



California Wildlife Center

Patient of the Week

June 27, 2025

Coexisting with Coyotes



Photo of Coyote patient taken from remote camera.

Coyotes are frequently misunderstood and often met with fear and disapproval from the human neighbors they live alongside. However, Coyotes have been around a lot longer than many of our cities and towns and hold an important role in the ecological food chain.

Coyotes are thought to have existed since the Pleistocene epoch, which includes the last Ice Age, and once coexisted with large carnivores like Dire Wolves and Saber-Toothed Tigers. As certain species faced extinction due to rising temperatures and human impact, the Coyote continued to evolve and adapt to their changing environment. Coyotes today are smaller than their ancestors and have evolved to skillfully navigate and live in areas that are now densely populated. Their adaptability is one reason this species is so common to spot in areas where they're not always welcome.

The circumstances that bring a Coyote into care are often the result of humans living in close proximity. In the springtime we admit pups who are found injured or orphaned- this year we have eight in care! We also recently admitted an adult Coyote suspected of being hit by a car.

When the adult female arrived, she was mentally dull—less responsive than normal—and had a severe chronic or old degloving injury on her left front leg, most likely from being hit by a car. The patient was immediately started on pain medication, antibiotics, and anti-inflammatories. The wound was carefully cleaned and debrided to remove damaged tissue and any foreign objects. Due to the severity of the injury and the high risk of infection, it will be crucial to clean the wound and change the bandage regularly. Over the past few days, the patient has become more alert and her appetite is good. Our hospital staff continue to manage her pain and minimize her stress in hopes of encouraging her to eat. While her current prognosis is guarded, our team is doing everything possible to support her recovery.

Coyotes, like all our wild neighbors, live among us and it is important we conduct ourselves thoughtfully when going about our daily lives. Please keep cats indoors and supervise dogs when outside. Coyotes are generally fearful of humans and are unlikely to show aggression unless they feel threatened or provoked or have a den with young pups nearby. If you ever feel unsafe around a Coyote, you can discourage them from approaching by making loud noises, waving your arms, or tossing a small object in their direction. Refrain from running away, and do not attempt to cause physical harm to the Coyote.

If you need assistance in learning how to coexist with Coyotes, contact your local wildlife rehabilitation center for guidance.