



REQUEST FOR DIRECTION TO RESPOND TO CONCERNS RELATED TO HUMAN-COYOTE INTERACTIONS

City Council Item No. 9
July 17, 2023





Urban Wildlife Management Plan

Public Health Department

- Urban Wildlife Management Plan (UWMP) adopted by City Council in August 2019
 - > Provides guidance for staff; does not apply to residents, businesses, or homeowner associations
 - > Strategy balances wildlife respect and protection while also protecting public safety
 - > Three-pronged approach
 - Public education
 - Enforcement of laws
 - Categorization of coyote interactions to correctly identify and respond to threats
 - > Requires active community participation



Urban Wildlife Management Plan

Public Health Department

- The City places a high value on wildlife
 - > Focus on preventing human-wildlife conflict
 - > When conflicts emerge, UWMP recommends corrective measures that do not harm wildlife or habitat
- Lethal control is tool of last resort reserved for:
 - > Confirmed, unprovoked attack on a human
 - > Other threat to human health or safety
- City would consult with CA Department of Fish & Wildlife (CDFW) to conduct abatement



Urban Wildlife Management Plan

Public Health Department

- Relevant state regulations are complex
 - > Non-game mammals must be released or humanely euthanized at trap location
 - > Allows property owners to trap
 - > Requires a trap ID from CDFW
 - > Requires written consent from all property owners within 150 feet of trap location
 - > Several state restrictions on trapping methods
- City ordinance prohibits use of firearms
- Residents should seek CDFW guidance and engage certified professionals



Urban Wildlife Management Plan

Public Health Department

Threat Level	Assessment	Response	Responding Agency
Green	Normal coyote behavior	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Public education on normal coyote behavior, hazing techniques, and pet safety	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• City staff• Pasadena Humane
Yellow	Mildly habituated coyote behavior	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Public education on normal coyote behavior and pet safety, yard audit checklist, and teaching aggressive hazing techniques	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• City staff• Pasadena Humane
Orange	Aggressive, habituated coyote behavior	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Public education on normal coyote behavior and pet safety, yard audit checklist, and teaching aggressive hazing techniques• Community meetings to raise public awareness and education	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• City staff• Pasadena Humane
Red	Provoked or unprovoked attack requiring investigation and action	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• All response actions listed in Level Orange• Locate and abate the responsible coyote(s)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• City staff• Pasadena Humane• CA Fish & Wildlife



Urban Wildlife Management Plan

Public Health Department

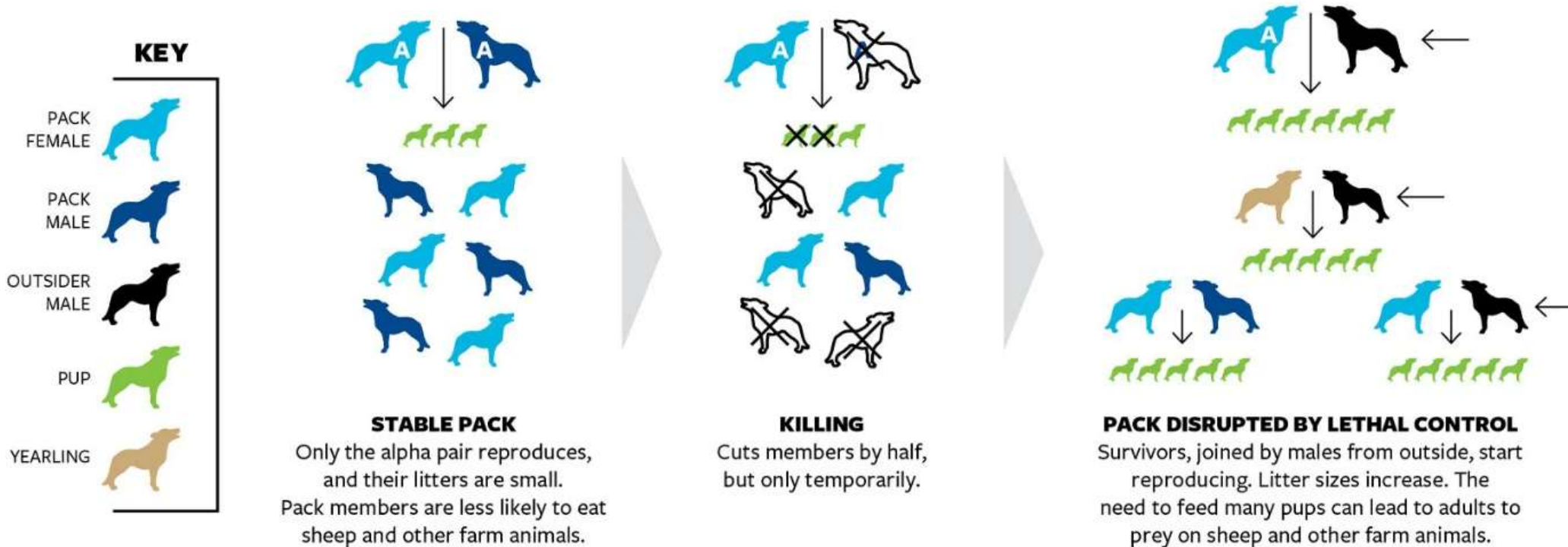
- Community members are encouraged to report coyote concerns to:
 - > Citizen Service Center (626) 744-7311
 - > Pasadena Humane (626) 792-7151
 - > Pasadena Police Department (626) 744-4241 for non-emergencies or 911 for emergencies
- PPHD reviews CSC and Pasadena Humane call data to assess trends in coyote concerns



