

Coyotes

Wildlife management series for Midwestern farmers



Adult coyote.

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Common and Latin name: Coyote (*Canis latrans*)

Commonly impacted crops: Coyotes prey on small or young livestock like poultry, sheep and calves, and occasionally damage fruit crops, irrigation lines and maple sap tubing.

Relevant regulatory agency: State level department of natural resources.

Species overview

Physical description of animal: Coyotes appear dog-like with erect pointed ears, a slender muzzle and bushy tail. Coyotes are predominantly brownish-gray with a light gray to cream-colored belly. Color varies greatly, however, from nearly black to red or nearly white in some individuals. Their fur is dense and thick, often making them appear larger than they are. Most have dark or black guard hairs over their back and tail. When running, coyotes carry their bushy, black-tipped tail down usually below the level of their back. In the East, many coyotes are larger than their western counterparts, with males averaging about 45 pounds and females about 30 pounds.

Coyote scat looks very similar to dog droppings, sometimes tapering at one end, and often will have small bones, fur or vegetable matter visible. Coyote scat are often deposited along trails and roadsides. Their tracks can be difficult to distinguish from medium-sized dog tracks, but are typically more oval than dog tracks.

Habitat and range description: Once found in the Great Plains and the West, coyotes are now found throughout the country. Coyotes have adapted to exist in virtually every type of habitat, arctic to tropic, in North America, including urban and suburban locations.

Behavior including food habits: Coyotes are active day and night, but most active around sunrise and sunset. The coyote diet can include many items depending on what is available, such as rodents, rabbits, deer, carrion, insects and fruit. Coyotes eat mostly meat during winter and spring. In late summer and fall, more than half of their diet may consist of plant material.

Identification of damage: Since coyotes will scavenge on livestock carcasses, the mere presence of coyote tracks or droppings near a carcass is not sufficient evidence of predation.

Coyotes typically attack sheep at the throat, but young or inexperienced coyotes may attack any part of the body. Coyotes usually kill calves by eating into the anus or abdominal area. Coyotes commonly feed on a carcass at the flanks or behind the ribs and first consume the liver, heart, lungs and other viscera. By contrast, dogs generally do not kill sheep or calves for food and are relatively indiscriminate in how and



Coyote tracks in the mud.

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Shooting: Shooting is a good option for control because it is selective and rather inexpensive. It does require skill to be effective and safe. It can be time-consuming since coyotes have a well-earned reputation for being adaptive and persistent. There are regulations in each state and perhaps local jurisdictions that describe what restrictions and conditions apply for lethal control of coyotes.

Considerations

Before pursuing an ambitious coyote management plan, consider the benefits of coyotes in suppressing rodent populations. It is unrealistic to eliminate coyotes from a farm or property for very long; coyotes are too numerous and adaptable for that. A well-conceived management plan would give serious consideration to sound husbandry practices and exclusion. Then, just before livestock are at a vulnerable stage, for example lambing or calving, might be the most strategic time to intervene with trapping, snaring or shooting. Any coyote management plan will be enhanced by good surveillance of coyote activity in the area, such as finding tracks and scat.

Acknowledgments

Green, Jeffrey S., Henderson, F. Robert and Mark D. Collinge. "Coyotes." *Prevention and Control of Wildlife Damage*. Editors, Scott E. Hygnstrom, Robert M. Timm, Gary E. Larson. 1994. University of Nebraska-Lincoln. 2 vols. <http://icwdm.org/handbook/carnivor/Coyotes.asp>



Alfred Viola, Northeastern University; Bugwood.org

The color of a coyote's fur can vary greatly.

Michigan Department of Natural Resources. "Coyote." 2009. https://www.michigan.gov/dnr/0,4570,7-350-79135_79218_79619_81482---,00.html

United States Department of Agriculture, Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service "Wildlife Services: Helping Producers Manage Predation." 2002. Program Aid No. 1722 https://www.aphis.usda.gov/wildlife_damage/nwrc/downloads/prodguide.pdf.

Additional resources

Visit our **Wildlife Management website for additional fact sheets on managing other wildlife** and for more resources: bit.ly/wildlife-mge

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service <https://www.fws.gov/offices/>

Your state's Department of Natural Resources or similar agency.

Wildlife Services. "Livestock Protection Dogs." Fact Sheet. 2010. https://www.aphis.usda.gov/publications/wildlife_damage/content/printable_version/fs_livestock_protection.pdf



Terry Spivey, USDA Forest Service, Bugwood.org

Guard dogs are used to repel predators from livestock or cropping areas.

Midwest directory of wildlife management agencies

Information from February 2019.

Illinois

Department of Natural Resources: (618) 435-8138
www.dnr.illinois.gov
USDA APHIS Wildlife Services: (217) 241-6700

Indiana

Department of Natural Resources: (317) 232-4102
www.in.gov/dnr
USDA APHIS Wildlife Services: (765) 494-6229

Iowa

Department of Natural Resources: (515) 725-8200
www.iowadnr.gov
USDA APHIS Wildlife Services: (573) 449-3033

Kansas

Department of Wildlife, Parks and Tourism:
(620) 672-5911 www.ksoutdoors.com
USDA APHIS Wildlife Services: (785) 537-6855

Michigan

Department of Natural Resources: (517) 284-6057
www.michigan.gov/dnr
USDA APHIS Wildlife Services: (517) 336-1928

Minnesota

Department of Natural Resources: (651) 296-6157
www.dnr.state.mn.us
USDA APHIS Wildlife Services: (651) 224-6027

Missouri

Department of Natural Resources: (800) 361-4827
www.dnr.mo.gov
USDA APHIS Wildlife Services: (573) 449-3033

Nebraska

Department of Natural Resources: (402) 471-2363
www.dnr.nebraska.gov
USDA APHIS Wildlife Services: (402) 434-2340

North Dakota

Game and Fish Department: (701) 328-6300
www.gf.nd.gov
USDA APHIS Wildlife Services: (701) 355-3300

Ohio

Department of Natural Resources: (800) 945-3543
www.ohiodnr.gov
USDA APHIS Wildlife Services: (614) 993-3444

South Dakota

Game Fish and Parks: (605) 223-7660 www.gfp.sd.gov
USDA APHIS Wildlife Services: (701) 355-3300

Wisconsin

Department of Natural Resources: (888) 936-7463
www.dnr.wi.gov
USDA APHIS Wildlife Services: (608) 837-2727



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