get enough food for the pack members. Normally, each coyote family group is a territorial and varies in number from 3 to 10 individuals. A portion of the area the family inhabits is the pack's territory, which they

defend from other coyotes. The number of mature coyotes in the family is linked to the amount of food resources in the territory. The family system keeps coyotes from getting too numerous because the families defend the area they need to survive.

A coyote family usually has one breeding (or alpha) female. This female produces more pups than are ultimately wanted in the family. Young coyotes may leave the family at about 9-11 months of age but dispersal patterns are highly variable. These coyotes become transients. Other types of transients include older individuals that can no longer defend their role as upper level family members and leave the family.

Transients move all over in narrow undefended zones that exist between territories searching for an open habitat to occupy or group to join. They often die before they succeed (many are hit by cars). It is largely because of these transients, that coyote eradication programs are unsuccessful.

Removing a group of territorial coyotes will create an undefended area into which the transient coyotes will flow. At all times of the year, numbers of transients are immediately available to replenish any voids created by killing the resident coyotes. Further, if either the alpha male or alpha female in a pack is killed, the resulting effect may result in ovulation in other breeding-age females in the family and an increase in the number of litters as well as the number of pups per litter.

Monitoring and Collecting Data

Monitoring and data collection are critical components of an effective coyote management plan. This is best accomplished with input from both residents and Culver City Animal Services. The Culver City Animal Services records and tracks coyote sightings or incidents (See Appendix A for definitions). Reports of Coyote sightings/incidents can be made by calling 310-253-6143 and via e-mail at animal.services@culvercity.org.

The purpose of monitoring human-coyote interactions is to document where coyotes are frequently seen and to identify human-coyote conflict hotspots. Gathering specific data on incidents will allow for targeting of educational campaigns and conflict mitigation efforts, as well as the ability to measure success in reducing conflicts over time.

Coyote Management Plan

Management Strategy

The Culver City strategy for managing coyotes is based on balancing respect and protection for wildlife and their habitats without compromising public safety. The main strategy is comprised of a three-pronged approach consisting of public education designed around co-existence with coyotes, enforcement of laws and regulations prohibiting the feeding of wildlife and ensuring public safety by implementing appropriate tiered responses to coyote and human interactions. This plan requires active participation on the part of the entire community including residents, homeowners associations, volunteers and Culver City Animal Services.

Education

Education is the key to having residents make appropriate decisions regarding their safety or managing their property and pets. Education will involve written materials in flyers. The goal of education is to decrease attractants, increase pet safety, and reshape coyote behavior through hazing and creating reasonable expectations of normal coyote behavior.

Learning how to respond to a coyote encounter empowers residents and supports reshaping undesired coyote behavior. The public should understand what normal coyote behavior is when living in close proximity with coyotes. For example, vocalization is normal acceptable behavior and does not indicate aggression.

Enforcement

The act of feeding wildlife is known to lead to an increase in wildlife activity. Feeding can attract coyotes and their prey to an area leading to an increased likelihood of creating a habituated coyote(s) resulting in increases in coyote and human interactions. California law prohibits feeding wildlife. Culver City Animal Services will strictly enforce the State law(s) pertaining to this activity.

Response Plan

A detailed tiered response plan has been developed to provide a mechanism for identifying and classifying different levels of human and coyote interactions. Definitions of coyote encounters is listed in Appendix A and Appendix B provides a chart detailing coyote behavior, behavior classification and recommended responses.

Coyote Attractants in Urban Areas

While human attacks are very rare, urban landscape development, habituation through intentional and unintentional feeding, pet related incidents and media attention have led some urban residents to fear coyotes. It is important to note that attacks on small pets are normal coyote behavior and do not necessarily indicate a danger for people.

Coyotes usually become habituated when they learn and associate people and/or neighborhoods with sources of food. We reinforce this behavior by not reacting appropriately when we see a coyote. Steps must be taken to address safety concerns and misconceptions and appropriate responses to potential threats to human safety. It's important to keep in mind that coyotes have been in and around Culver City (and other parts of Southern California), for a very long time.