Summary of Related Research

Public Health Department

- Lethal control is not an effective strategy for reducing human-coyote conflicts



Source: Humane Society of the United States, 2023



Summary of Related Research

Public Health Department

- “Rebound effect” or “compensatory reproduction”
 - > Found in coyote research in the 1970s and 1980s
- Coyote family
 - > One breeding alpha female producing one litter per year with an average of six pups
 - > Litter size is generally between 4 to 7 pups and is tied to nutritional status and coyote population density



Summary of Related Research

Public Health Department

- Juveniles leave the pack between 9 to 11 months becoming transients
 - > Move between narrow undefended zones between pack territories
 - > Removing coyotes reduces the ability of a pack to defend an area
 - > Immigration of transients replenishes population
- If alpha male or female are killed, ovulation is triggered in other breeding age females
 - > Resulting in an increase in number and size of litters



Summary of Related Research

Public Health Department

- Gese (2005) studied coyotes in Colorado
 - > Compared impact of lethal control on population density subject to trapping and killing in one area
 - > Used coyotes in a nearby area as a control
- Where lethal control was used, population density decreased by as much as 70%
 - > Vacancies in the pack were quickly filled by immigrating coyotes
 - > Within 8 months, the population density within the removal area had fully recovered



Summary of Related Research

Public Health Department

- Kilgo (2017) studied coyotes in southeastern US
 - > Found coyotes in areas where exploitation was occurring to have higher reproduction rate
 - > Primarily due to high immigration of juvenile males
- Conclusions
 - > It would be impossible to implement a trapping program over a sufficiently large area to limit the pool of immigrant coyotes
 - > Lethal control efforts are unlikely to reduce coyote populations for longer than a few months



Summary of Related Research

Public Health Department

- Non-lethal control can be effective if they are consistently and correctly applied
 - > Hazing
 - > Removing coyote attractants
 - > Keeping pets indoors
 - > Strengthening properties against coyote intrusion
 - > Enforcing laws prohibiting feeding of wildlife



Summary of Related Research

Public Health Department

- Study of urban coyotes in LA County by CA State University Northridge and National Park Service (2020) found
 - > 60% to 75% of the urban coyote diet is garbage, ornamental fruits, and cats
 - > Coyotes are taking advantage of unsecured food sources provided by humans
 - > When coyotes view human activity as food source, habituation results
- Frequent coyote visits to same location is a strong sign someone is feeding them



Summary of Related Research

Public Health Department

- Coyotes are naturally fearful of humans
- Hazing, or fear conditioning, helps maintain that fear
 - > Loud noises
 - > Spraying water
 - > Using bright lights
 - > Throwing objects
 - > Shouting
- Pasadena Humane and CDFW offer coyote workshops to promote a culture of hazing



Reported Coyote Concerns

Public Health Department

- Some community members have expressed growing concerns
- Mildly habituated behavior
 - > Entering enclosed yards
 - > Injuring an unattended pet
 - > Killing an unattended pet
- Normal behavior
 - > Sightings of active coyotes during the day
 - > Stalking residents while walking their pets
 - > Sitting or resting in front yards



Reported Coyote Concerns

Public Health Department

- 159 coyote concerns reported in 2022
 - > 12 of the 159 reports related to an injured or killed pet
 - > Nearly 54% were for normal coyote behavior
 - > 26% for mildly habituated behavior
 - > 12% for aggressive habituated behavior
 - > No calls for an attack on a human
- 51 reported concerns as of May 30, 2023
 - > 22% less than the prior year for the same period
 - > Two coyote attacks resulting in death of unattended pets



Reported Coyote Concerns

Public Health Department

Reported Concerns by Threat Level (Jan 1, 2022 to May 30, 2023)





Public Safety Committee Requests

Public Health Department

- Committee requested staff:
 - > Review of the City of Torrance lethal control program
 - > Seek more information on the SGVCOG Coyote Management Task Force; and
 - > Provide recommendations for addressing the community concerns reported at the April 19, 2023, Public Safety Committee meeting



Torrance Lethal Control Program

Public Health Department

- City of Torrance
 - > Population of 147,000
 - > Geographic area of roughly 21 square miles
 - > Proximity to natural resources and open space
- Torrance is the only city in LA County to use lethal control to reduce coyote population
- Like Pasadena, several other cities consider lethal control only when:
 - > Unprovoked, confirmed attack on a human
 - > Showing aggressive behavior toward humans



