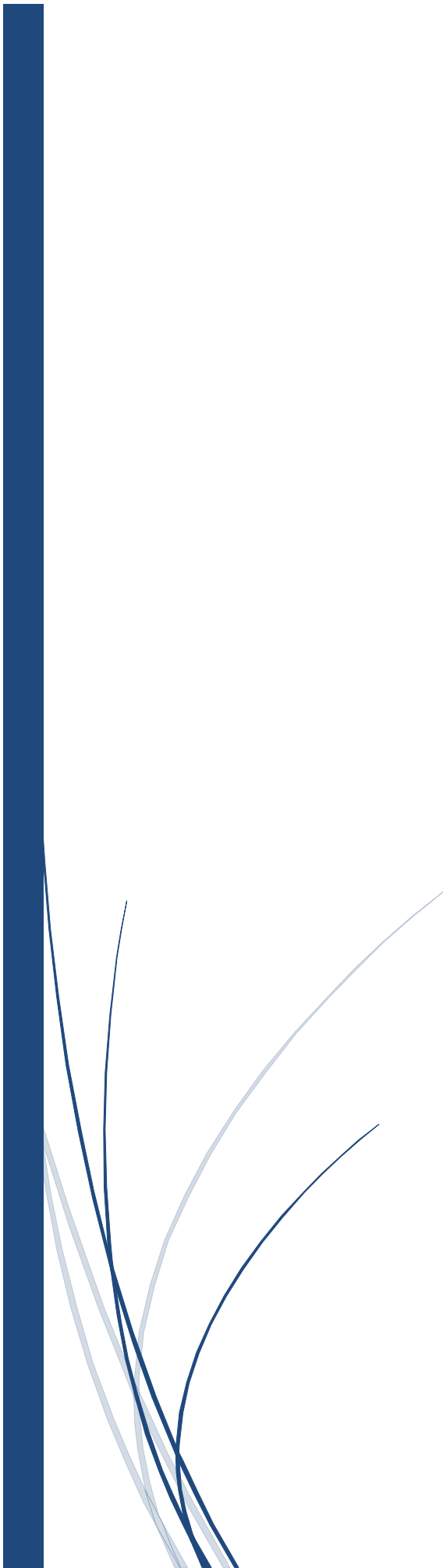


# CITY OF SAN DIMAS

## Coyote Management Plan



## **SECTION 1: INTRODUCTION**

The goal of the San Dimas Coyote Management Plan is to discourage the habituation of coyotes in an urban environment by using education, and a robust human/coyote reporting and responding system. The recommended actions in this plan are designed to increase the community's knowledge and understanding of how coyotes behave and actions that can be taken to manage or reduce human conflicts with coyotes.

The overall intent of this plan is to provide guidance for dealing with coyotes in the City. This plan has implemented methods that are supported by professionals and have successfully been utilized by other municipalities in Southern California. This plan does not supersede federal, state, county, and city regulations and policies.

The City of San Dimas Plan is guided by the following principles:

- Human safety is a priority in managing human-coyote interactions.
- Coyotes serve an important role in San Gabriel Valley's ecosystems by helping to control rodent populations.
- Preventive practices are crucial to minimizing potential interactions and encounters with coyotes.
- Solutions for coyote conflicts must address both problematic coyote behaviors and the human behaviors that invite them.
- Regionwide programs that involve residents can improve coexistence among humans, coyotes, and pets.

## **SECTION 2: COYOTE MANAGEMENT STRATEGY**

The strategy for managing coyotes is based on balancing respect and protection of wildlife without compromising public safety. The main strategy is a multi-focused approach consisting of public education, enforcement, and reporting.

### *PUBLIC EDUCATION*

Coyote awareness education is critical for residents to make informed decisions regarding their safety, properties, and pets by decreasing attractants, reshaping coyote behavior, and creating reasonable expectations of normal coyote behavior. Dissemination of information to residents, businesses, and schools will be accomplished through the use of the cities' websites, newsletters, social media, press releases, town halls, community meetings, coyote management workshops, and other direct and indirect public outreach campaigns.

Learning how to properly and effectively respond to a coyote encounter empowers residents with methods to protect both humans and pets. The public should understand what normal coyote behavior is when living in close proximity with coyotes. For example, vocalization (coyote calls) is a normal and acceptable behavior that does not indicate aggression.

The City can host town hall meetings, trainings, and provide youth education workshops in areas with high human-coyote interactions. The City can mail information regarding coyotes to educate the residents and households residing in areas with high coyote sightings. Mailers and social media postings will be offered in English and other languages that are widely spoken by local residents.