Coyotes are drawn to urban and suburban areas for the following reasons:

1. **Food** – Urban areas provide a bounty of natural food choices for coyotes that primarily eat rodents such as mice and rats. However, coyotes can be further attracted into suburban neighborhoods by human-associated food such as pet food, unsecured compost or trash, and fallen fruit in yards. Intentional and unintentional feeding can lead coyotes to associate humans with sources of food, which can result in negative interactions among coyotes, people and pets. To reduce food attractants in urban and suburban areas:
 - a) Never hand-feed or otherwise deliberately feed a coyote.
 - b) Avoid feeding pets outside. Remove sources of pet food and water. If feeding pets outside is necessary, remove the bowl and any leftover food promptly.
 - c) Never compost any meat or dairy (unless the compost is fully secured).
 - d) Maintain good housekeeping, such as regularly raking areas around bird feeders, to help discourage coyote activity near residences.
 - e) Remove fallen fruit from the ground.
 - f) Keep trash in high-quality containers with tight-fitting lids. Only place the cans curbside the morning of collection. If you leave out overnight, trash cans are more likely to be tipped over and broken into.
 - g) Bag especially attractive food wastes such as meat scraps or leftover pet food before discarding
2. **Water** – Urban areas provide a year-round supply of water in the form of storm water impoundments and channels, artificial lakes, irrigation, pet water dishes, etc., which support both coyotes and their prey. In dry conditions, water can be as alluring as food, so remove water bowls set outside for pets and make watering cans unavailable.

3. **Access to Shelter** – Parks, greenbelts, open spaces, golf courses, buildings, sheds, decks and crawl spaces, etc., increase the amount and variability of cover for coyotes. They allow coyotes to safely and easily remain close to people, pets, homes and businesses without detection. In the spring, when coyotes give birth and begin to raise young, they concentrate their activities around dens or burrows in which their young are sheltered. Coyotes may take advantage of available spaces under sheds or decks for use as a den, bringing them into close contact with people and pets.
4. **Unattended Pets** – Coyotes primarily eat small mammals such as mice and rats, but will also prey on slightly larger mammals such as rabbits and groundhogs. Animals that are approximately the same size as a groundhog or rabbit, free-roaming outdoor pets especially cats and sometimes small dogs, may attract coyotes into neighborhoods.
 - a) The best way to minimize risk to pets from coyotes (and the other dangers of outdoor life such as cars, disease, dogs and other wildlife) is to keep small pets indoors (or only let them outside in a secure enclosure or when accompanied by a person and under the control of a leash and harness).
 - b) It is important to either keep dogs on a leash six feet long or shorter when outdoors or to stay within six feet of them when outside. (Coyotes may view a dog on a leash longer than six feet as an unattended pet.) Attacks on unattended, small dogs are normal coyote behavior and do not indicate a danger for people.
 - c) Although attacks on larger dogs are rare, coyotes will sometimes go after a large dog when they feel that their territory is threatened. This generally occurs during the coyote breeding season, which takes place from January through March. During this time, it is especially important not to let dogs outside unattended and to keep them on leashes (six feet long or less) when in public areas.
5. **Feral Cats** – People who feed feral cats are often concerned that coyotes might prey on the cats. These concerns are well founded, as coyotes can be attracted to the outdoor pet food. Although there is no sure way to protect feral cats from coyotes, the following tips can be helpful:
 - a) Feed cats only during the day and at a set time—and pick up any leftovers immediately.
 - b) Provide escape routes for cats.
 - c) Haze coyotes seen on the property (see *Appendix C*). Making them feel uncomfortable will encourage them to stay out of the area.

Other domestic animals kept outside, such as rabbits, may also be viewed as prey by coyotes. Protect outdoor animals from coyotes (and other predators) with protective fencing, by ensuring that they are confined in sturdy cages each evening.

Residents are encouraged to use the Yard Audit Checklist (Appendix D) as a tool to help recognize and remove attractants in their yards and neighborhoods.

Hazing and Behavior Change

Some coyotes have become too comfortable in the close proximity of people. To safely coexist, it's important to modify this behavior and attitude in resident coyote populations. Habituated coyote behavior needs to be reshaped to encourage coyotes to avoid contact with humans and pets.

Hazing – also known as “fear conditioning” is the process that facilitates this change and is by necessity a community response to negative encounters with coyotes. The more often an individual animal is hazed, the more effective hazing is in changing coyote behavior.

