



COEXISTENCE OF PETS AND WILDLIFE

Many wild animals have adapted to living in urban areas. Across North America, wildlife such as coyotes, crows, deer, foxes, raccoons, Canada geese, some species of owls and even black bears are now living in areas dominated by human development. As well, more than ever before, people, along with their pets, are using wilderness areas for recreation, work and as a place to live. There are things you can do to reduce the risk of conflicts between your pets and wildlife. This fact sheet offers some helpful advice to protect yourself, your family, your pets and wildlife.

THINGS YOU CAN DO TO REDUCE THE RISK OF CONFLICT

Feed Pets Indoors

Pet food can attract wildlife. The scent of your pet's food or lingering odours in its food dish will draw animals such as bears, coyotes, foxes, skunks and raccoons into your yard. Feed your pets indoors. If you must feed your pet outdoors, feed it only at set times during the day and take the food dish indoors as soon as your pet finishes eating.

Keep Pets Restrained

The presence of a dog can attract black bears, coyotes, cougars and wolves. All can view a dog as a potential

competitor or as food. Wolves and coyotes may also view larger dogs as potential mates. By controlling a dog with a leash you can reduce the likelihood of it interacting with, aggravating or attracting wildlife, which could lead to you or your dog being attacked.

Wildlife that typically conflict with people are often most active at night. Keeping pets indoors from dusk until dawn will reduce the risk of a wildlife encounter.

Cats are considered prey by coyotes and other predators. Coyotes have healthy populations in Manitoba, including well established populations in urban areas. Allowing cats to wander freely puts them at significant risk of attack by coyotes or other predators, including large owls.

Domestic and feral cats are a significant predator of North America's birds. They kill millions of birds annually and many affected bird populations are in decline. Keeping cats indoors or on a leash can help reduce their effect on bird populations as well as reduce their risk of injury.

In Manitoba, it is illegal to let your dog harass wildlife. Consider fencing your yard or installing an invisible fence to control your dog while still allowing it some freedom of movement.

Don't Leave Pets Unattended.

Most wildlife will avoid people, thus human presence acts as a wildlife deterrent. Leaving a pet unattended in your yard can make it vulnerable to attack by predators.

When Walking Your Pet, Carry Deterrents and Be Aware of Your Surroundings

Be extra vigilant if you walk your pet between dusk and dawn when wild animals tend to be more active.

In urban areas walk in areas with lots of pedestrian activity.

When walking pets, assume wildlife is nearby. Watch for signs that confirm wild animals have used the area recently. These could include:

- animal tracks
- fresh droppings
- a smell or presence of an animal carcass
- a gathering of scavenger birds
- disturbed garbage containers
- an active den site
- distant or nearby howling
- disturbed ant hills, logs or squirrel caches

If your pet appears agitated it may be a warning sign. Your pet's acute senses will often let it know a predator is nearby long before you will realize it.

Don't use headphones while walking your pet in natural areas. You need to hear your surroundings or you may find yourself surprised and unprepared.

Carry a deterrent and know how to operate it. Some deterrents might include:

- a wildlife deterrent spray, sometimes called bear spray, made with capsaicin (can be carried in wilderness areas)
- an air-horn
- a loud emergency whistle
- a rattler (coins or pebbles in a canister)
- a walking stick

Walking or hiking in groups is a good idea. Make your presence known to wildlife by making noise (e.g., talking, laughing, singing, etc.). In most cases, if wildlife hear people approaching, they will move away to avoid an encounter.



Don't Attract Wildlife to Your Yard

Manage garbage responsibly:

- Store garbage and food compost in a secure building, a bear-resistant container or surrounded by electric fencing to make it inaccessible for wildlife.
- Place garbage curbside just prior to pickup, not the night before.
- Clean garbage containers regularly with bleach or ammonia.

Manage bird feeders:

- Consider removing bird feeders from April to November. During this period, consider using a bird bath to attract birds.
- If you use bird feeders during the winter, don't allow them to hang below two metres, and consider cleaning up any spilled seed to ensure it doesn't attract wild animals.

Manage fruit trees:

- Pick all fruit from fruit trees as it ripens, don't allow it to fall to the ground, accumulate and rot.

Keep barbecues clean and grease-free:

- Burn off food residue and clean your barbecue after each use. Don't forget the grease trap.

Protect fish ponds and sand boxes:

- Place secured metal mesh screening over fish ponds.
- Cover sand boxes when not in use.

Reduce cover and denning opportunities:

