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PUBLIC SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENT

Coyotes Sightings in Goleta: Tips on Living Near Wildlife

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Goleta, CA, November 15, 2011 -- Recently coyotes have been sighted near Lake Los Carneros and Stow Grove Park, both individually and in small groups. Animals like coyotes and bobcats sometimes come down from the national forest into our suburban environment in search of food and water. While this in and of itself is not cause for alarm, the City is encouraging you to be aware of their presence, take steps to discourage them from staying in the area, and, most importantly, take steps to keep your children and small pets safe. Coyotes should not feel comfortable around you or your home.

What do coyotes look like: Coyotes have pointed ears, slender muzzles and drooping bushy tails they tuck under their hindquarters as they run. Their coats are grayish-brown with a tinge of red behind the ears and around the face. A coyote's eyes are a striking yellow with large dark pupils. An adult coyote can weigh 25-35 pounds, but because of their long hair, they are often mistaken as being much larger.

They most often they bark, whine and yip. A coyote print has two nail prints at the top of the paw and a larger heel impression. Coyote tracks will appear in a straight line.

Do not feed coyotes. Coyotes have an adequate food supply and are capable of surviving without our help. In suburban areas coyotes prey on rats, squirrel, garbage, yard fruit and small domestic pets. By feeding coyotes, you put yourself, your neighborhood and the coyote at risk. A coyote that becomes dependent on humans for food may become too bold around humans, bite someone and have to be destroyed.

If a coyote approaches you:

- Appear to be as **BIG, MEAN** and **LOUD** as possible
- Make yourself appear larger (stand up if sitting)
- Wave your arms, throw objects (not food) at the coyote and use a deterrent (like rocks or tennis balls)
- Shout in a deep, loud and aggressive voice
- If the coyote continues to approach, **DO NOT RUN** or turn your back on the coyote. Continue to exaggerate the above gestures while maintaining eye contact and moving toward an area of human activity

When are coyotes a risk to people? Although naturally curious, coyotes are usually timid animals and normally run away if challenged. Coyotes can be a risk to people if they have become comfortable around humans, usually as the result of feeding.

It is not normal for coyotes to attack or pursue humans, especially adults. It is a learned response to human behavior. You can discourage coyotes from feeling comfortable around you by responding to their presence and eliminating coyote attractants (food sources) from your yard and neighborhood.

Discourage coyotes from hanging around your home by removing attractants, such as:

- Accessible garbage or compost, including fruit that has fallen from trees or shrubs
- Outdoor pet food and water (stored or fed)
- Rodent habitat: neglected yards, garages or sheds
- Make sure your neighbors and others in your neighborhood do the same

Keep your pets safe. Coyotes will prey on outdoor cats and small dogs. There are some things you can do to reduce the risk to your pets:

If you own a cat: The only way to guarantee your cat's safety is to keep it indoors. Removing coyote attractants from your yard and neighborhood will reduce the probability of a coyote visiting your home. Outdoor cats face potential death from cars, diseases, parasites, raccoons and dogs, in addition to coyotes.

If you own a small dog: If you are aware of coyotes in your neighborhood, you can greatly reduce the risk of conflict if you:

- Keep your dog on a short leash while outside and avoid extension leashes.
- Supervise your dog when it is off-leash in the yard.
- Walk your dog at times and places that coincide with high pedestrian traffic.
- Keep your dog in front of you. If your dog stops, keep an eye on it.
- Dog walk with other people.

If you own a large dog: Coyotes pose less risk to medium-to large-sized dogs. Keep large dogs on leash, except in designated areas, and discourage your dog from feeling comfortable with coyotes by preventing it from "playing" or interacting with a coyote.

Fence your yard: Another option to protect pets and children is to fence in your rear yard. Minimum height to keep out coyotes is six feet. A five-foot fence with a rolling top bar is considered adequate.

Report aggressive coyotes. Aggressive coyotes should be immediately reported to the City of Goleta at 961-7500.

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