Hazing employs immediate use of deterrents to move an animal out of an area or discourage undesirable behavior or activity. Deterrents include loud noises, spraying water, bright lights, throwing objects, shouting. Hazing can help maintain a coyote's fear of humans and discourage them from neighborhoods such as backyards and play areas. Hazing does not harm or damage animals, humans or property. Behavioral change also involves human activities such as how to identify and remove attractants and how to responsibly protect pets.

Foundation of Hazing

- a) It is not economically, ecologically or in other ways efficient to try and eradicate coyotes from the urban ecosystem.
- b) Hazing is one piece of a long-term plan in creating safe and acceptable living situations, increase understanding and reduce conflict between coyotes and people.

Goals of Hazing

- a) To reshape coyote behavior to avoid human contact in an urban setting. Human behavior can shape animal behavior, in either a negative or positive manner. People living in close proximity to coyotes can remove coyote attractants, identify potentially dangerous situations for their pets and themselves, and respond in a manner designed to change coyote behavior.
- b) To provide residents information and tools to actively engage in reshaping coyote behavior and to support feeling safe in their parks and neighborhoods. This can be accomplished by teaching residents hazing techniques.
- c) To model hazing behavior and share accurate information about coyotes among other residents, friends and family.
- d) Monitor hazing by volunteers to assess its effectiveness and determine if further action or more aggressive hazing is needed.
- e) Develop long-term community based hazing programs.

General Considerations

1. Levels of hazing need to be appropriately relevant to coyote activity.

- a) Coyotes live in open spaces and the best practice is to leave them alone and educate the public on personal safety.
 - b) Coyotes are often out late at night when few people are present. This is normal acceptable behavior. Hazing may not be necessary.
 - c) Exceptions: In early stages of hazing, programs should still engage animal. Coyotes that associate danger in the presence of people under all circumstances will be reinforced to avoid contact.
- 2. Hazing must be more exaggerated, aggressive and consistent when first beginning a program of hazing. As coyotes “learn” appropriate responses to hazing, it will take less effort from hazers. Early in the process, it is extremely common for coyotes not to respond to hazing techniques. Without a history of hazing, they do not have the relevant context to respond in the desired outcome (to leave).
- 3. Techniques and tools can be used in the same manner for one or multiple animals. Usually there is a dominant animal in a group who will respond - others will follow its lead. DO NOT ignore, turn your back or avoid hazing because there are multiple animals instead of a single individual.
- 4. The more often an individual coyote is hazed by a variety of tools and techniques and a variety of people, the more effective hazing will be in changing that animal’s future behavior.
- 5. Hazing must be directly associated with the person involved in the hazing actions. The coyote must be aware of where the potential threat is coming from and identify the person.
- 6. Coyotes can and do recognize individual people and animals in their territories. They can learn to avoid or harass specific individuals in response to behavior of the person and/or pet.
- 7. Coyotes can be routine in habit. Identifying their normal habits can help target which habits to change. For example, the coyote patrols the same bike path at the same time in the morning three to five days a week. Hazers should concentrate on that time and place to encourage the animal to adapt its routine to decrease contact with people.
- 8. Certain levels of hazing must always be maintained so that future generations of coyotes do not learn or return to unacceptable habits related to habituation to people.
- 9. Human behavior must change to support hazing and continued identification and, if necessary, remove possible attractants.

10. Education about exclusion techniques including how to identify and remove attractants, personal responsibility in pet safety and having reasonable expectations are critical parts of a coyote hazing plan.
11. Coyotes are skittish by nature. Habituated behavior is learned and reinforced by human behavior. Coyotes as a rule DO NOT act aggressively towards aggressive people. The one exception is a sick or injured animal. Engaging a sick or injured animal can result in unpredictable behavior. If this is suspected, people should not engage and remove themselves from the situation, then immediately contact Culver City Animal Services at 310-253-6143.
12. Individuals involved in hazing need to be trained in explaining hazing to residents who witness the process. They also need to explain the difference between hazing and harassment of wildlife and goals of appropriate behavior for coexistence.

