

Living with Wildlife in BC

COYOTE & WOLF #3

“Living with Wildlife” is a series of nine wildlife management guides for the agricultural and natural resource sectors, as well as rural land owners. Options for wildlife management, worker safety, and animal deterrents are provided for each species. Many guides suggest completing wildlife conflict management plans. Web links to the guides and other resources are on the back page. Consult the “Conflict Reduction Guide” for wildlife deterrent management options.

Coyote: *Canis latrans*

- Possess a keen sense of smell, vision and hearing.
- Coat is generally a buffy, grizzled grey with a mixture of cinnamon-coloured forelegs and feet, white throat and belly, and often a dark line down the back.
- Can live up to 18 yrs old, but the average is 6 to 8. They reach 1-1.3m/3- 3.5' in total length (the tail constituting about one-third of the total length), and weigh 10- 14 kg/25- 35 lbs.
- Males are about 15 percent larger and heavier than females.
- Are a highly adaptable species, and can live as easily in the city or the country.
- Thrive in rural and agricultural areas and range between 10 to 40 square km.
- Diets include small mammals, carrion, ungulates (deer) and carcasses killed by larger predators.
- Are drawn to the same attractants as dogs such as composts, garbage, livestock and pet foods.
- Can sprint up to 43 mph (70 km) and will hunt alone or in a pack (family group).

Wolf: *Canis lupus*

- Wolves are the largest member of the canid (dog) family.
- Males weigh 35-50 kg/70-100 lbs. and females 30- 40 kg/66-80 lbs.
- Coats range from near white, to brindle, grey, brown and charcoal black.
- There are records of wolves covering up to 65 km in a day in mountainous terrain, and speeds of 55 to 70 km in short bursts.
- Pups are born in the den, in April or May, to the dominant female in the group and litters average 4 to 7.
- Wolf sightings and predation to livestock appear to be on the rise, seemingly in proportion to areas historically inhabited by wolves.
- A dominant carnivore (meat eater) can live about 10 years, possess a keen sense of smell and hearing.
- Hunt year round, alone or in strong, well organized, family groups.
- Are fiercely territorial and pack size depends on geography, and available food sources.



On the Land

Management Options

A Wildlife Conflict Management Plan advises:

- Keep a tidy operation.
- Secure garbage and waste in wildlife proof bins. Keep secure and dispose of refuse regularly.
- Supply safety information to employees.
- Bring domestic pets in at night.
- Consider installing an electric fence to protect livestock and poultry.
- Remove dead, dying or sick livestock.
- Bury or incinerate any carcasses or afterbirth from livestock.
- Animal feed and shelters are a major attractant. Keep corrals, pens and runs clean and secure all feed, feed additives, and supplies.
- Construct a carcass pit to properly dispose of livestock carcasses.

See back page and Conflict Reduction Guide for an in depth discussion of management options.

On-site evaluations and forms can be accessed by agricultural operators.
Contact:

Wolves and coyotes have begun to come into to contact with humans more frequently in part due to expanding human populations and habitat loss. Combined with the incredible adaptability of both species, they learn to take advantage of prey opportunities provided by farmers and ranchers.



Damage done by coyotes and wolves is related to available prey species, and includes the loss of ewes, lambs, goats and poultry and on occasion, calves. Coyotes are particularly adaptable and easily habituated. Coyotes that have been fed, or have been successful at feeding will return for more. They are attracted to the same attractants as domestic dogs, such as garbage and recycling, fruits and vegetables. Coyotes can also threaten domestic pets, have been known on occasion to take after small children, rush at and nip adults. On a positive note, coyotes keep rodent populations under control for farmers, ranchers, growers and in urban areas. With proper management, coyotes can be beneficial.

Wolves are less common than coyotes and tend to stay away from large settlements and developments. They are more commonly seen in areas where rural properties collide with wild habitat and cross their travel corridors. Wolves are formidable predators and highly adaptable; this capacity, combined with human expansion into wild areas results in an increase in loss caused by wolves. Wolves will take farm animals and domestic pets. Dead, dying or sick animals can draw wolves onto properties. Once they have been successful they will likely return again. They can also carry Distemper and Sarcoptic Mange, both of which can be transmitted to domestic dogs.

A Wildlife Conflict Management Plan can reduce the incidence of damage or trespass from wildlife. A management plan includes:

- an on-site evaluation to assess past and current operations by identifying potential conflict sites and safety concerns:
- Property points:
 - a. outbuilding, worker shelters, and shed vulnerability
 - b. eating, break - time or campsite areas
 - c. worker safety
- once the evaluation is complete, conflict reduction options can be explored and a plan can be implemented
- assign a person to implement the plan including worker education

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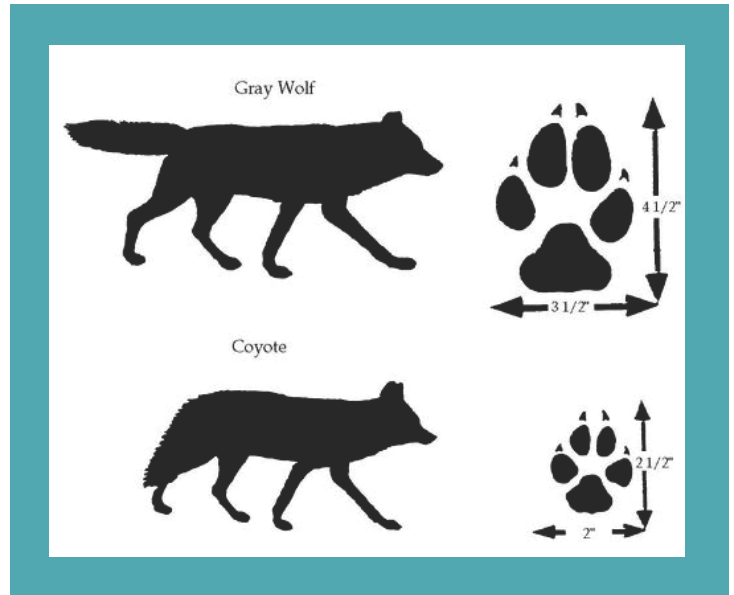
Worker Safety

