

**AGENDA DESCRIPTION:**

Consideration and possible action to receive and file a quarterly status report on the implementation of the City's Coyote Management Plan

**RECOMMENDED COUNCIL ACTION:**

- (1) Receive and file a quarterly status report on the implementation of the City's Coyote Management Plan.

**FISCAL IMPACT:** None

<b>Amount Budgeted:</b>	N/A
<b>Additional Appropriation:</b>	N/A
<b>Account Number(s):</b>	N/A

**ORIGINATED BY:** Rudy Monroy, Code Enforcement Officer *RM*

**REVIEWED BY:** Ara Mhrianian, AICP, Director of Community Development *AM*

**APPROVED BY:** Doug Willmore, City Manager *DW*

**ATTACHED SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS:**

- A. 2019 Coyote Sighting Activity Map and Data (Page A-1)

To view the City's Coyote Management Plan, Keep Me Wild brochure, and Home & Yard Checklist for Wildlife on the City's website go to:

<http://www.rpvca.gov/1113/Coyote-Management-Plan>

---

**BACKGROUND AND DISCUSSION:**

The 2019 City Council Goals state that Staff is to provide a quarterly status report with data on the implementation and effectiveness of the City's Coyote Management Plan. In accordance with the City Council Goals, the first quarterly report (January 1 – May 20) was provided to the City Council at its June 4, 2019 meeting, which can be viewed on the City's website at the following link:

[http://rpv.granicus.com/player/clip/3433?view\\_id=5](http://rpv.granicus.com/player/clip/3433?view_id=5)

This report is intended to describe and compare the implementation measures of the City's Coyote Management Plan since the June 4 status report.

## Coyote Management Plan

The Peninsula cities agree that education is a key component in coyote management. The City's Coyote Management Plan is consistent with those in the cities of Rolling Hills Estates and Palos Verdes Estates, and is also based on input received from the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW), which administers the Coyote Wildlife Watch Program. The goal of the Management Plan is to encourage and "support coexistence with urban coyotes using education, behavior modification and development of a tiered response to aggressive coyote behavior." The tiered response requires active participation on the part of the entire community, including residents, homeowners associations, volunteers and city personnel. The Management Plan is based on research and best-known practices, and includes a full spectrum of management tools. Basic principles that guide the Management Plan are based on the following:

- Don't leave pet food outside.
- Don't leave small pets or children outside unattended.
- If you compost, use enclosed bins and never compost meat or fish scraps.
- Install motion-sensitive lighting around the house.
- Make sure your fences are six feet high with no gaps at ground level – coyotes are good diggers.
- Put bird feeders away at night to avoid attracting rodents and other coyote prey.
- Remove fallen fruit from the ground.
- Remove sources of water.
- Talk to your neighbors to make sure they're following the same procedures.
- Trim ground-level shrubbery to reduce hiding places.

The Management Plan (and Staff in its public outreach) recommends hazing as another deterrent method to move a coyote out of an area or discourage an undesirable behavior or activity because some coyotes have become too comfortable in the close proximity of people. Hazing, also known as "fear conditioning," is the process that facilitates a change in behavior and is effective when a community responds consistently to negative encounters with coyotes. The more often an individual animal is hazed, the more effective hazing is in changing coyote behavior. To safely coexist, it's important to modify this behavior and attitude in resident-coyote populations. Habituated coyote behavior needs to be reshaped to deter coyotes from coming in contact with humans and pets.

Hazing should be conducted in a manner that allows the coyote to return to its normal habitat (i.e. canyons and open space areas). Hazing the animal in the direction of other houses and busy streets should be avoided. A variety of tools should be used in hazing as coyotes can easily become acclimated to individual items and sounds, as described below:

- Noisemakers: 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

A common concern with hazing involves potential danger to the hazer. A coyote's basic nature is very skittish and the nature of the species is what makes this technique successful. A normal, healthy coyote will not escalate a situation with an aggressive person. Hazing is NOT successful with every species of wild animal because different types of animals have different traits.

The Management Plan describes the following City-level tiered responses to specific coyote actions or behaviors.

- Level 1 (coyotes are either heard or seen) – The City's response to the sighting is to provide informational material to educate the resident on typical coyote behavior.
- Level 2 (coyote encounters a person or pet) – The City's response to the encounter is to conduct yard audits to identify ways to deter coyote entry and to improve pet management.
- Level 3 (coyote enters yard or pet is injured or killed) – The City's response to the incident is to gather information and report it to the appropriate agencies, conduct a yard audit, develop a hazing team for the neighborhood, and implement the Wildlife Watch Program.
- Level 4 (coyote shows teeth, back fur is raised, lunges towards a person, bites or injures a person) – The City's response to the characteristics of an aggressive coyote is to initiate a trapping assessment and to coordinate with the Los Angeles County Department Of Agricultural Commissioner/Weights and Measures (Agricultural Commissioner). A biting is reported to the CDFW.