Training Program

Because coexisting with wildlife involves the community, initiating the hazing training programs and hazing activities by volunteers must be supervised by experts. Without this support, the programs will ultimately fail. Information should include basic training on background, coyote ecology information, and overview of hazing, examples of techniques. Materials should be provided such as handouts, contact information and resources when questions, comments and concerns come up relating to coyotes.

Volunteers need to learn about coyote behavior and be aware of realistic expectations, understanding normal versus abnormal coyote behavior and having a consistent response to residents' concerns and comments.

Behavioral change and hazing includes the following:

- a) Pet owners need to protect pets. Off-leash and unattended dogs and unattended outside cats attract coyotes (as well as pet food).
- b) Residents need to learn hazing effectiveness and techniques. A hazing program must be instituted and maintained on a regular basis.
- c) Hazing needs to be active for a sustained period of time to achieve the desired change for the highest possible long-term success.
- d) Hazing requires monitoring to assess its effectiveness and to determine if further action or more aggressive hazing is needed.

Public Hazing Training

Hazing requires by necessity community involvement, understanding, and support. Residents are best equipped to respond consistently and at the most opportune times in their own neighborhoods, parks and open spaces.

1. Locations of trainings offered shall be based on data accumulated from public on coyote activity in specific neighborhoods, parks or open space or proactively when requested by neighborhood community or volunteer groups.
2. Trainings are free to the public.
3. Topics to be covered include but are not limited to:
 - a) basic coyote information
 - b) discussion on why coyotes are in the City
 - c) normal and abnormal coyote behavior
 - d) seasonal behavior changes-breeding season, pups, denning behavior
 - e) reality of dangers towards people vs. danger towards pets
 - f) children and coyotes
 - g) how human behavior influences coyote behavior
 - h) attractants
 - i) tips on deterring animals from entering private property
 - j) appropriate response when encountering a coyote
 - k) what is hazing, goals, how to engage
 - l) appropriate hazing techniques and tools
 - m) pet safety tips
4. Updates, additional coyote information, electronic flyers and handouts distributed to participants. Information is encouraged to be passed on to others.
5. Participants shall be notified of “hot spots” and asked to haze in the area.
6. Ask for feedback on hazing training and use of hazing techniques.
7. Participants shall email detailed accounts of encounters and hazing (Hazing interaction reports, to volunteer hazers for evaluation of program, progress, successful tools and techniques being used, techniques and tools needed.
 - a) Date, location, time of day, number of coyotes
 - b) Initial coyote behavior, hazing behavior, coyote response
 - c) Effectiveness ratings
 - d) Tools and techniques used
 - e) Additional details/comments

Enforcement

The act of feeding wildlife is known to lead to an increase in wildlife activity. Feeding can attract coyotes and their prey to an area leading to an increased likelihood of creating a habituated coyote(s) resulting in increases in coyote and human interactions. California law prohibits feeding wildlife. Culver City Animal Services will strictly enforce the State law(s) pertaining to this activity.

CALIFORNIA CODE OF REGULATIONS TITLE 14

§251.1. Harassment of Animals.

Except as otherwise authorized in these regulations or in the Fish & Game Code, no person shall harass, herd or drive any game or nongame bird or mammal or furbearing mammal. For the purposes of this section, harass is defined as an intentional act which disrupts an animal's normal behavior patterns, which includes, but is not limited to, breeding, feeding or sheltering.

LOS ANGELES COUNTY CODE TITLE 10

§10.84.010. Providing Food for Certain Rodents or Predator Animals Prohibited.

- A.** Except as otherwise provided for herein, no person shall feed or in any manner provide food to a nondomesticated rodent or a nondomesticated mammalian predator.
- B.** For purposes of this chapter:
1. “Rodent” includes ground squirrels;
 2. “Mammalian predators” includes coyote, raccoon, fox and opossum.

Response Plan

A detailed tiered response plan has been developed to provide a mechanism for identifying and classifying different levels of human and coyote interactions. Definitions of coyote encounters are provided in Appendix A and Appendix B, detailing coyote behavior, behavior classification and recommended responses.

The Culver City Police Department's Animal Services will respond to calls which involve a sick or injured coyote(s) or if there is a public safety issue, such as a coyote(s) threatening people or resting in an area frequented by people, such as a yard, park, playground, school, etc.