### *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 habituated coyotes and resulting in increases in coyote-human interactions. California law prohibits feeding wildlife, including coyotes.

### *REPORTING*

A five-tier safety response plan has been developed to provide a mechanism for identifying and classifying different levels of human-coyote interactions.

### SECTION 3: COYOTE ATTRACTANTS

Urban landscape development, intentional and unintentional feeding, pet-related incidents, and media attention have led some residents to fear coyotes. It is important to note that attacks on free-roaming and unattended small pets are normal coyote behavior and do not necessarily indicate a danger for humans. Coyotes usually become habituated when they learn and associate people and/or neighborhoods with sources of food.

Residents may reinforce this behavior by acting inappropriately when they see a coyote. Steps must be taken to address safety concerns and misconceptions and to ensure appropriate responses to potential threats to human safety. It is important to keep in mind that coyotes have been in and around the San Gabriel Valley and other parts of Southern California since thousands of years ago.

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

**FOOD** – Urban areas provide a bounty of natural food choices for coyotes that primarily eat rodents. 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 parks and yards. Intentional and unintentional feeding can lead coyotes to associate humans with sources of food, which can result in negative and aggressive interactions among coyotes, people, and pets.

To reduce food attractants in urban and suburban area, residents should be educated to:

- Never hand-feed or otherwise deliberately feed a coyote.
- Avoid feeding pets outside and remove sources of pet food and water in outdoor settings. If feeding pets outside is necessary, remove the feeding bowl and any leftover food promptly.
- Never compost any meat or dairy products unless the compost is fully secured.
- Maintain good housekeeping, such as regularly cleaning up spilled seed in areas around bird feeders, to help discourage attracting rodents, which leads to more coyote activity near residences.
- Remove fallen fruit from the ground.
- Keep trash in high-quality containers with tight-fitting lids.
- Only place trash bins curbside during the morning of trash collection. If left out overnight, trash bins are more likely to be tipped over and broken into by coyotes. If necessary, purchase secured trash containers.
- Seal food waste, such as meat scraps or leftover pet food, before discarding the waste into trash bins.

**WATER** – Urban areas provide a year-round supply of water in the form of stormwater impoundments and channels, artificial lakes, irrigation, swimming pools, and pet water dishes, which support both coyotes and their prey. In dry conditions, water can be as alluring as food. Residents should remove outdoor water bowls/cans and secure fountains, pools, and jacuzzis.

**SHELTER** – Parks, greenbelts, open spaces, golf courses, buildings, sheds, decks, and crawl spaces increase the amount and variability of cover for coyotes. They allow coyotes to safely and easily remain

close to residents, pets, homes, and businesses without detection. Coyotes may take advantage of available spaces under sheds or decks for use as a den, thereby bringing them into close contact with residents and pets.

***UNATTENDED PETS*** – Coyotes primarily eat small mammals, such as mice and rats; however, they will also prey on slightly larger mammals such as rabbits and groundhogs. Animals that are approximately the same size as a groundhog or rabbit, especially unattended outdoor cats and small to medium sized dogs, may attract coyotes into neighborhoods.

- The best way to minimize risk to pets from coyotes (and the other dangers of outdoor life such as cars, disease, and other wildlife) is to keep small pets indoors, only let them outside in a secured enclosure, or when they are accompanied by a person and under the control of a leash and harness that is less than six feet long.
- It is important to either keep dogs on a leash that is 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 free-roaming small cats or dogs are normal coyote behavior and do not indicate a danger for humans. A free-roaming pet is considered as an unattended domestic pet outside of its enclosed yard or area.
- Although attacks on larger dogs are rare, coyotes may often attack a medium to large sized 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 to not leave dogs outside unattended and to keep them on leashes (six feet long or less) when in public areas.

***FERAL CATS*** – While residents who feed feral cats are often concerned that coyotes might prey on the cats, the act of feeding feral cats may cause more harm than good, as coyotes often frequent these locations. Resident should not feed feral cats to avoid attracting coyotes into their neighborhoods. Although it can be difficult for residents to protect feral cats from coyotes, the following tips can be helpful:

- Do not feed feral cats.
- If feral cats frequent your neighborhood, please contact your local Animal Services agency.
- Make coyotes feel uncomfortable will encourage them to stay out of the area.

Other domestic animals kept outside, such as rabbits and chickens, may also be viewed as prey by coyotes. Protect outdoor animals from coyotes and other predators with protective fencing and sturdy cages.

