

# WILY COYOTE



Residents in Magnolia Point are seeing an increase of coyote sightings on their home security and trail cameras. Coyote breeding season is from January through March, during which they'll be more active, territorial, and defensive, and are found in all 67 Florida counties. FWC recommends you "haze" them by waving your arms, shouting, and increasing your size by waving a golf club, stick or umbrella above your head. There's no shortage of golf clubs here so we should be okay!

Just keep your distance and keep your pet indoors if possible. Unfortunately, as their homes are destroyed with the development around us, they'll be moving closer seeking food and shelter. FWC can only do so much, and will not relocate them: that just doesn't work.

DON'T allow your pets to roam freely. A hungry coyote will go to great lengths to catch its prey. Don't leave pet food outside and eliminate any extra water source from your yard. Most attacks occur at night or at dusk or dawn. Be cautious if you are going to pick up your pet if you see a coyote. Picking it up may stop the attack but an aggressive coyote may continue its attack on the pet in your arms. For a small dog, you may want to invest in a coyote vest,

which has spikes across the back and neck to protect your dog from an attack.

If a coyote approaches your child, different tactics are called for: yell loudly and move quickly towards the animal. This will startle him and give you a chance to lift the child and back away. Be prepared to defend yourself. It's best not to allow small children to play outside unattended during this season.

Coyotes are excellent climbers and diggers. A six foot privacy fence, the maximum allowed here by ARC rules, provides some protection, however, you'll need to fortify it with protection 1-2 feet into the ground. They can also scale trees and overgrown shrubs. Keep your yard landscaping trimmed in order to make climbing and hiding difficult. It's also important to pick up any fallen fruit from your trees. Coyotes hunt primarily during night and don't like bright lights; motion detector lights will discourage hunting around your home.

If you regularly walk your dog at night, always use a short leash, less than 6 feet. Don't walk them in wooded areas or areas where there's a lot of foliage, helping to conceal the predator. Staying away from wooded areas and maintaining close control of your dog will help deter a fight.

DON'T try to poison a coyote. If other wildlife or a pet ingests a poisoned coyote you'll end up killing non-predatory animals in the neighborhood.

If you see a coyote exhibiting unusual behavior, such as approaching people closely, allowing people to approach closely, or acting in an aggressive manner, contact the Florida Wildlife Conservation at 352-732-1225.

- BECKY HINSON



05:39AM 12/02/2022



01:15AM 03/09/2023

*Recently, on Colonial Drive - by Susan Pasquali*