### Coyote-Related Community Services

The Agricultural Commissioner has a contract with the City for coyote-related community services. However, when residents have concerns about coyotes, they are asked to contact the Code Enforcement Division. Code Enforcement Staff will assess the situation and determine if the problem is one that can be handled by the use of preventative measures, or if the situation needs to be escalated to the Agricultural Commissioner for further review. Many times, informing residents about what they can do to secure their yard to deter coyotes is all that is needed. However, in some instances, Staff may determine that a visit from the Agricultural Commissioner is warranted. In those cases, City Staff and an Agricultural Commissioner officer will conduct a yard audit to assess what can be done to deter coyote activity.

### Yard Audits

Yard audits involve working closely with numerous residents in a neighborhood by coordinating informative and educational outreach to identify potential coyote attractants

such as fallen fruit, overgrown brush, inadequate fencing and coyote scat. As part of the yard audit, residents are provided with the City's Coyote Management Plan, Keep Me Wild brochure, and Home & Yard Checklist for Wildlife. In some cases, through yard audits, the Agricultural Commissioner has identified signs of aggressive coyote behavior and have set up traps. Since June 4, the City's Code Enforcement Officers, and in some instances in collaboration with the Agricultural Commissioner, have conducted six yard audits on the following streets:

- Coach Road – one property
- Monero Drive – two properties
- Falconhead Drive – one property
- Springcreek Road – two properties

To date, the City has conducted 19 yard audits (13 of which occurred in the first quarter of 2019).

### Coyote Trapping

The Agricultural Commissioner provides trapping services only when it has been determined by the City that an “aggressive” coyote exists. As it is well known that the trapping and resulting euthanization of a coyote is not as effective as other methods of hazing contact as discussed within this Management Plan, the City shall determine, based on field observations and assessing the incident, if a case needs to be brought to the County's attention or simply additional education instruction is needed. If the County is contacted by the City because the City feels that a coyote may be “aggressive” and cause concern for the public's safety, the County will still conduct its own assessment to determine if trapping should occur. For this second quarter report, no traps have been set up.

If residents are concerned with coyotes in their area, the City recommends following the guidelines in the Management Plan and other handout material in decreasing attractants and increasing pet safety in order to help shape coyote behavior to avoid human contact. Residents may contact the City's Code Enforcement Division if they have any questions or wish to report an aggressive coyote. As previously noted, the City's Code Enforcement Division is trained to conduct property assessments to assist property owners in minimizing coyote attractants.

According to state law, coyotes are considered “non-game wildlife,” therefore residents can initiate, at their own expense, action to protect themselves and their property from coyote attacks, including trapping. No private individual is authorized to discharge a firearm within the City of Rancho Palos Verdes. Section 9.08.010 of the Rancho Palos Verdes Municipal Code states:

“Except as otherwise provided in this chapter, it shall be unlawful within the boundaries of the city for any person to fire, discharge, shoot or operate or to

assist or participate in firing, discharging, shooting or operating any gun, revolver, pistol, firearm, spring gun, air gun, sling, slingshot or device designed or intended to discharge or capable of discharging any dangerous missile or any cartridge, shell, ammunition or device containing any explosive substance designed or intended to be used in or fired from any gun, revolver, pistol or firearm.”

Although residents have the ability to initiate, at their own expense, trapping and removal of coyotes, a private trapper must be certified/licensed by the State of California.

### Public Outreach

In addition to conducting yard audits, the City’s Code Enforcement Officers have been both proactive and reactive in canvassing City neighborhoods to raise awareness about deterrent measures to keep coyotes out of neighborhoods and adjoining canyon areas. They spend an average of 15 hours a week meeting with residents in response to calls and posts on the City’s website application to raise awareness. This includes conducting yard audits previously discussed and providing residents with the City’s Coyote Management Plan and related informational brochures (i.e. Keep Me Wild brochure, and Home & Yard Checklist for Wildlife). Since June 4, the City held a neighborhood meeting at Marymount California University on July 14 with the Mira Catalina Homeowners Association.

Staff is working with the Grandview Homeowners Association to conduct a neighborhood meeting in September.

