

COYOTES ON UW CAMPUSES

The information below is intended to educate the UW community about living and working around urban coyotes, preventing conflict with these animals, and reporting coyote activity on campus.

URBAN COYOTES

Coyotes look like small dogs, with erect pointed ears, slender muzzle, and a bushy tail. They tend to be more afraid of humans than we are of them. Coyotes can be most active at night and in the early morning, but it is also normal for them to be moving at any time of day. Coyotes have been present at our campus locations and vicinity for [years](#) and they are an important part of our ecosystem. Coyotes, like other urban wildlife, can sometimes carry parasites and diseases transmissible to people and animals.



Coyote near Denny Hall, December 2022.

PREVENT CONFLICT

Conflicts and risks to humans and coyotes can occur when they lose their natural fear of humans. Please take the following actions to keep coyotes wild:

- **Never feed coyotes or put food out to attract them.** Wild animal bites can occur when people attempt to feed or touch them; habituating an animal to rely on people for food can lead to its demise.
- **Make space.** If you see a coyote near you, widen the gap between you and the animal.

- **Be loud and appear large.** Clap your hands, stomp, shout at it, wave your arms, shine a flashlight, pop open an umbrella, throw a rock or stick towards it, or take a step towards it. These actions encourage them to leave and avoid people in future.
- **Do not run at or away from a coyote.** Never corner or trap a coyote or other wild animal.
- **Remove pet food and bird feeders around buildings.** Feed pets indoors. Pet food, bread, table scraps, seeds that attract birds and rodents also attract coyotes to the area.
- **Dispose of garbage in secure bins** with lids. Don't leave waste outdoors, next to bins or outside exterior doors. Event organizers should plan for waste containment and disposal.
- Fence produce gardens and **promptly remove ripe fruits and vegetables.** Cover compost piles.
- **Accompany small children outside** if coyotes have been frequenting the area.
- **Walk pets on leash** ([required](#) on University property), **and keep pets close to you at night.** Don't leave pets outside unsupervised. Coyote diseases or parasites are rarely a risk to humans but can affect dogs. Never let a dog interact with a coyote.

REPORT SIGHTINGS

IF A COYOTE APPROACHES YOU

- > **Act loud and appear large to deter it.**
- > **If it continues to approach or acts aggressively: Call 9-1-1 (or UW Police Department on the Seattle campus).**
 - **Back away slowly. Do not run.**

Promptly [report](#) a sick, injured, or dead coyote.
Never touch a sick, injured, or dead animal.

You may also [report repeated sightings](#) of coyotes in an area of University property, observed concerning behavior, or multiple coyotes together to help with monitoring coyote activity on campus.

If the coyote you observe is quickly and quietly passing through an area and avoiding human contact, you do not need to take action; enjoy getting a glimpse of a clever urban animal.



*A coyote stands watch in Discovery Park, Seattle.
Image Credit: [Discovery Park Staff](#).*

LIVING WITH COYOTES

Occasional sightings of coyotes around campus and in city greenspaces will likely continue. They easily adapt to urban areas where they find fewer competing carnivores and various food sources, including small animals and human garbage.

The University keeps grounds trimmed and tidy to limit cover and habitat, regularly removes waste from bin locations, removes reported dead animals on campus, and uses integrated pest management methods to control pest activity around campus buildings.

Coyotes are an essential part of our campus ecosystem; they help keep city and campus wild small animal (e.g. squirrels, rabbits, rats, mice) populations in check.

In the surrounding city coyotes live in and travel through neighborhood parks, golf courses, nature reserves, along waterways, ravines, and bike paths that cross or border our campuses. We may see coyotes more often in early summer while raising pups and searching for food, or in the fall when young coyotes leave their parents for the first time.

Coyotes can become bolder in urban areas when they start associating human activity with an easy and dependable food source (e.g., human foods and garbage, garden produce, roadkill, pet food and small pets left outside).

The risk of negative encounters between coyotes and people [is very low](#). However, if you are concerned about wildlife on campus, you **can request a safety escort** when traveling in dark or secluded areas on the [Bothell](#), [Seattle](#) or [Tacoma](#) campuses.

MORE INFORMATION

Visit the following resources for more information.

- [Pest Control and Wildlife Resources](#) webpage on the UW Environmental Health & Safety website
- [Seattle Coyote Study website](#)
- [Seattle Urban Carnivore Project FAQs](#)
- [Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife, Living with Wildlife: Coyote Fact Sheet](#)
- [US Dept of Agriculture Urban and Suburban Coyote Factsheet](#)
- [The Humane Society of the United States, Coyote hazing guidelines](#)

Questions? Contact EH&S Environmental Public Health team at (206) 543-7262 or phdept@uw.edu.