Torrance Lethal Control Program

Public Health Department

Date		Action					
Jun 2016		Adoption of Coyote Management Plan (CMP)					
Sept 2019		Amended CMP to establish five-month trapping season					
Oct 2019 – Mar 2020		Five-month trapping season completed					
Oct 2020 – Mar 2021		Five-month trapping season completed					
Nov 2021		Amended CMP to start year-round <i>weekday</i> trapping					
Period	Coyotes Trapped	Coyote Sightings	Dog Attack	Cat Attack	Dog Fatality	Cat Fatality	Cost
Oct 2019 – Mar 2020	14	276	Not reported	Not reported	Not reported	Not reported	\$74,000
Oct 2020 – Mar 2021	15	315	Not reported	Not reported	Not reported	Not reported	\$74,000
Oct 2021 – Sep 2022	31	Not reported	Not reported	Not reported	Not reported	Not reported	\$55,200
Oct 2022 – May 2023	18	217*	5	4	0	23	\$52,800

*Data is for approximately 8 months but does not include the period of the year when coyote activity is heightened



Coyote Management Task Force

Public Health Department

- SGVCOG developed the San Gabriel Valley Regional Coyote Management Framework
 - > Collaboration with the CDFW, County of Los Angeles, and the University of California
 - > Goal is to discourage coyote habituation through public education, behavior modification, and robust reporting and response system
- Framework emphasizes coexistence, changing human behavior, and a culture of hazing



Coyote Management Task Force

Public Health Department

- Non-selective coyote removal programs are ineffective for reducing coyote population or preventing conflicts in the long run
- Serves as the foundation for approaches to coyote response for
 - **Alhambra**
 - **Arcadia**
 - **Glendora**
 - **Irwindale**
 - **Rosemead**
 - **San Marino**
- UWMP aligns with SGVCOG Framework



Coyote Management Task Force

Public Health Department

- Neighborhood Coyote Program
 - > Similar services provided by Pasadena Humane and City of Pasadena
 - Reporting tools
 - Community workshops and trainings
 - Pet safety planning
 - > Additional services
 - Educational access line
 - Referrals to resources
 - Crisis intervention
 - > Does not conduct field visits or offer trapping services



Five Recommendations

Public Health Department

1. Increase public outreach services
2. Improve local coyote activity reporting systems
3. Convene a panel of coyote experts to improve understanding of effective approaches
4. Hire a consultant to conduct a field study where community concerns are heightened
5. Support residents to strengthen protections against coyote intrusion



1. Increase Public Outreach Services

Public Health Department

- Build on or expand current services offered by Pasadena Humane and Citizen Service Center
 - > Targeted public outreach and education
 - Culture of Hazing
 - Removal of coyote attractants
 - Compliance with laws prohibiting wildlife feeding
 - > Campaign to encourage public to report sightings
- Dedicated resources focused on coyotes



2. Improve Local Reporting System

Public Health Department

- Streamline and consolidate reporting into one point of contact
- Quality local data is needed
 - > Seek system improvements to map concerns using Geographic Information Systems (GIS)
 - > Use data to identify neighborhood hotspots, launch targeted community outreach, and other hyperlocal interventions



3. Convene a Panel of Coyote Experts

Public Health Department

- Surge in local research on urban coyotes
 - > Focused on studying coyote behavior and methods for addressing human-coyote conflicts
- Hosting a panel for the public may help improve understanding of coyote populations and reducing conflicts
 - > Understand latest research
 - > Identify approaches for educating the public
 - > Address problematic coyote behavior
 - > Learn about best practices in data collection and analysis



4. Hire Consultant to Conduct Field Study

Public Health Department

- For one or more areas of the city where concerns are heightened, hire a consultant to conduct a field study
 - > Assess neighborhood coyote population
 - > Directly observe coyotes to understand behavior
 - > Identify neighborhood food sources and other attractants
- Recently, consultants prepared comprehensive coyote reports for Culver City and Manhattan Beach



5. Support Protections Against Intrusion

Public Health Department

- There are several effective methods for strengthening properties against coyote intrusion such as coyote rollers, taller fencing, and lighting
- Potential options for exploration
 - > Incentives or financial assistance to property owners
 - > Offer technical assistance to comply with the zoning code in historic districts
 - > Review the zoning code to assess conflicts between coyote deterrents and zoning restrictions



Options for Consideration

Public Health Department

Option 1: Direct staff to take steps to amend the UWMP to begin a seasonal trapping program, possibly October to March

Option 2: Direct staff to take steps to amend the UWMP to begin an annual trapping program

Option 3: Direct staff to implement one or more of the five staff recommendations listed in response to the Public Safety Committee



Options for Consideration

Public Health Department

Option 4: Direct staff to take no action at this time.

Option 5: Direct staff to pursue an alternative option not presented in this report.



Recommendations

Public Health Department

It is recommended that the City Council:

1. Find the proposed action is exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) in accordance with Section 15061(b)(3). The Common Sense Exemption states that CEQA only applies to projects that may have an effect on the environment; and
2. Provide direction on whether to initiate one of the identified options or an alternative option not presented in this agenda report.