

Coyotes Have Been Seen Around Town: Police Have Advice

Author : David Gurliacci

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The Darien Police Department and the Municipal Animal Control Officer (MACO) have received recent reports from residents about coyote sightings in various parts of town.

It has been discovered that incorrect information has circulated on social media pertaining to what the response of the Darien Police Department and animal control officer has been.

— [an announcement](#) *from Darien police*

The following is a coordinated statement from both the Darien Police Department and the Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection.

As coyotes have become more common and occasionally prey on small pets, public concerns about coyotes attacking people, especially children, have increased.

Although some coyotes may exhibit bold behavior near people, coyote attacks on humans are extremely rare, however aggressive behavior toward small dogs is common and more prevalent during the breeding season which typically runs from January to February.

This risk can increase if coyotes are intentionally fed and then learn to associate people and their residences with food.

As a reminder: The Darien Animal Control Officer WILL NOT “trap” or remove a coyote based on a sighting.

The DEEP Wildlife Division may consider issuing a special permit to a professional licensed Nuisance Wildlife Control Operator (NWCO), hired by the landowner, to trap and destroy coyotes that exhibit a pattern of attacking supervised pets or threaten public safety.

Tips on Preventing Conflicts with Coyotes

- **DO NOT allow pets to run free!** Keep cats indoors, particularly at night, and small dogs on a leash or under close supervision at all times. The installation of a kennel or coyote-proof fencing is a long-term solution for protecting pets. A variety of livestock fencing and small animal pen designs can protect farm animals.
- **NEVER feed coyotes!** DO NOT place food out for any mammals. Clean up bird seed below feeders, pet foods, and fallen fruit. Secure garbage and compost in animal proof containers.
- **Always walk dogs on a leash.** If approached by a coyote while walking your dog, keep the dog under control and calmly leave the area. DO NOT run or turn your back. Coyotes are territorial and many reports of bold coyotes visiting yards, howling, or threatening larger dogs can often be attributed to this territorial behavior.
- **Attempt to frighten away coyotes by making loud noises** (e.g., shouting, air horn) **and acting aggressively** (e.g., waving your arms, throwing sticks, spraying with a hose).
- **Be aware of any coyote behaving abnormally** or exhibiting unusually bold behavior (e.g., approaching people for food, attacking leashed pets that are with their owners, stalking children, chasing joggers or bikers, etc.) and report these incidents to authorities immediately.
- Be aware of and **report any coyotes exhibiting behavior indicative of rabies**, such as staggering, seizures, and extreme lethargy. Daytime activity is not uncommon and does not necessarily indicate rabies.
- **Teach children to recognize coyotes and to go inside the house** (do not run) or climb up on a swing or deck and yell if they are approached.
- **Close off crawl spaces** under porches and sheds that coyotes or other animals may use.

Educate your neighbors. Ask them to follow these same steps.

Regulated hunting and trapping may be used to remove problem coyotes in areas where it is safe and legal to do so.

Contact the DEP Wildlife Division at 860-424-3011 for more information on coyotes or other wildlife problems.

Who to Call

To report coyote sightings in Darien contact:

- Darien Animal Control Officer: 203-662-5345
- DEEP Wildlife Division: (860) 424-3011

To report animals that are behaving abnormally or are posing an immediate public threat in Darien:

- Darien Police Department 203-662-5300
- DEEP Emergency Dispatch Office (24 hrs.): (860) 424-3333