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

## SECTION 4: PROTECTION METHODS

Some coyotes have become too comfortable in the close proximity of residents. To safely coexist, residents must modify their behavior to protect themselves and/or pets. Residents can employ immediate use of deterrents to move an animal out of an area or discourage an undesirable behavior or activity. Deterrents include loud noises, spraying water, bright lights, throwing objects, waving arms, and shouting. These methods can help maintain a coyote's fear of humans and discourage/remove them from neighborhoods, such as backyards and play areas.

These methods are not intended to harm or damage animals, humans or property, but a method to detour a coyote during an encounter. A coyote, similar to a dog, will not know that the behavior it is engaging in is unwanted unless some type of message is sent and reinforced repeatedly. If a human sees a coyote in an urban area and does not respond in any way, there is no reason for the coyote to leave the area.

It is not economically and ecologically practical to eradicate coyotes from the urban ecosystem. Hazing can be used as a method of protection.

### *TRAINING PROGRAM*

The City which partners with experts from CDFW, local Humane Society, the County of Los Angeles, and/or other relevant external stakeholders to empower residents with methods to safely co-exist with wildlife. Specific to human-coyote conflicts, education and training on species-specific ecology and behavior, strategies to reduce potential human-coyote conflicts, and appropriate conflict and management techniques may include the following:

- Basic coyote information;
- Normal/healthy vs. abnormal/unhealthy coyote behavior;
- Seasonal behavior changes;
- Appropriate responses when encountering wildlife, especially coyotes;
- Human health, public, and pet safety tips and concerns;
- Coyote attractants; or,
- Methods to reduce/eliminate access to attractants (e.g. exclusion, deterrence)

## **SECTION 5: ENFORCEMENT**

The act of feeding wildlife can attract coyotes and their prey to an area, leading to an increased likelihood of creating habituated coyotes and increased coyote-human interactions. California law prohibits feeding wildlife and local police departments will strictly enforce applicable state statutes pertaining to this activity. The City has the option to adopt an ordinance that further discourage residents from feeding wildlife.

The following are some of the applicable regulations that may be utilized as enforcement tools to discourage coyotes from proliferating in urbanized San Gabriel Valley:

### **CALIFORNIA CODE OF REGULATIONS TITLE 14. SECTION 251.1. HARASSMENT OF ANIMALS**

Except as otherwise authorized in these regulations or in the Fish and Game Code, no person shall harass, herd, or drive any game 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. SECTION 10.84.010. PROVIDING FOOD FOR CERTAIN RODENTS OR PREDATOR ANIMALS PROHIBITED**

It is unlawful to feed a nondomesticated rodent or nondomesticated mammalian predator as defined in this section, unless:

- The person is the owner of the animal and the animal is kept in accordance with the requirements of the State Department of Fish and Wildlife; or
- After notifying the responsible agency to pick up the animal, the person provides food to a trapped or injured animal.

For purposes of this chapter:

1. "Rodent" includes ground squirrels;
2. "Mammalian predators" include coyotes, raccoons, foxes, and opossums.

A violation of this section is a misdemeanor.

## SECTION 6: SAFETY RESPONSE PLAN

A tiered response plan identifies and classifies levels of human and coyote interactions. The City’s 5-tier coyote response plan is below.

COYOTE BEHAVIOR	RESPONSE LEVEL	RESPONSES
<b>Coyote heard or seen moving in public area</b>	1	Sighting report will be reviewed, and if appropriate, a response will be provided by e-mail or phone. The City would direct residents to available resources on normal coyote behavior.
<b>Coyote seen resting in public area</b>	1	Sighting report will be reviewed, and if appropriate, a response will be provided by e-mail or phone. The City would direct residents to available resources on normal coyote behavior.
<b>Coyote seen resting in public area with humans present</b>	2	The City provides resources for the resident to be educated on hazing techniques and what-to-do tips. Additionally, the City would work with the local community to eliminate coyote attractants.
<b>Coyote entering a yard to a home with or without pets present</b>	2	The City provides information for the household to be educated on coyote attractants, yard audit implementation, human-coyote conflict mitigation, protection techniques, and/or pet safety information (if applicable).
<b>Coyote entering a yard and injuring or killing an unattended pet</b>	3	The City gathers information on specific animal involved, report on circumstances, and provide information for the household to be educated on coyote attractants, yard and neighborhood audits, and pet safety information. Removal/euthanasia considered if there is no evidence of attractants that can be removed.
<b>Coyote biting or injuring an attended or /pet on a leash</b>	3	The City gathers information on specific animal involved, report on circumstances, and provide information for the household to be educated on coyote attractants, yard and neighborhood audits, and pet safety information. Removal/euthanasia considered if there is no evidence of attractants that can be removed.



