

# Coyote Sightings In Turtle Rock

January 2019

There have been visits, phone calls and pictures coming into this office over the last two days about the Coyote population in and around Turtle Rock. As development continues to reduce the natural habitat, the preserves, hammocks and wetlands become a safe haven for many animals looking for a new place to live.

I reached out to the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission and spoke to one of their biologists, Rhonda Douthett, this is the e-mail and information she sent back to me.

“It is important to secure all attractants (pet food, garbage, bird seed, fallen fruit, etc.) as this is commonly what brings coyotes into communities. It is also important to keep all cats indoors and dogs should be kept on a short leash and supervised while outdoors. You can also use hazing techniques (such as yelling, throwing rocks, using air horns, etc.) to scare the coyotes away as you see them. Coyotes are generally not a threat to people and are usually easily scared off. Deterrent products include the water scarecrow (motion-activated sprinkler), a critter gitter device, and motion-activated lights.”

“The mere presence of coyotes does not necessarily indicate a threat, as pet and livestock depredation is a learned behavior. Killing and removing coyotes from a landscape where they are not currently causing problems is discouraged, because it can open up a space in the ecosystem for recruitment of other coyotes who have learned to prey on pets or livestock. Additionally, coyotes are highly organized in their social structure, and live in family groups consisting of one mated parent pair and sometimes sibling beta individuals that help raise young. Removing one or two will disrupt that hierarchy and cause more young to be born at a faster rate as the betas vie for and to try to replace the parent position you are likely to eliminate on the first go (because parents are the more active and visible group members.) Coyotes are also beneficial to the ecosystem by providing pest and rodent control.”

FWC page on living with coyotes: <http://myfwc.com/conservation/you-observe/wildlife/coyotes/>

Humane society: <http://www.humanesociety.org/animals/coyotes/>

FWC General information about coyotes:

<http://myfwc.com/wildlifehabitats/profiles/mammals/land/coyote/>

Urban coyote research in Chicago: <http://urbancoyotereseach.com/>

The Urban Coyote Initiative, several great articles here including one on dog safety:

<http://urbancoyoteinitiative.com/articles/>