



Puente Hills Landfill
Native Habitat Preservation Authority

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Coyote Pups May Be Reason For Increased Sightings and Incidents

Have you been reading or hearing a lot about coyote sightings in neighborhoods lately? Have you wondered whether there this is due to a sudden increase in the coyote population? The answer is likely a combination of both “yes” and “no”.

While there is no evidence to suggest that coyote populations as a whole are increasing, they do breed and produce pups every year. By summer, pups that were born in April or May are now old enough to be eating meat and out of the den, hunting with their family group for food and learning how to hunt for themselves for when they eventually might disperse on their own in late fall or winter. With the extra mouths to feed, coyote parents need to find more food sources, and may be searching farther and wider than normal to find them.

Fortunately, coyotes are scavengers and are very resourceful – they can eat almost anything, including small mammals (such as rabbits and rodents), snakes, fruits and vegetables, birds. Unfortunately, however, that also means that some coyotes can sometimes stray into suburban and urban neighborhoods to eat trash, fruit, or even small pets. If food sources are deliberately, or even accidentally, provided by people, these young coyote learn to associate human neighborhoods with food and may develop a reliance on these unnatural food sources, increasing their interactions with humans and reducing their natural fear of humans. The California Department of Fish and Game reports that roughly two-thirds of coyote incidents occur in the spring and summer, most likely related to pup rearing.

The best way to avoid human-coyote interactions is to prevent them by keeping coyotes wild by reducing their reliance on human food sources. How can you help? 1) Do not feed coyotes, directly or indirectly – this includes making sure that any outside garbage is secured. 2) Do not feed your pets outdoors, and do not leave pet food outdoors unattended, especially at night. 3) Do not allow pets to roam free outside, and make sure to keep your dog on a leash during walks. 4) And finally, make sure that fencing around your yard is intact and secure – a six-foot high fence is recommended, as is burying the bottom six inches of the fence underground to prevent digging underneath it.

Ecologist Shannon Lucas with the Puente Hills Landfill Native Habitat Preservation Authority reminds us, “Coyotes play an important role in the ecosystem by helping to keep local populations of rodents and other small mammals under control.”



Informative Links:

California Department of Fish and Game
<http://www.dfg.ca.gov/keepmewild/>

U.S. Department of Agriculture
http://www.aphis.usda.gov/lpa/pubs/fsheet_faq_notice/fs_wscoyote.html

Habitat Authority
www.HabitatAuthority.org

The Puente Hills Landfill Native Habitat Preservation Authority (Habitat Authority) is a government park agency which manages 3,869 acres of hillsides in Whittier, Hacienda Heights and La Habra Heights. The Habitat Authority is dedicated to the acquisition, restoration, and management of open space in the Puente Hills for preservation of the land in perpetuity, with the primary purpose to protect the biological diversity. Additionally, the agency will endeavor to provide opportunities for outdoor education and low-impact recreation.

For more information about the Habitat Authority visit www.habitatauthority.org.

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