If a human is attacked and physically injured by a coyote, the Culver City Police Department will work with the California Department of Fish and Wildlife, which will be the lead investigating agency, to thoroughly investigate the incident, identify and lethally remove the responsible coyote(s). Lethal removal will also be considered as a last resort if there is a public safety issue (such as a coyote(s) threatening people or resting in an area frequented by people, such as a yard, park, playground, school, etc.) only after a thorough investigation and identification of the offending coyote(s). Since coyotes are considered "non-game wildlife" any resident or Homeowner's Association Board of Directors can initiate, at their own expense, action to protect themselves and their **private property** from coyote attacks.

Threat Level Tiered Response

Level Green: Behavior - A coyote is seen or heard in an area. Sighting may be during the day or night. Coyote may be seen moving through the area. Response - Education and hazing needed.

Level Yellow: Behavior - A coyote appears to frequently associate with humans or human related food sources, and exhibits little wariness of human presence. Coyote is seen during the day resting or continuously moving through an area frequented by people. Response - Education and aggressive hazing needed, volunteer hazing team created.

Level Orange: Behavior - A coyote is involved in an incident(s) where there is an attended domestic animal loss. Several level orange incidents in the same general area may indicate the presence of a habituated coyote(s). Response - Education and aggressive hazing needed, volunteer hazing team created, and public awareness of incident(s) and circumstances discussed. If multiple level orange incidents have occurred in the same vicinity within a short amount of time, lethal removal may be recommended.

Level Red: Behavior - A coyote that has been involved in an investigated and documented provoked or unprovoked close encounter or attack on humans. Response - Culver City staff may work to lethally remove the responsible coyote(s) after a thorough investigation of the incident(s).

Incident Defined

An incident is described as a conflict between a human and a coyote where the coyote exhibits the following behavior: coyote approaches a human and growls, bares teeth, or lunges; injures or kills an escorted/on-leash pet. This includes attended pet loss, but not human injury. When human injury occurs, it is defined as an “attack.” The California Department of Fish and Game will investigate the incident if a human is physically injured.

Circumstances Determine the Response

If an attack is unprovoked indicating a continued threat to human safety, Culver City Animal Services will determine a course of action, potentially including a permit for trapping. Culver City Animal Services will not engage in any attempts of general culling. Only specific animals will be targeted.

In a provoked attack, Culver City Animal Services will determine if circumstances indicate a continued threat to human safety. Culver City Animal Services will determine initial response which may range from targeted education up to lethal removal of the involved animal.

Continued response will depend on specific details of the attack. The level of threat to human safety will determine if continued action is needed. Continued activity may include increased educational materials such as flyers, mailers or press releases, public meetings, and/or potentially applying for a trapping permit.

If leg hold traps or snares are determined to be necessary, Culver City Animal Services will coordinate with the California Department of Fish and Wildlife on location, duration and details of trapping attempts.

Trapping will not extend beyond one month. While the use of live traps is legal, they are proven to be ineffective at capturing a targeted coyote and generally will not be considered. Leg hold traps or snares will be used only as a last resort.

If there is immediate danger that requires shooting, Culver City Animal Services will support and coordinate with the Culver City Police Department first responders. No private individual will be authorized to discharge a firearm within the City of Culver City.

If a coyote is lethally removed, Culver City Animal Services will evaluate and determine what educational measures and hazing techniques need to be modified in order to decrease any reoccurrence.

Appendix A

Definitions of Encounters with Coyotes

Active coexistence: Humans and coyotes exist together. Communities decide on community space, such as open spaces, where coyotes are appropriate and do not haze, feed, or interact with them in these areas. Humans take an active role in keeping coyotes wild by learning about coyote ecology and behavior, removing attractants, taking responsibility for pet safety, and hazing coyotes in neighborhood or community spaces (except for predetermined coyote appropriate areas).

Attack: – A human is injured or killed by a coyote.

Provoked - A human-provoked attack or incident where the human involved encourages the coyote to engage. Examples include dog off-leash in an on-leash area; dog on leash longer than 6' in length, or a human intentionally approaches or feeds the coyote.

Unprovoked - An unprovoked attack or incident where the human involved does not encourage the coyote to engage.

Pet Attack:

Attended animal loss or injury - When a person is within 6' of the pet and the pet is on leash and is attacked and injured by a coyote.

