

Appendix B: Hazing Program and Training Plan

Hazing and behavioral change

Some urban coyotes have become comfortable in close proximity to people. To safely coexist, it's important to modify this behavior and attitude in resident coyote populations. Urban coyote behavior needs to be reshaped to encourage coyotes to avoid contact with humans and pets.

Hazing is the process that facilitates this change and is by necessity a community response to encounters with coyotes. The more often an individual animal is hazed, the more effective hazing is in changing coyote behavior.

Hazing employs immediate use of deterrents to move an animal out of an area or discourage undesirable behavior or activity. Deterrents include loud noises, spraying water, bright lights, throwing objects, and shouting. Hazing can help maintain coyotes' fear of humans and discourage them from neighborhoods such as backyards and play areas. Hazing does not harm or damage animals, humans or property. Behavioral change also involves human activities such as how to identify and remove attractants and how to responsibly protect pets.

Foundation of hazing

- a) It is not economically, ecologically or in other ways efficient to try and remove coyotes from the urban ecosystem.
- b) Hazing is one piece of a long-term plan in creating safe and acceptable living situations, increasing understanding, and reducing conflict between coyotes and people.

Goals of hazing

- 1) To reshape coyote behavior to avoid human contact in an urban setting. Human behavior can shape animal behavior, in either a negative or positive manner. People living in close proximity to coyotes can remove coyote attractants, identify potentially dangerous situations for their pets and themselves, and respond in a manner designed to change coyote behavior.
- 2) To provide residents information and tools to actively engage in reshaping coyote behavior and to support feeling safe in their parks and neighborhoods. This can be accomplished by teaching residents hazing techniques. The latter will be initiated by community volunteers.
- 3) To model hazing behavior and share accurate information about coyotes among other residents, friends and family.
- 4) Monitor hazing by volunteers to assess its effectiveness and determine if further action or more aggressive hazing is needed.
- 5) Develop long-term community based hazing programs by volunteers.

General Considerations

1. Levels of hazing need to be appropriately relevant to coyote activity.
 - a. Coyotes live in open spaces and the best practice is to leave them alone and educate the public on personal safety.

- b. Coyotes are often out late at night when few people are present. This is normal acceptable behavior. Hazing may not be necessary.
- c. Coyotes that associate danger in the presence of people under all circumstances will be reinforced to avoid contact.

2. Hazing must be more exaggerated, aggressive and consistent when first beginning a program of hazing. As coyotes “learn” appropriate responses to hazing, it will take less effort from hazers. Early in the process, it is extremely common for coyotes not to respond to hazing techniques. Without a history of hazing, they do not have the relevant context to respond in the desired outcome (i.e.: to leave the area).

3. Techniques and tools can be used in the same manner for one or multiple animals. Usually there is a dominant animal in a group who will respond --- others will follow its lead. DO NOT ignore, turn your back or avoid hazing because there are multiple animals instead of a single individual.

4. The more often an individual coyote is hazed by a variety of tools and techniques and a variety of people, the more effective hazing will be in changing that animal’s future behavior.

5. Hazing must be directly associated with the person involved in the hazing actions. The coyote must be aware of where the potential threat is coming from and identify the person.

6. Coyotes can and do recognize individual people and animals in their territories. They can learn to avoid or harass specific individuals in response to behavior of the person and/or pet.

7. Coyotes can be routine in habit. Identifying their normal habits can help target which habits to change. For example, if a coyote patrols the same bike path at the same time of the morning three to five days a week, hazers should concentrate on that time and place to encourage the animal to change its routine to decrease contact with people.

8. Certain levels of hazing must always be maintained so that future generations of coyotes do not learn or return to unacceptable habits related to habituation to people.

9. Human behavior must change to support hazing, continued identification of possible conflicts and, if necessary, remove possible attractants.

10. Education about exclusion techniques including how to identify and remove attractants, personal responsibility in pet safety and having reasonable expectations are critical parts of a coyote hazing plan.

