

Coyotes in Shelburne: What you need to know

The Shelburne area is a natural habitat for coyotes. Their high-pitched barks and yips can be heard year-round.

January marks the start of coyote mating season, with mating typically beginning in February and pups being born from late March through April. During this time, you may encounter or hear coyotes as they search for mates and establish their territories through howling and yipping.

Coyotes play an essential role in the urban ecosystem by controlling rodent and other wildlife populations. When their pups are born, their need for food increases, and you may see them foraging during the day.

Coyotes are opportunistic feeders and will eat what is readily available, including mice, rats, squirrels, raccoons, berries, and nuts. They are attracted to communities due to the abundance of food and shelter.

According to the Humane Society and the Ministry of Natural Resources, coyotes are mainly nocturnal hunters, primarily preying on small mammals like rodents. Attacks on people are rare, but it is recommended to keep young children (infants and toddlers) attended when outside, especially after dark. Attacks on pets are more common but still rare.

Recommendations From the Ministry of Natural Resources

If you see a coyote, wolf, or fox:

? Keep your distance. The animal will likely avoid you.

If you encounter an aggressive animal:

? Never approach or touch a wild animal.

? Do not turn your back or run from a wild animal.

? Back away calmly and remain calm.

? Stand tall, wave your hands, and make lots of noise.

? Carry a flashlight at night.

? If a wild animal poses an immediate threat or danger to public safety, call 911.

To make your property uninviting:

? Use flashing lights, motion sensors, and noise makers.

? Erect a two-meter-high fence that extends at least 20 centimeters underground.

? Install a roller system on top of your fence to prevent animals from gaining a foothold.

To prevent conflicts with dogs:

? Keep dogs inside at night.

? Clean up after your dog, as coyotes are attracted to dog feces.

? Spay and neuter your dogs, as coyotes can be attracted to and mate with unspayed or unneutered domestic dogs.