This and other neighborhood meetings held throughout the year have led to conducting individual yard audits. More often than not, residents are not aware of the information and programs that the City has available to them, which is a sign that more outreach is needed. More outreach will occur over the next several months.

### Participation in the Wildlife Watch Program

Wildlife Watch is a CDFW-administered program that is similar to a Neighborhood Watch program in that it enlists the participation of citizens to bring neighbors together and helps train them to recognize and distinguish wildlife sightings, wildlife threats to public safety, and natural versus unnatural wildlife behavior, with an emphasis on coyotes. It also helps with the implementation of basic wildlife conflict prevention techniques, such as hazing. This program requires the participation of an entire neighborhood to keep coyotes out of neighborhoods. Since June 4, Staff has coordinated with one block captain in the following neighborhood:

- Grandview Community

In collaboration with the block captain, Staff has been able to establish a single point-of-contact to address coyote-related issues and to serve as the conduit between Staff and

the neighborhood. Overall, the Wildlife Watch Program continues to be an extremely beneficial added tool for residents to deter coyote activity.

Coyote Sighting Application and Dashboard

Last year, the City’s Information Technology Staff launched a web-based coyote sighting application that the public can use on mobile and desktop devices (<http://cityofrpv.maps.arcgis.com/apps/GeoForm/index.html?appid=819077a4e67f4e5dbc0c79a3d4004760>). The application benefits all the Peninsula cities, and although its development was led by the City’s Staff, it was a collaborative effort with the cities of Rolling Hills Estates and Palos Verdes Estates, whose residents and Staff utilize this application as well.

The application provides information on coyote population and sighting trends. Residents report a coyote sighting and describe the coyote’s behavior or incident on this application. The reported information is documented and forwarded to City Staff. Additionally, a map of the Peninsula is available on the website that identifies the location of the reported coyote and its activity.

In January 2019, the map was “refreshed” for the 2019 reporting period. At the June 4 meeting, Staff reported a total of 70 sightings for the first quarter, which covered the period of January 1 through May 20. For this second quarter, there have been 50 sightings for the reporting period of May 21 through August 23. Both the first and second quarter maps are attached for comparison purposes (Attachment A). The table below provides a comparison of the specific activity reported to the City between the two reporting periods.

Categories	First Quarter Jan 1 - May 20	Second Quarter May 21 - August 23	Difference
Coyote Seen/Moving/Resting	39	24	-15
Coyote Followed or Approached	1	1	0
Coyote Entered without Pets	12	5	-7
Coyote Entered with Pets	7	8	1
Coyote Entered Yard and Injured a Pet	2	0	-2
Coyote Entered Yard and Killed a Pet	1	3	2
Coyote Bit Pet on Leash	0	0	0
Coyote Showed Aggressive Behavior	1	0	1

Categories	First Quarter Jan 1 - May 20	Second Quarter May 21 - August 23	Difference
Coyote Bit or Injured a Person	0	0	0
Other	7	9	2
<b>Total Sightings Reports</b>	<b>70</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>-20</b>

The public can review the data collected via the coyote sighting application using a real-time coyote sighting dashboard. The data on the dashboard is displayed using charts, widgets, maps and other visual elements. The dashboard can be viewed on the City’s website at <https://www.rpvca.gov/CoyoteSightingDashboard>.

**CONCLUSION:**

With the City’s semi-rural topography, coyote sightings are not uncommon. Informing residents about typical coyote behavior and what can be done to deter coyotes from entering yards and neighborhoods is an important step in coyote management. Residents are encouraged to report coyote sightings and incidents using the City’s tracking applications, and to report aggressive coyote behavior to the City’s Code Enforcement Division for further investigation.

**ALTERNATIVES:**

In addition to the Staff recommendation, the following alternative action is available for the City Council’s consideration:

1. Direct Staff to develop additional measures to address the City’s coyote issues for the City Council’s future consideration.

