

City of Austin, Texas

Coyote Conflict Management Policy

October 8, 2014

The City of Austin recognizes that neighborhoods have encroached upon wildlife habitats, resulting in human/coyote interaction; however, the City also believes that the community as a whole benefits from the presence of wildlife. The City recognizes that a healthy ecosystem balances predators and prey.

The City and its citizens have an interest in strategies and planning for animal welfare programs community wide. In March 2009, the City became the largest city in the United States and the first in Texas to be certified as a community wildlife habitat by the National Wildlife Federation. In March 2011, the City became the largest no-kill city in the United States. In 2013 the City adopted a no-kill policy for the management of white-tailed deer. Therefore, the City of Austin will practice an attitude of tolerance for and co-existence with coyotes, with an emphasis on education, awareness and humane conflict management.

Coyotes are naturally reclusive animals that tend to avoid human contact. Food availability will tempt these intelligent, adaptable animals to test the boundaries of human interaction. Habituated urban coyotes can appear to lose all fear of humans and may appear threatening to some. These habituated coyotes may pose a danger to small pets; especially free roaming or unsupervised cats and dogs. Breeding pairs may present a danger to perceived rivals such as larger dogs. Fortunately, coyotes can be conditioned to avoid people through coyote "hazing."

Hazing is an inexpensive and proven method of re-training coyotes to avoid human contact. This method is far more effective and humane than trapping with leg-hold traps. Traps are not selective and have the potential to kill pets or other non-target animals. Therefore, the City will institute a public education and coyote hazing policy. A city policy of public education and coyote hazing will minimize the need for the City to remove coyotes.

Normal coyote behavior, including coyote sightings, presence of coyotes in yards and residential neighborhoods, and loss of free-roaming or unsupervised pets will not necessarily result in coyote removal. Lethal responses (coyote removal) will be considered only in the event of an incident* on a pet or an attack# on a human. Furthermore, the City will not sanction the use of leg-hold traps, neck snares, or chemical control for coyote management. Removal will only be implemented using live release box traps that are monitored at least twice a day, followed by euthanasia at the Austin Animal Center. Furthermore the contract between the City of Austin and Wildlife Services will be revised to reflect the provisions of this coyote policy.

**Incident is defined as a Coyote entering yard and injuring or killing attended pet or Coyote biting or injuring pet on leash.*

Attack is defined as a Coyote biting or injuring a person without provocation.