Domestic animal loss or injury - A coyote injures or kills a pet. Also includes “depredation” - predation on domestic pets. Unattended animal loss or injury is normal behavior for a coyote.

Suspected Pet Attack: A coyote is an opportunistic feeder and may feed on animals, especially cats that were previously killed by cars or other means. The remains may be found and indicate that the animal was attacked by a coyote. In cases where Animal Services Officers respond to these calls, without knowledge of an actual attack, the incident will be recorded as a suspected attack.

Encounter: An unexpected, direct meeting between a human and a coyote that is without incident.

Feeding:

Intentional feeding - A resident or business actively and intentionally feeds coyotes including intentionally providing food for animals in the coyote food chain.

Unintentional feeding - A resident or business is unintentionally providing access to food. Examples such as accessible compost, fallen fruit from trees, left open sheds and doors, pet food left outdoors, among others.

Unintentional feeding – bird feeders: A resident or business with bird feeders that may provide food for coyotes, e.g. birds, bird food, rodents, squirrels. Bird feeders must be kept high enough from the ground so a coyote is unable to reach the feeding animals. The area under the bird feeder must be kept clean and free of residual bird food.

Hazing: Training method that employs immediate use of deterrents to move an animal out of an area or discourage an undesirable behavior or activity. Hazing techniques include loud noises, spraying water, bright lights, throwing objects, shouting. Hazing can help maintain a coyote's fear of humans and deter them from neighborhood spaces such as backyards and play spaces. Hazing does not damage animals, humans or property.

Threat Incident: A conflict between a human and a coyote where the coyote exhibits the following behavior: approaches a human and growls, bares teeth, or lunges; injures or kills an attended domestic animal. A human is not injured.

Stalking Incident: A conflict between a human and a coyote where the coyote exhibits the following behavior: follows a person with or without an attended pet on leash. A human is not injured.

Observation: The act of noticing or taking note of tracks, scat or vocalizations.

Sighting: A visual observation of a coyote(s). A sighting may occur at any time of the day or night.

Unsecured Trash: - Trash that is accessible to wildlife, e.g. individual garbage cans, bags or uncovered or open dumpsters or trash cans over-flowing or where scattered trash is outside the receptacle.

Appendix B

Coyote Behavior, Behavior Classification and Recommended Response

Coyote Action	Classification	Response
Coyote heard	Observation Level Green	Provide educational materials and info on normal coyote behavior
Coyote seen moving in area	Sighting Level Green	Provide education materials and info on normal coyote behavior
Coyote seen resting in area	Sighting Level Green	Educate on hazing techniques, what to do tips
Coyote seen resting in area with people present	Sighting Level Yellow	If area frequented by people, educate on normal behavior and haze to encourage animal to leave. Look for and eliminate attractants.
Coyote entering a yard without pets	Sighting Level Yellow	Educate on coyote attractants, yard audit, provide hazing info
Coyote entering a yard with pets	Encounter Level Yellow	Educate on coyote attractants, yard audit, hazing info, pet safety
Coyote entering yard and injuring or killing pet w/o people present	Pet Attack Level Orange	Develop hazing team in area, gather info on specific animals involved, report on circumstances, educate on coyote attractants, yard and neighborhood audits, pet safety
Coyote biting or injuring unattended pet/pet on leash longer than 6'	Pet Attack Level Orange	Gather info on specific animals involved, report circumstances, educate on coyote attractants, yard/neighborhood audits, hazing, pet safety
Coyote following or approaching a person w/o pet (Stalking)	Encounter Level Red	Educate on hazing techniques and what to do tips. Lethal removal will be considered.
Coyote following or approaching a person & pet (Stalking)	Sighting Encounter Level Red	Educate on hazing techniques and what to do tips and pet safety. Lethal removal will be considered.
Coyote entering yard or home with people & pets, no injury occurring	Encounter Level Red	Gather info on specific animals involved, document circumstances, educate on coyote attractants, yard/neighborhood audits, hazing, pet safety. Lethal removal will be considered.
Coyote biting or injuring attended pet / pet on leash 6' or less	Pet Attack Level Red	Gather info on specific animals involved, document circumstances, educate on coyote attractants, yard/ neighborhood audits, hazing, pet safety. Lethal removal will be considered.
Coyote aggressive, showing teeth, back fur raised, lunging, nipping w/o contact	Threat Level Red	Gather info on specific animals involved, report circumstances, educate on coyote attractants, yard/ neighborhood audits, aggressive hazing, pet safety. Lethal removal recommended.
Coyote biting or injuring person	Attack Level Red	Identify and gather information on specific animal involved, report circumstances, educate on coyote attractants, yard/ neighborhood audits, hazing, and pet safety. City staff will inform the California Department of Fish and Game. Lethal removal recommended.

