



WESTPORT POLICE DEPARTMENT

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Foti Koskinas
Chief of Police

Press Release

Westport Police Issue Safety Precautions for Coyotes

(Westport, CT) Spring is here and the Westport Police Department is experiencing the same type of calls related to our local coyote population as we have in previous years. The Police Department and Animal Control have responded to several calls from residents regarding close coyote sightings. We would like to remind residents that coyotes' ability to survive and take advantage of food sources found in and around man made habitats has resulted in an increase in coyote related conflicts. We also would like to remind those with children and small pets to be aware of the dangers associated with a coyote encounter. Please follow these pointers to keep yourselves and your pets safe:

- Never feed coyotes—it is illegal to feed coyotes in most places. Feeding endangers your family and neighbors as it lures coyotes into neighborhoods.
- Keep unattended cats and dogs indoors or in completely enclosed runs, especially at night, and do not assume that a fence will keep a coyote out of your back yard.
- Accompany your leashed pet outside. Make sure you turn on lights if it is dark to check your back yard for unexpected wildlife.
- Keep dogs on short leashes while walking outside; the Division of Wildlife recommends a leash no longer than 6 feet.
- Leave noisemakers on hand to scare away coyotes that may enter your yard, such as whistles and horns.
- Don't run away or turn your back on a coyote.

- Do not allow a coyote to get in between you and your pet or child—keep children close to you.
- Yell, clap hands, blow a whistle and try to make yourself look larger if you have a close encounter with a coyote.

Habituated coyotes are sometimes a neighborhood issue. Work with your neighbors to make sure attractants such as fallen fruit, pet food left outside, dirty barbecue grills, and unsecured trash or compost are removed so that negative coyote interactions are minimized. Be sure no one is intentionally feeding coyotes.

Please contact the Police Department if there is an immediate danger associated with a coyote. To report coyote sightings, please contact the Animal Control Office at 203-341-6011 or the Westport Police non-emergency number at 203-341-6000. Animal Control is also providing informational pamphlets to residents in the neighborhoods where we have been experiencing coyote issues.

For more information, please see the attached document from the Department of Environmental Protection.

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