

IT'S COYOTE MATING SEASON



Unlike domestic dogs, coyotes typically mate once a year during late winter, primarily from January to March. While the overall breeding season spans about two months, the alpha female has a narrow fertility window of just two–five days each year.

COYOTES MATE FOR LIFE. [A 20-year study of urban coyotes](#) found coyotes are innately monogamous. Very few mammals form lifelong relationships; scientists documented this in only 3-5% of mammalian species. For coyotes, it's crucial for survival for several reasons:

1. **Protect and care for pups.** Once born, the alpha male and female support the coyote pups by providing food and offering protection from the weather and predators. The male also helps to raise the litter and teaches pups to hunt.
2. **Defend territory.** Family groups work cooperatively to protect their territory from other coyotes and threats. The alpha male and female are the primary defenders. If one or both alpha pairs are removed, the pack's hierarchy can destabilize, allowing other coyotes to take over territory.
3. **Strengthen family bonds.** Coyotes are highly socialized animals with a well-established hierarchy. Monogamy and family stability help maintain pack cohesion and cooperation.

How can residents prevent conflict during mating season?

Coyotes may become more visible and territorial as they reinforce pair bonds and defend areas. To reduce coyote visits and prevent conflict:

1. **Remove food sources.** Litter size varies with food availability; abundant food can lead to larger litters (up to eleven pups in some cases), while limited resources keep average litter size from four to seven pups. Secure trash, remove pet food outdoors, pick up fallen fruit, and avoid feeding wildlife to help control local coyote population growth.
2. **Supervise small children and pets when outdoors.** Always supervise young kids and pets outdoors. Coyotes can be more aggressive during mating season.
3. **Actively scare or haze coyotes.** Active hazing involves use of deterrents, such as noise, visual cues (make yourself bigger), or uncomfortable touch (spray water from a hose, throw rocks near them). A dog barking or honking a car horn does not qualify as active hazing. It does not reinforce fear of people.

DID YOU KNOW?

- The female coyote's fertility window lasts only two to five days each year. Female domestic dogs experience this twice a year.
- Coyotes mate for life.
- Studies of urban coyotes show that pups have a 60% chance of surviving one year.

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TorranceCA.Gov/Coyotes



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