Appendix C

Overview of Hazing

Human behavior can shape animal behavior, in either a negative or positive manner. People living in close proximity to coyotes can remove coyote attractants, identify potentially dangerous situations for their pets and themselves, and respond in a manner designed to change coyote behavior.

Hazing is a process whereby individuals and volunteers respond in like manner to make a coyote uncomfortable and choose to leave a situation where their presence is unwanted.

Basic hazing consists of standing your ground, never ignoring or turning your back to a coyote(s), yelling and making unpleasant and frightening noises until the animal(s) choose to leave.

More aggressive hazing consists of approaching an animal quickly and aggressively, throwing projectiles, spraying with a hose or water gun, or creating fear of contact so the animal leaves the situation. For more options see Appendix C on hazing.

Hazing must continue once it begins until the animal leaves, otherwise, the coyote will learn to “wait” until the person gives up. Not following through with hazing will create an animal more resistant to hazing instead of reinforcing the image that “people are scary.”

Hazing should never injure the animal. An injured animal becomes less predictable versus a normal, healthy one who responds in a consistent and predictable manner to hazing.

Hazing should be conducted in a manner that allows the coyote to return to its normal habitat in a direction that would minimize harm to the animal. Hazing the animal in the direction of other houses and busy streets should be avoided.

Hazing uses a variety of different hazing tools. This is critical as coyotes get used to individual items and sounds.

- Noisemaker: Voice, whistles, air horns, bells, “shaker” cans, pots, pie pans
- Projectiles: sticks, small rocks, cans, tennis balls, rubber balls
- Deterrents: hoses, spray bottles with vinegar, pepper spray, bear repellent, walking sticks

A common concern with hazing involves potential danger to the hazer. A coyote’s basic nature is very skittish and the nature of the species is what makes this technique successful. A normal, healthy coyote will not escalate a situation with an aggressive person. Hazing is NOT successful with every species of wild animal because different types of animals have different traits.

Appendix D

Coyote Yard Audit Checklist

(For homeowner use)	OK	FIX	WAYS TO MITIGATE
FOOD			NEVER hand-feed or intentionally feed a coyote!
Pet Food			Never feed pets outdoors; store all pet food securely indoors.
Water Sources			Remove water attractants (such as pet water bowls) in dry climates.
Bird Feeders			Remove bird feeders or clean fallen seed to reduce the presence of small mammals that coyotes prefer to eat.
Fallen Fruit			Clean up fallen fruit around trees.
Compost			Do not include meat or dairy among compost contents unless fully enclosed.
BBQ Grills			Clean up food around barbeque grills after each use.
Trash			Secure all trash containers with locking lids and place curbside the morning of trash pickup. Periodically clean cans to reduce residual odors.
LANDSCAPING			Trim vegetation to reduce hiding places and potential denning sites.
Structures/ Outbuildings			Restrict access under decks and sheds, around woodpiles, or any other structure that can provide cover or denning sites for coyotes or their prey.
*FENCING			Enclose property with a 6-foot fence with an additional extension or roller-top) to deter coyotes. Ensure that there are no gaps and that the bottom of the fence extends underground 6 inches or is fitted with a mesh apron to deter coyotes from digging underneath. *Must comply with Culver City Municipal Codes
PETS			Never leave pets unattended outside.
			Never allow pets to “play” with coyotes.
			Fully enclose outdoor pet kennels.
			Walk pets on a leash no longer than 6 feet in length.

We encourage you to take steps to eliminate attractants on your property in order to minimize conflicts with coyotes. We also urge you to share this information with friends and neighbors because minimizing conflicts is most effective when the entire neighborhood works together.