<b>Coyote following or approaching a person and pet (stalking)</b>	3	The City provides information for the resident to be educated on hazing techniques, what-to-do tips, yard/neighborhood audits, and pet safety information. Additionally, the City will work with the residents to eliminate coyote attractants in the area. Removal/euthanasia considered if there is no evidence attractants that can be removed.
<b>Coyote following or approaching a person without a pet (stalking)</b>	4	The City provides information for the resident to be educated on hazing techniques, what-to-do tips, yard/neighborhood audits, and pet safety information. Additionally, the City will work with residents and local groups to eliminate coyote attractants in the area. Removal/euthanasia considered if there are no evidence attractants that can be removed.
<b>Coyote biting or injuring a human</b>	5	The City informs the California Department of Fish and Wildlife. Residents will receive educational materials on coyote attractants, yard or neighborhood audits, and pet safety. Removal/euthanasia recommended.

If a human is attacked and physically injured by a coyote, the City will work with the CDFW, which will be the lead investigating agency to thoroughly investigate the incident, to identify and remove the responsible coyote. As a last resort, lethal removal will also be considered if there is a public safety issue with a coyote threatening residents—only after a thorough investigation and identification of the offending coyote.

If there is an immediate public safety issue, such as a coyote threatening residents in an area frequented by people, the local police department will respond. Since coyotes are considered as “non-game wildlife,” any resident or homeowners’ association can, at their own expense, initiate action to protect themselves and their private property from coyote attacks within the limits of the law regarding trapping and hunting, such as by employing a private animal control service.

## SECTION 7: COYOTE REPORTING

The City encourages residents to report coyote sightings to the University of California Coyote Cacher© at <https://ucanr.edu/sites/CoyoteCacher/>. This will allow Cities to identify potential trouble areas where coyotes are frequently sighted and allow the City to focus resources where they are needed most. There are several options to choose from and residents are encouraged to use the tool that works best for them. Please keep in mind that these are only coyote reporting tools. Depending on the submission format, residents may receive acknowledgement of their submissions.

### *University of California Coyote Cacher©*

This tool is accessible by members of the public from a computer or mobile device. It provides a repository for reported coyote activity, real-time alerts to stay abreast of reported activities, and GIS mapping by zip code. Residents may view coyote encounters in the San Gabriel Valley region by visiting [https://ucanr.edu/sites/CoyoteCacher/Story\\_Map/](https://ucanr.edu/sites/CoyoteCacher/Story_Map/). Residents can also report a coyote encounter to the UC Coyote Cacher through the link on the website or by submitting a request at <https://geodata.ucanr.edu/coyoteCacher/form/>.

### *State and Local Enforcement Agencies*

Coyote bites, injured or ill coyotes, or coyotes that pose a threat to the public should be reported to the 9-1-1 emergency line. Coyote bites can be extremely hazardous to human health. If a resident has been bitten by a coyote, please direct the injured resident to seek medical attention immediately. A police report may be taken to document the incident. All animal bites to humans are legally reportable in Los Angeles County except for rodent and rabbit bites. For more information, please visit the County of Los Angeles Public Health Department website at <http://publichealth.lacounty.gov/vet/biteintro.htm>.

## APPENDIX A: YARD AUDIT CHECKLIST

	No Action Required	Adjustments Required	Recommended Action
<b>FOOD</b>			Never 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, leaking faucets, and irrigation systems that cause water to pool.
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 fruits around trees.
Compost			Do not include meat or dairy among compost contents unless the area is fully enclosed.
BBQ Grills			Clean up food around BBQ grills after each use.
Trash			Secure trash containers with locking lids and place curbside on pickup day. Periodically clean cans to reduce residual odors.
<b>LANDSCAPING</b>			Trim vegetation to reduce hiding places for rodents and coyotes and potential denning sites.
<b>STRUCTURES</b>			Restrict access under decks and sheds, around wood piles, or any other structure that can provide cover or denning sites for coyotes or their prey.
<b>FENCING*</b>			Enclose property with six-foot fence with additional extension or roller top to deter coyotes. Ensure that there are no gaps and that the bottom of the fence extends underground six inches or is fitted with a mesh apron to deter coyotes from digging underneath. <b>*Must comply with local municipal code</b>
<b>PETS</b>			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.