

## COYOTES IN WINNETKA

Some residents have recently expressed concern about coyote sightings in the Village. According to State and local wildlife experts, this is not unusual in the Chicago Metropolitan area. Widespread development may have resulted in a temporary loss of natural habitat for coyotes, but it has actually resulted in more food for them.

Coyotes have adapted extremely well to living in the “urban wilderness” and like to travel along paths, trails and waterways. They are most active from dusk until dawn, but may be seen during the day, especially in the summer when they are raising their pups.

According to the Illinois Department of Natural Resources, coyote attacks against humans are rare. Their statistics show that there have been only 16 cases of coyotes attacking humans in a 30-year period. This usually occurs when people try to hand feed the coyotes. According to the IDNR, the number one rule is never feed coyotes. Feeding coyotes completely breaks down their natural fear of humans, and can cause them to become unusually aggressive.

In order to avoid coyotes viewing humans as a food source at all, experts recommend securing garbage cans and bringing in dog or cat food in the evening so coyotes don't become regular visitors scavenging for scraps in the back yard. While coyotes can pose a threat to small cats and dogs, a simple solution is to keep dogs on a leash and bring cats in at night.

Aggressively trapping and killing coyotes will not help to reduce the coyote population as the void created by an animal's death will be filled within three to four weeks. The animals are also very smart and difficult to catch in a live trap. Wildlife experts recommend that unless an animal has demonstrated aggressiveness toward a human or a domestic pet, the coyote should be left alone. In the event of aggressiveness, an Illinois Department of Natural Resources licensed trapper should be contacted to address the problem animal.

Indigenous wild animals in Winnetka will be handled within the guidelines of the Illinois Department of Natural Resources and U.S. Fish and Wildlife laws. If one of these animals has acted aggressively or has otherwise endangered the safety of a person or attacked a domestic pet, the Police Department will contact one of the IDNR for trapping and appropriate disposition of the animal. Residents are asked to call the Winnetka Police Department 911 Emergency Number to report animals meeting these criteria.

### REMEMBER

- **DO NOT FEED ANY WILD ANIMALS**
- **BRING IN PET FOOD AND WATER**
- **SECURE GARBAGE CANS**
- **KEEP PETS ON LEASHES**
- **DO NOT APPROACH A COYOTE**
- **AS LONG AS HUMANS DO NOT THREATEN THEM OR THEIR PUPS, COYOTES WILL BE THE FIRST TO RUN AWAY**