

# Coyotes in Iredell County

## *What Citizen's Need to Know*

### Iredell County Animal Services and Control

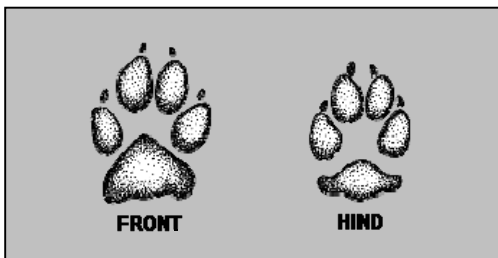
#### HISTORY IN IREDELL COUNTY

Iredell County Animal Services and Control has received numerous calls from citizens regarding coyotes in the City of Statesville and in the county. Since coyotes are not domestic animals and are wildlife, Animal Services and Control has to refer all calls regarding coyotes to NC Wildlife in Raleigh. We have spoken to NC Wildlife Biologist, Chris Kreh, and he told an interesting story about coyotes in North Carolina. In year's past, fox hunting was a popular sport in Iredell County. At one point, Foxes were in short supply so someone transported coyotes from Virginia into Iredell County replacing the foxes. When Hurricane Hugo came through Iredell County the storm demolished the pens for the coyotes, and they were returned to the wild. The coyotes have continued breeding over time resulting in a coyote problem in Iredell County. It is now illegal to transport coyotes into North Carolina or breed coyotes in North Carolina.

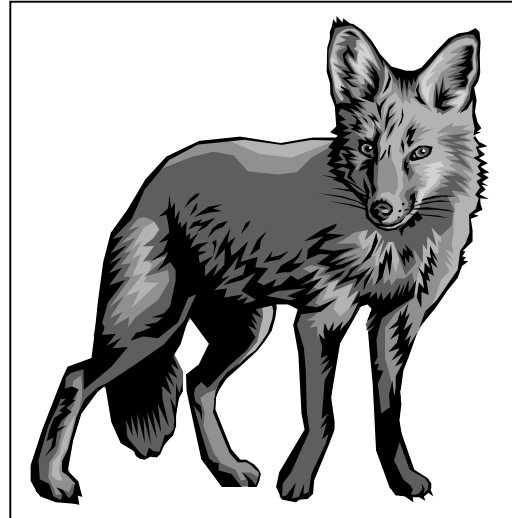
Coyotes pose little threat to people, though their prey can include domestic cats and small- to medium-size dogs.

#### IDENTIFICATION

In body form and size, the coyote (*Canis latrans*) resembles a small collie dog, with erect pointed ears, slender muzzle, and a bushy tail. Coyotes are predominantly brownish gray in color with a light gray to cream-colored belly. Color varies greatly, however from nearly red, black or white. An all black or all white coyote is extremely rare.



*Coyote Tracks*



*The Coyote (Canis latrans)*

#### FOOD HABITS

Coyotes often include many items in their diet such as rabbits, rodents, snakes, squirrels, domestic pets, and even fruits and vegetables.

In areas where coyotes are known to be present:

1. Dogs taken outdoors by their owner should always be leashed unless in a fenced yard, where they should still be supervised and checked regularly.
2. Dogs should not be tied outdoors, unfenced and unsupervised in coyote-prevalent areas.
3. Cats should be kept indoors unless trained to remain at home.
4. Dogs and cats should not be left outside for any period of time unsupervised especially at night even in a fenced enclosure.
5. Invisible fences do not protect your pets from predators. While they may keep your pet in your yard, they do not keep predators or other animals out of your yard.

## DO'S AND DON'TS IN COYOTE AREAS

1. DO chase them away and make noise (bang pots and pans) if you don't want them in your yard. Of course, if you don't mind them, then watch them from a window quietly as to not scare them away.
2. DO make noise when you are outside especially if coyotes are often in your area (like a den site nearby). They will often change their course of direction when they hear people. Take a whistle or horn to scare them away from you.
3. DO NOT feed coyotes or other animals. Even if you are feeding birds or other animals, coyotes will be attracted to your yard just like any other animal looking for an easy handout.
4. DO NOT feed your pets outside for the same reason as #3.
5. Just as importantly, DO NOT let your neighbors feed wildlife. Coyotes travel tremendous distances and a coyote regularly coming to your neighbor's yard for a free handout will surely pass through your yard to get there. A habituated coyote is a potential problem coyote.
6. Absolutely DO NOT let your cat outside if you are truly concerned with its health. Coyotes are just one of many mortality factors for outdoor cats.
7. DO leash your dogs. Although coyotes may follow a leashed dog out of curiosity (to the concern of the person), it is extremely rare for them to actually get within contact of your pet.
8. DO consider removing habitat that provides protective cover for coyotes and their prey such as small rodents. Modifying such a habitat around residential areas will dissuade coyotes from using the space as part of a territory or home range and will reduce the likelihood of conflicts.

## HUNTING AND TRAPPING COYOTES

Coyotes are extremely smart and that can make them difficult to catch. Coyote populations, not unlike all wildlife populations, will continue to grow until their numbers are limited by food availability or space. Though they can live up to 13 years, a high infant mortality rate lowers the animal's average life span to two to three years.

Foothold traps are a commonly used by trappers to capture coyotes in the wild, but it is not unusual for coyotes to dig them up and leave their would-be captors a message.

A special permit must be obtained from the State of North Carolina to trap coyotes during the fur-bearing season. NC Biologist Chris Kreh said that it is legal to shoot the coyotes anytime of the year. While there is no closed season or bag limit for coyotes in North Carolina, using a firearm inside the city limits is typically prohibited by most city ordinances. Solutions other than the use of firearms, as previously discussed, are needed to resolve coyote nuisance problems inside city limits.

### NEED MORE INFORMATION?

- NC Wildlife Commission  
919-707-0040
- Related websites:

<http://www.easterncoyoteresearch.com/index.html>

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Coyote>

[http://www.ncwildlife.org/fs\\_index\\_06\\_coexist.htm](http://www.ncwildlife.org/fs_index_06_coexist.htm)

