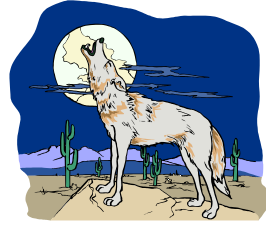




# Coyotes



Coyotes (*Canis latrans*) are found through most of California. The California Department of Fish and Game estimates a population range of 250,000 to 750,000 individuals. Coyotes are very adaptable and inhabit most areas of the state with the exception of the centers of major metropolitan areas.

Most adults weigh larger sex. resemble a coyotes



In the The howls, proficient predators, possessing the speed, strength, and endurance necessary to tackle prey as large as adult deer.

They are medium sized animals belonging to the dog family. between 22 to 25 pounds on the average, with males being the

With large erect ears, slender muzzle, and bushy tail they small collie dog. In the hotter drier regions of California, are tan-brown in color with streaks of gray. In the more

mountainous or humid areas the color is darker with less brown. winter the coats become quite dense, especially in the colder areas.

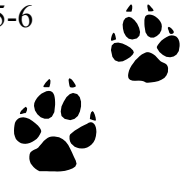
voice of the coyote is quite distinctive, consisting of various high-pitched yaps, and occasional dog like barks. Coyotes are

In California, coyotes breed mainly during January, February, and March. The gestation period is about 60-63 days. Young are born March through May, with litter sizes averaging 5-6 pups. Coyotes produce one litter per year. The young are weaned at 5-6 weeks and leave the parents at 6 to 9 months. Most adults breed first in their second year. Non-breeding yearlings often stay with the adult parents and help care of the pups. Coyote dens are found in steep banks, rock crevices, sinkholes, and underbrush. Often these are holes that have been used by badger, skunks, foxes, or other animals with entrances enlarged to about one foot in diameter. Dens vary from 4 to 5 feet wide to 50 feet deep.

The diet of the coyote consists mainly of mice, rats, ground squirrels, gophers, rabbits, and carrion. They also eat insects, reptiles, amphibians, fruits, birds and their eggs, and deer fawns. In some rural areas of California they prey heavily on sheep, cattle, and poultry. In urban and suburban areas, garbage, domestic cats and dogs, other pet, hobby animals, and pet food can be important food items.

Coyotes are most active at night and during the early morning and late evening hours. In areas where they are not disturbed by human activities and during the cooler times of the year, they may be active throughout the day. Urban coyotes are becoming very tolerant of human activities. Young coyotes tend to be more active during daylight hours than adults. Home range size varies depending on food availability.

Distemper and canine hepatitis are among the most common diseases of coyotes. Rabies and tularemia also occur and may be transmitted to humans and other animals. Coyotes often carry parasites including mites, ticks, fleas, worms, and flukes. Mites that cause sarcoptic mange are



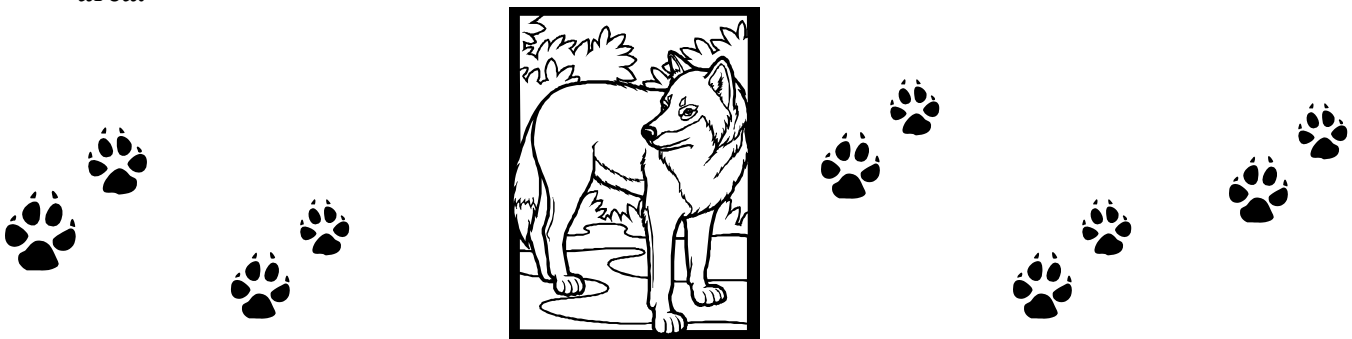
an important ectoparasite of coyotes. Heartworm is one of the most important endoparasites in California's coyote population. This parasite can be transmitted to domestic dogs by mosquitoes.

Coyotes can cause substantial damage. In rural areas they often kill sheep, calves, and poultry. In some parts of the state they cause damage to drip irrigation systems by biting holes in the pipe. In other areas they cause considerable damage to watermelons, citrus fruits, and avocados. Aircraft safety is often jeopardized when coyotes take up residence on or near runways. Coyotes have also been known to prey on various endangered/threatened species including the kit fox and the California least tern. In urban and suburban areas, coyotes commonly take domestic house cats, small dogs, poultry, and other domestic animals. Coyotes have been known to attack humans, and in one case, a coyote in southern California killed a three-year-old girl.

During the time of the year when adult coyotes are caring for young (May-September), they can be very aggressive. Domestic dogs are especially vulnerable to attack during this time. In urban settings where a den site has been identified, the area should be posted with signs and caution should be taken to keep dogs out of the area. Increased predation on all domestic pets can be expected around den sites. In some cases a family group of coyotes can be harassed enough to encourage them to move. **Whenever possible, coyotes should be harassed or scared to condition them to avoid humans.**

Coyotes are not threatened or endangered in California and are classified as non-game mammals by the Department of Fish and Game. Where coyotes continue to be a problem after non-lethal methods have proven unsuccessful or when human health and safety is jeopardized, it is sometimes necessary to kill one or more animals. Coyotes can be shot where legal and appropriate or captured using a variety of restraining devices. California Department of Fish and Game regulations prohibit the relocation of coyotes without written permission from the Department. For further information on the legal status of coyotes and other wildlife contact your local California Department of Fish and Game Regional Office.

**For further information or assistance in solving coyote problems contact the USDA-APHIS-WS State Office (916-979-2675) or the USDA-APHIS-WS District Office for your area.**



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