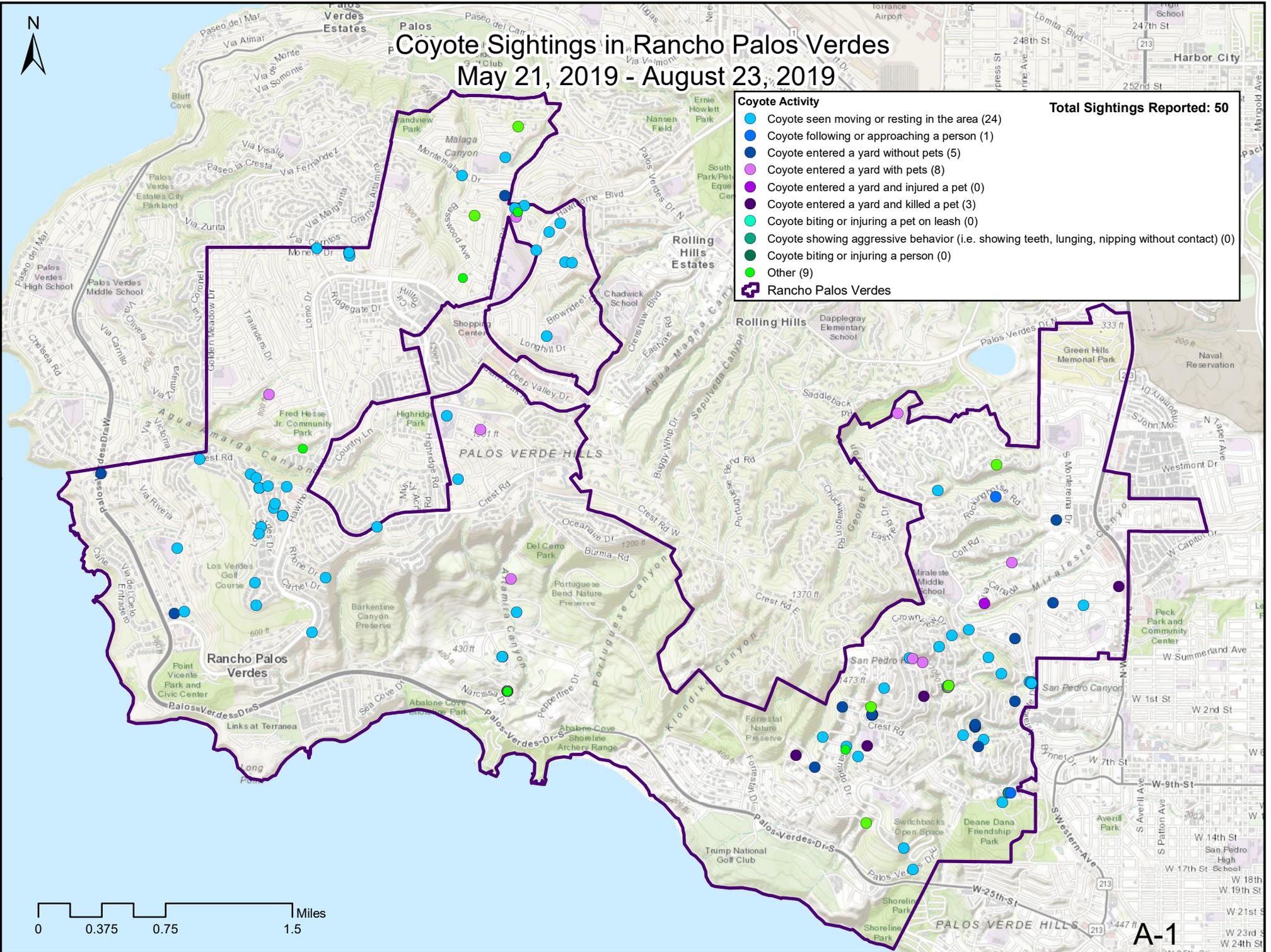
# Coyote Sightings in Rancho Palos Verdes May 21, 2019 - August 23, 2019

**Coyote Activity**

- Coyote seen moving or resting in the area (24)
- Coyote following or approaching a person (1)
- Coyote entered a yard without pets (5)
- Coyote entered a yard with pets (8)
- Coyote entered a yard and injured a pet (0)
- Coyote entered a yard and killed a pet (3)
- Coyote biting or injuring a pet on leash (0)
- Coyote showing aggressive behavior (i.e. showing teeth, lunging, nipping without contact) (0)
- Coyote biting or injuring a person (0)
- Other (9)

**Total Sightings Reported: 50**

📍 Rancho Palos Verdes



# Coyote Sightings in Rancho Palos Verdes January 1, 2019 - May 20, 2019

**Coyote Activity**

- Coyote seen moving or resting in the area (39)
- Coyote following or approaching a person (1)
- Coyote entered a yard without pets (12)
- Coyote entered a yard with pets (7)
- Coyote entered a yard and injured a pet (2)
- Coyote entered a yard and killed a pet (1)
- Coyote showing aggressive behavior (i.e. showing teeth, lunging, nipping without contact) (1)
- Other (7)

🗺️ Rancho Palos Verdes

**Total Sightings Reported: 70**

