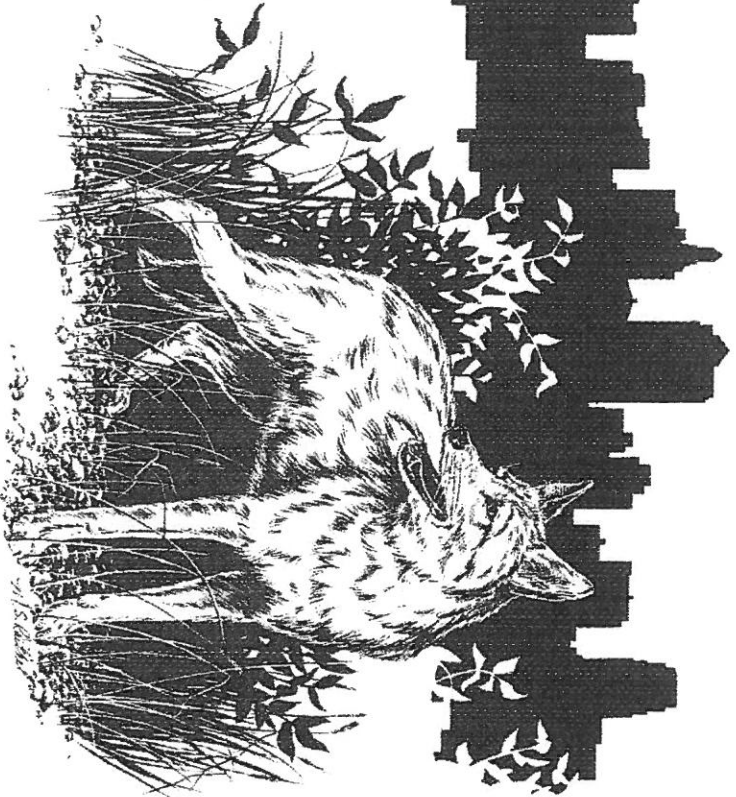


Coyotes are becoming a common sight in urban areas across Missouri and North America.

Historically, these adaptable mammals lived in open grasslands and prairies, but they have flourished in the different habitats humans have created. Many people enjoy observing coyotes and, by taking a few precautions and learning about coyote behavior, are avoiding conflicts with them.



COYOTE BEHAVIOR

A true scavenger, the coyote will eat just about anything including: snakes, foxes, rodents, rabbits, fruits (apples, persimmons, watermelons), vegetables, birds, grass, grasshoppers, pets and pet food, roadkill, and just plain garbage.

A high reproductive rate and rapid growth of offspring aid in the coyote's success. They breed in February and March and pups are born about 60 days later. An average litter contains four or five pups, which are born in dens. In urban environments, dens can be in storm drains, under sheds, in holes in vacant lots, parks, golf courses, or any other dark, dry place.

Both parents care for their pups. At about a month old, pups can eat meat and move. Because food requirements increase dramatically dur-

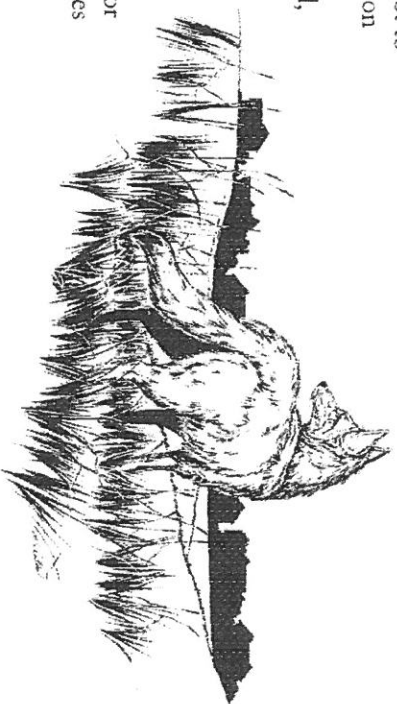
ing pup rearing, this is a period when conflicts between humans and urban coyotes are most common. If food is deliberately or inadvertently provided by people, the pups quickly learn not to fear humans and will develop a dependency on easy food sources.

In areas where they are hunted or trapped, coyotes are extremely wary of humans. However, in urban areas where they are less likely to be harmed and more likely to associate people with an easy and dependable source for food, they can become very bold. They will come right up to the door of a house if food is regularly present. Coyotes have learned that small dogs and cats can be easy prey.

HEALTH CONCERNS

Rabies has not been found in recent years in Missouri coyotes. Canine distemper virus does occur and somewhat mimics the symptoms of rabies (convulsions, tremors, loss of fear). Distemper is not transmissible to humans, but pets are susceptible and should be vaccinated. Sarcoptic mange outbreaks are common and cause the animal to lose patches of fur resulting in an overall mangy appearance. Coyotes also can suffer from heart worms, hookworms, canine hepatitis, and parvo virus.

To minimize transmission of any wildlife diseases, wear protective gloves when touching a coyote carcass or feces.



Missouri Department of Conservation

MEDIA RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

DATE: December 13, 2017



MDC urges pet owners to be watchful of coyotes this time of year

St. Louis, Mo—Missouri Department of Conservation (MDC) officials say it's important this time of year to be especially vigilant of pets in areas where coyotes are known to live.

Unlike many other kinds of wildlife, coyotes adapt particularly well around human development and coexist with people in many places. These areas can include municipal parks and other urban green space, golf courses, suburban wooded common areas and even within subdivisions themselves.

As a result of this, conflicts can sometimes occur between humans and these wild canines, particularly when it comes to small pets. Coyotes have been known on occasion to attack and kill small dogs.

According to MDC Wildlife Damage Biologist Tom Meister, one of the secrets behind the coyote's survival success is their diet. "A true scavenger, the coyote will eat just about anything, including: foxes, groundhogs, mice, rabbits, squirrels, fruits, vegetables, birds, insects, carrion (dead animals) and common household garbage," Meister said.

However, Meister said that coyotes may attack family pets not as a food source, but instead because they see them as competition for other food.

Installing a fence around yards may also help. Fences should be at least six feet high and dug into the ground six inches deep so the agile and resourceful canines cannot jump or dig under them.

More information on dealing with nuisance coyotes can be found at MDC.mo.gov by searching keywords, "coyote control". Or obtaining a free brochure by writing: Controlling Conflicts with Urban Coyotes in Missouri, PO Box 180, Jefferson City, MO 65102. Or e-mail pubstaff@mdc.mo.gov.