



Tips on how to interact
with wildlife this spring

Description

Nature Conservancy offers advice on how to deal with coyote and other wildlife sightings

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Early spring draws out animals that may have spent the winter lying low to conserve energy. Now, as the snow melts and reveals more food sources, these creatures take the opportunity to find food and spring homes wherever they can. That's why people may see and hear more wildlife in their neighbourhoods this time of year. **Samantha Knight**, national conservation science manager with the **Nature Conservancy of Canada (NCC)**, feels it is a good sign that people are becoming more aware of wildlife and their annual life cycles.

... we need to remember that these are wild animals and need to be treated with respect so we can peacefully co-exist.

– [Samantha Knight, national conservation science manager, Nature Conservancy of Canada](#)



Urban coyote – Image: [Frank Schulenburg, CC BY-SA 4.0](#), via Wikimedia Commons

“Wildlife is making a comeback in many cities,” said Knight. “For example, **coyotes** have expanded their range and even adapted to live in the downtown cores of our cities. But we need to remember that these are wild animals and need to be treated with respect so we can peacefully co-exist.”

Knight says coyotes are generally active in winter during their mating season. Spring is when they are searching for dens to rear their pups. She reminds people that coyotes, as with all wildlife, should only be watched from a distance and never approached. While coyotes are generally shy and would prefer to avoid confrontations with humans, they can become habituated to people and become aggressive.

“Early spring is when coyotes are very actively looking for food. They play an important role in the urban ecosystem by controlling rodent populations and eating carrion. But, unfortunately, coyotes that are injured, starving, young or have been fed by humans can come into conflict with people,” said Knight.

Knight offers the following tips to people to keep themselves and their pets safe:

- Feed your pets inside and keep them indoors. Do not leave pets unattended or unprotected outdoors. Keep dogs on a leash when going for walks.
- Make sure garbage, pet food or compost is not left outside. Keep garbage containers sealed and locked. Close off spaces under porches, decks and sheds to prevent wildlife from seeking shelter or dens.



Howling coyote – Image: [USFWS Mountain-Prairie](#), Public domain, via Wikimedia Commons

She also shares good information for people going out into nature and who may encounter a coyote or any wildlife:

- Do not approach, try to feed, touch, or photograph the animal from close distances.
- If you encounter a coyote and it does not flee, remain calm and slowly back away and leave the area in the direction where you came from. Never run from a coyote, or any wildlife, as it may trigger a predatory response and give chase.
- Use personal alarm devices — such as a whistle, bell or phone — to frighten or threaten the animal.
- If the animal exhibits aggressive behaviour, make yourself larger and noisier by raising your arms and voice.
- If, in the rare case, the animal continues to approach, throw rocks or sticks in its direction.

Landowners unable to deal with coyotes that repeatedly show signs of aggression or habituation should contact the police or their local Natural Resources Department.

Feature image: coyote, by Christopher Bruno

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