



CONTROLLING COYOTES IN URBAN AREAS

Presented by the City of Myrtle Beach

Issues with Coyotes

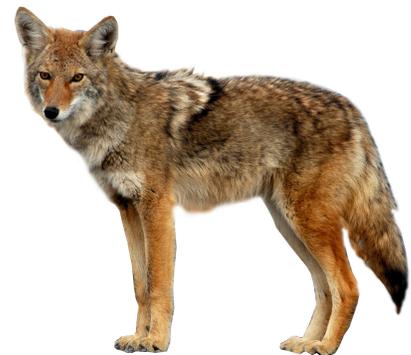
We may live in an urban environment, but wildlife issues still exist. Myrtle Beach residents have seen coyotes in their neighborhoods, with at least one report of a pet being killed. The City of Myrtle Beach is aware of these challenges and provides the following information to protect you and your pets.

What is a Coyote?

The coyote is a medium-sized member of the dog family that includes wolves and foxes. With its pointed ears, slender muzzle, and drooping bushy tail, it often resembles a German shepherd or collie. Coyotes are usually grayish brown with reddish tinges behind the ears and around the face, but coloration can vary from silver-gray to black. Most adults weigh 25–35 pounds, although their full coats often make them appear larger.

Coyotes are typically most active beginning at twilight and continuing throughout the night. In some areas, they may be seen during the day, especially when left undisturbed. They have a keen sense of smell and good eyesight. Coyotes are opportunistic feeders. While rabbits probably comprise the majority of their prey, they also eat rodents and other small mammals and supplement their diet with fruits, berries and insects.

Coyotes generally avoid humans, even when their home range encompasses largely urban or suburban habitat. As predators, coyotes play an important role in ecosystems by helping to control other animal population. Coyotes can help manage rodent and rabbit populations, along with an overabundance of white-tailed deer and Canada geese.



Dealing with Coyotes

Feeding coyotes is illegal. Myrtle Beach City (Code Section 4-5) prohibits creating a neighborhood nuisance by feeding wildlife. However, the presence of a “free buffet” in the form of pet food, compost or garbage in neighborhood yards may tempt coyotes into yards and create the impression that these places are bountiful feeding areas. Without the lure of food or other attractants, visits will be brief and rare. But a coyote that finds food in one yard may learn to search for food in others.

Here are some general safety rules to protect your pets from coyotes:

- Allow pets outside only when you are with them, especially at night.
- Keep pet food and water inside; if you must feed outside, bring dishes in when your pet has eaten.
- Keep garbage containing food well secured.
- Keep dogs on a leash in public area; never leave them outside unattended.
- Discourage or harass coyotes: aggressively make the coyote uncomfortable if it is invading your space.

Wildlife Removal

Coyote removal is difficult and should only be attempted by professionals with appropriate permits and conducted under municipal and state regulations. Coyotes that are removed (trapped and killed) from an area may be replaced by new ones. In some cases, immigrant coyotes may be more habituated to people than the previous animals.



Relocating coyotes is not an option, but trapping and killing are allowed under certain conditions. A person may trap on lands that he owns, or on lands owned by others, provided the trapper has written permission from the landowner. The written permission must be in the trapper's possession at all times while engaged in trapping activities.

State law prohibits relocation of nuisance animals, although trapping and killing are allowed under certain conditions. A person may trap on lands that he owns, or on lands owned by others, provided the trapper has written permission from the landowner. The written permission must be in the trapper's possession at all times while engaged in trapping activities.

Wildlife "emergencies" are incidents involving wild animals in which an immediate danger to public health and safety is present. Contact the South Carolina Department of Natural Resources Emergency number (843-953-5291) and/or the Myrtle Beach Police Department (843-918-1382).

The Myrtle Beach Police Department may only respond to wild animal complaints in which the animal is sick or injured or is an immediate and present danger to public health and safety. Contact SCDHEC at 843-915-8801 for rabies control inquiries.



Depredation Permits and Trapping

Property owners may obtain a permit from the South Carolina Department of Natural Resources to remove dangerous nuisance coyotes. Coyotes also may be hunted throughout the year with a valid hunting license, but it is unlawful for any person to discharge or cause to be discharged any firearm of any kind or nature or any air rifle or slingshot at any place within the City of Myrtle Beach (Code Section 14-101).

Depredation permits are available for controlling destructive coyotes year-round. No hunting or trapping license is required with a depredation permit. For more information about depredation permits, contact the SC Department of Natural Resources Furbearer Project at 803-734-3609.

The landowner also can hire a trapper regulated by the state to trap and kill coyotes during season and sell the pelts. Trapping season is January 1 through March 1 with a valid commercial fur harvest license, along with a valid hunting license. Private trapping companies in the area include:

- Palmetto Wildlife Extractors (855-465-1088)
- The Snake Chaser (843-399-5096)
- TruTech (843-628-0972)

For those property owners who wish to pay someone to trap coyotes for them, the list of wildlife control operators is available at <http://www.dnr.sc.gov/wildlife/docs/nwco.pdf>.

The SC Department of Natural Resources publishes a separate coyote brochure with biological information and additional control tips including trap preparation and trap examples. The information is available online at <http://www.dnr.sc.gov/wildlife/coyote/coyoteinfo.pdf>.