



Song Dogs of the West Need a Chance to Sing

Coexisting with Coyotes

Background

Highly intelligent and ecologically important, coyotes (*Canis latrans*) have long suffered from human persecution. In rural areas, tens of thousands of coyotes are killed annually with poisons, traps, snares, and by aerial gunning—often with the use of tax dollars. In urban areas, coyotes face intolerance because of the perception that they threaten human safety, or because they prey on unsecured pets. But it doesn't have to be this way.

WILDEARTH GUARDIANS promotes coexistence with coyotes by teaching communities how to keep pets and children safe in coyote country. We celebrate coyotes as precious native carnivores that inspire respect and wonder.

Behavior and Breeding

Coyotes, known for their vocalizations, are also called “song dogs.” Weighing an average of 30 pounds, coyotes have adapted to diverse ecosystems from deserts and grasslands to forests. They even live in large cities such as Los Angeles and Chicago. They range from the Arctic to Central America and across the breadth of the U.S.

Generally, coyotes hunt alone because their primary prey consists of rodents, rabbits, and hares. Omnivorous, they also eat a wide variety of fauna and fruits. Their keen eyesight, sense of smell, and incredible speed increases hunting success. Coyotes also scavenge.



The West's iconic coyotes are threatened by human persecution.

Coyotes occur as solitary individuals, most often as mated pairs, or in family groups called packs. Mated for life, the pack consists of the alpha pair and their progeny—from different age litters. When a pack is left intact, only the alpha pair breeds—a natural birth control mechanism. If one or both members of the alpha pair are killed, all the members of the pack are now “permitted” to breed—which increases the number of breeders. After lethal control operations, litter sizes increase, and individuals migrate from other areas. Killing coyotes has the exact opposite intended effect: more individuals come to the killing area.

Role in Ecosystems

Coyotes are important ecosystem actors—their presence increases biological diversity. Coyotes limit populations of smaller carnivores such as foxes, skunks, raccoons, and even house cats. This work indirectly benefits ground-nesting birds, such as sage-grouse and meadowlarks.

Coexisting

Most conflicts between coyotes and people don't have to end in coyote killings. In those rural areas where livestock ranching occurs, livestock can be protected from coyotes and other native carnivores through the use of guard animals and other tools. Coyote killing has not proven economically effective for reducing livestock losses.

In urban areas, particularly in quality coyote habitat, human conflicts can be reduced or eliminated if cats are kept indoors, dogs are leashed, and trash and bird-feeders do not act as coyote attractants. It is illegal to knowingly feed coyotes in Colorado and other states.

Near Denver, WILDEARTH GUARDIANS has organized nearly 100 volunteers who scare away coyotes. This hazing keeps coyotes away from humans and helps prevent coyotes from being killed. We've also been successful in working with local communities to adopt plans that emphasize coexistence, not killing.

Together, we can ensure that coyote songs will be heard throughout the West for generations to come.

For more information about coexisting with coyotes, contact Nicole Rosmarino at 303.573.4898 or nrosmarino@wildearthguardians.org.

Yes! I will help coyotes keep singing by joining WILDEARTH GUARDIANS!

Special introductory offer—half-price membership rates:

\$15 Individual Membership \$25 Family Membership Or \$_____

My check payable to WILDEARTH GUARDIANS is enclosed. Name _____
 Please charge my credit card: VISA MC Address _____
Card # _____ City/State/Zip _____
Exp. Date _____ Phone _____
Signature _____ Email _____

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