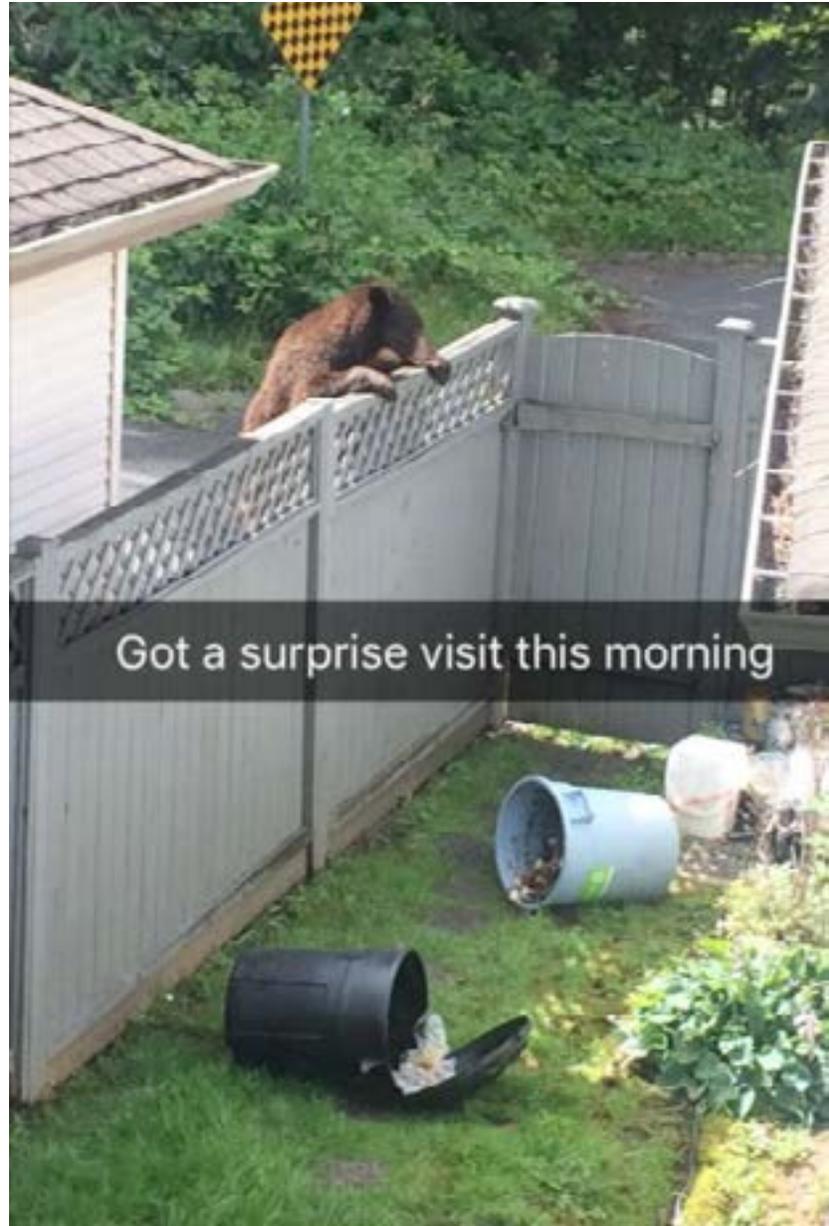
- Remove any piles of debris and trim overgrown areas in your yard to prevent wildlife from using them as shelters or dens.
- Prevent access to denning opportunities. Remove tree branches overhanging your house. Seal entry to your attic, chimney and under your shed or deck, as well.

Install fencing:

- Fencing can help keep wildlife from entering areas where they are not welcome. Traditional fencing and electric fencing options are available. Wildlife species can jump, climb and dig, so keep that in mind when selecting fencing material and construction design. For example, fencing to exclude coyotes should be at least two metres tall and extend underground at least 30 centimetres or have an L-shaped mesh apron extending outward at least 50 centimetres and secured with landscaping staples.

Install items like motion-activated lights, sounds or water sprayers:

- Motion-activated lights discourage unwanted visits from wildlife at night.
- Motion-activated alarms or water sprayers set along paths wild animals use to access your yard can discourage visits. Consider your neighbours before installing alarms.



- While deterrents may be effective at first, they may lose their effect as wildlife become accustomed to them. Change the locations and types regularly to keep wildlife wary.

Vaccinate Your Pet

Diseases that affect pets in Manitoba include:

- rabies
- canine distemper
- leptospirosis
- ringworm
- sarcoptic mange

Speak with your veterinarian to determine appropriate vaccinations and other ways to keep your pet disease free.

RESPONDING TO WILDLIFE ENCOUNTERERS

If you encounter wildlife while with your pet, be sure to maintain control of your pet. Don't approach or crowd wildlife. Make sure the wild animal has an escape route. Stop, stay calm and assess your situation. **Don't run — you may cause a chase.** What you do should depend on the wild animal and its behaviour. For more information about how to respond to wildlife encounters, visit www.manitoba.ca/human-wildlife. Report any encounters with aggressive wildlife to the nearest Sustainable Development office or call the **TIP** line at **1-800-782-0076**.



Coyote Hazing

Conflicts between coyotes and domestic dogs are becoming increasingly common in urban areas. Never allow your dog to interact or "play" with a coyote as this can be a precursor to an attack.

Coyotes are generally reclusive animals that avoid human contact, but they can lose their fear of people if they have neutral or positive encounters with humans, such as when people allow them to approach, or deliberately feed them.

A coyote with no fear of humans can become bold and aggressive unless it re-learns associating people

as a threat. Coyote hazing is a method used to maintain a coyote's natural fear of people and deter it from visiting places frequented by humans or from approaching people when they are walking their pets.

If a coyote approaches you, haze the animal to ensure it associates people with being a threat:

- Maintain eye contact and stay facing the coyote.
- Let the coyote know you are human. Stand tall, shout and wave your arms above your head to make yourself appear more threatening.
- Make noise. You can use your voice, an air horn, a whistle, something that rattles, or anything that will make a loud noise.
- Throw projectiles such as small rocks, cans, sticks or balls. Never throw food.
- Spray the coyote with a garden hose, use a squirt gun filled with water or diluted vinegar, or use a wildlife deterrent spray (often referred to as bear deterrent spray) if the animal comes within range.
- Continue hazing the coyote until it leaves the area.

Hazing activities are recommended when a coyote:

- approaches a person or pet
- is active in daylight in an area with people present
- appears habituated (doesn't run away when approached by people)
- enters a person's yard in daylight

Hazing activities are NOT recommended when a coyote:

- does not have an escape route
- is avoiding people and pets
- is in a wide open space and out late at night

If your pet is attacked by a coyote, use hazing techniques to scare it away. Do not try to separate the animals with your hands as this could result in serious human injury.

For more information on reducing the risk of conflicts with wildlife, visit www.manitoba.ca/human-wildlife.

To report wildlife showing aggressive behaviour or that appears sick, injured, or orphaned, call the TIP line at 1-800-782-0076.