11. Coyotes are skittish by nature. Habituated behavior is learned and reinforced by human behavior. Coyotes as a rule DO NOT act aggressively towards aggressive people. The one exception is a sick or injured animal. Engaging a sick or injured animal can result in unpredictable behavior. If this is suspected, people should not engage and remove themselves from the situation, then inform appropriate agencies (i.e. Washington State Department of Fish and Wildlife).

12. Individuals involved in hazing need to be trained in explaining hazing to residents who witness the process. They also need to explain the difference between hazing and harassment of wildlife and goals of appropriate behavior for coexistence.

The Training Program

Because coexisting with wildlife involves the community, initiating the hazing training programs and hazing activities by volunteers must be supervised by experts. Without this support, the programs ultimately fail. Information should include basic training on background, coyote ecology information, an overview of hazing and examples of techniques. Materials should be provided such as handouts, contact information and resources when questions, comments and concerns come up relating to coyotes.

Coyote Management Plan

Volunteers need to learn about coyote behavior and be aware of realistic expectations, understanding normal versus abnormal coyote behavior, and having a consistent response to residents' concerns and comments.

Public Hazing Training

Hazing requires community involvement, understanding, and support. Residents are best equipped to respond consistently and at the most opportune times in their own neighborhoods, parks and open spaces.

1. Locations of trainings shall be based on data accumulated regarding coyote activity in specific neighborhoods, parks or open space.
2. Trainings shall be free to the public.
3. Topics that need to be covered include, but are not limited to:
 - a) Coyote behavior and ecology
 - b) Why coyotes are in the city
 - c) Normal and abnormal coyote behavior
 - d) Seasonal behavior changes---breeding season, pups, denning behavior
 - e) Reality of dangers towards people vs. danger towards pets
 - f) Children and coyotes
 - g) How human behavior influences coyote behavior
 - h) Attractants
 - i) Tips on deterring animals from entering private property
 - j) Appropriate response when encountering a coyote
 - k) What is hazing, goals, how to engage
 - l) Appropriate hazing techniques and tools
 - m) Pet safety tips
4. Interested individuals and participants shall be placed on a confidential email list. Updates, additional coyote information, electronic flyers and handouts sent out. All information can be and is encouraged to be passed on to others.
5. Participants shall be notified of "hot spots" and asked to haze in the area.
6. Ask for feedback on hazing training and use of hazing techniques.
7. Participants shall email detailed accounts of encounters and hazing to volunteer hazers for evaluation of program, progress, successful tools and techniques being used, techniques and tools needed.
 - a. Date, location, time of day, number of animals
 - b. Initial coyote behavior, hazing behavior, coyote response

Summary of Hazing

Hazing is a process whereby individuals and volunteers respond in like manner to make a coyote uncomfortable and choose to leave a situation where their presence is unwanted.

Basic hazing consists of standing your ground, never ignoring or turning your back to a coyote(s), yelling and making unpleasant and frightening noises until the animal(s) choose to leave.

More aggressive hazing consists of approaching an animal quickly and aggressively, throwing projectiles, spraying with a hose or water gun, or creating fear of contact so the animal leaves the situation. Note: Many projectiles are not legal including but not limited to slingshots, paintballs, guns and pepper balls.

Once it begins, hazing must continue until the animal leaves, otherwise the coyote will learn to “wait” until the person gives up and will be more resistant to additional hazing.

Hazing should never injure the animal. An injured animal becomes less predictable versus a normal, healthy one who responds in a consistent and predictable manner to hazing.

Hazing should be conducted in a manner that allows the coyote to return to its normal habitat in a direction that would minimize harm to the animal. Hazing the animal in the direction of other houses and busy streets should be avoided.

Hazing uses a variety of different hazing tools. This is critical as coyotes get used to individual items and sounds.

- Noisemaker: Voice, whistles, air horns, bells, “shaker” cans, pots, pie pans
- Projectiles: sticks, small rocks, cans, tennis balls, rubber balls.
- Deterrents: hoses, spray bottles with vinegar, pepper spray, bear repellent, walking sticks, pop-up umbrellas