Farms, orchards, vineyards and livestock operations are often located in wildlife interface or natural areas where wildlife live. It is important to understand which predators or wildlife conflict situations may occur where you are working and be prepared to keep yourself and others safe.

Having a **Worker Action Plan** is the best defence to avoid encounters.

As part of personal safety, research and ask your employer for information on the on the wildlife you are most likely to encounter. Understand coyote and wolf biology and behaviour traits.

Wolves and coyotes generally avoid people where they can, but contact with humans is increasing. Unfortunately, this means an increase in losses of livestock and domestic pets, and an increased health and safety concern for humans. These risks can be minimized with proper knowledge and management while minimizing the negative impact on wolf and coyote populations.



To avoid an encounter:

Minimize attractants: the smell of vulnerable livestock, garbage and attractants can be detected by coyotes and wolves from two miles away and draw them to your property. Keep garbage inside or in a wildlife proof bin.

Carcass Pits: many livestock farmers construct a dedicated carcass pit. This is a pit where dead animals are either burned or buried. Proper construction of a carcass pit is essential, improperly constructed pits are predator attractants. Pits should be located as far away from livestock and your home as possible and be protected by an electric fence. See the Conflict Reduction Techniques Guide in this series.

Install an electric fence: to prevent entry onto the property. If wolves or coyotes are unsuccessful, or find it difficult to enter the property they are unlikely to return.

Keep Children and domestic pets close: to avoid losing a pet or child, keep them close while out on the farm. This makes them less vulnerable and also prevents a roaming dog from luring a coyote or wolf back to you.

If an encounter occurs: *fight back*

Wolf: it is unlikely that a wolf would approach or attack a human.

Coyote: have been known to take after domestic pets, and on rare occasions, children. In both cases, it is probably a predatory attack. **FIGHT BACK!** Be loud, aggressive, throw sticks, and use deterrents.

If a dog gets into a conflict with a wolf or coyote, do not get involved, it is better to lose a dog than risk your own life.

DO

- ✓ learn how to minimize attractants
- ✓ install an electric fence.
- ✓ keep children close by on the farm
- ✓ bring domestic pets inside at dusk
- ✓ learn to identify wolf and coyote signs, know when they are in the area

DON'T

- ✗ leave sick or dying livestock out in the open
- ✗ allow dogs to roam past dusk
- ✗ leave garbage or recycling outside without a wildlife proof bin
- ✗ feed coyotes or wolves

Contacts & Resources

“Living with Wildlife in BC” management guide series:

- # 1 Bear
 - #2 Cougar
 - #3 Coyote & Wolf
 - #4 Rodents
 - #5 Snakes
 - #6 Starlings
 - #7 Ungulates
 - #8 Conflict Reduction: mitigation options for wildlife safety and control
- Mitigation Decision Matrix: calendar of wildlife occurrences and recommended controls



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The “Living with Wildlife” series is available for downloading and distribution (personal, noncommercial use) on the following websites: www.osca.org “Living With Wildlife” pages
<http://www.rdos.bc.ca/departments/public-works/wildsafe-bc-bear-aware/>
www.bcwgc.org Health and Safety Section

Consult Guide #8 Conflict Reduction, for details on bear deterrent management, electric fencing and safety management for bears.

Wildlife Deterrent retailers for fencing:

Margo Supplies <http://margosupplies.com/public/canadian1/index.html>
R&S Power Fence 645 Main St. Penticton, BC V2A 5C9 250-492-7090
<http://electricfence.homestead.com/>

Wildlife Deterrent retailers for devices and kits:

Margo Supplies <http://margosupplies.com/public/canadian1/index.html>
True North Outdoors Store <http://trueoutdoors.ca/> Vernon, Kamloops, Kelowna, Penticton
Bear Scare (training courses available as well) <http://www.bearscares.ca/>

Resources:

Bear Aware Web Site <http://www.bearaware.bc.ca>
WildSafeBC web Site <http://learn.wildsafebc.com/index.php>
BC Conservation Officer Service <http://bit.ly/COServeHumanWildlifeConflict>

Bear Spray is available at most Outdoors Stores, Hunting Outfitters, and Canadian Tire
Deer/Dog Spray is available at Canadian Tire Stores across BC (not restricted)

Livestock and Wolves - www.defenders.org
BC Cattlemen Association – Mitigating Cattle losses - www.cattlemen.bc.ca/

References and credits:

Prevention and Control of Wildlife Damage. Editors, Scott E. Hygnstrom, Robert M. Timm, Gary E. Larson. 1994. University of Nebraska-Lincoln. 2 vols. (tracks)

Defenders of Wildlife – Livestock and Wolves 2008, Washington DC

Furbearer Management Guidelines: BC Trappers Assoc. David F. Hatler, Garth Mowat, Kim G. Poole and Alison M.M.

Photos: Wikimedia Commons, page 2 Beal 2003

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