



# COYOTE:

## the Survivor of North America

The coyote is a relative of the dog, wolf and jackal. Like its relatives, it is a predator and mostly eats other mammals. It will, however, eat a wide variety of foods, including insects, fruits and vegetables.

Coyotes are found throughout most of North America, from Mexico and Central America to Canada and Alaska. The color of its coat depends on where it lives. Mountain coyotes are darker than those living in the desert.

Like the wolf, coyotes live in groups, or packs. The pack is usually smaller in number than a wolf pack. All members of the pack are usually related. The pack will often divide into pairs to hunt.

Female coyotes have a litter of pups once a year. A litter has an average of six pups. Over half of the pups will die before they reach adulthood. Male pups usually leave the pack to find their own territory. Female pups stay with the parent's pack.

Wolves and coyotes compete for the same prey animals. Since the coyote is smaller than the wolf, wolves will usually drive the coyote out of any shared territory.

The coyote adapts easily to new areas. Unlike the buffalo or wolf, the coyote's range increased after human populations expanded across the continent. For example, the coyote was not native to New England. Once the New England settlers eliminated wolves, however, the coyote moved in. Scientists who have studied the coyote believe it is better than the wolf at living in human areas.

Coyotes are now found in most large urban areas. They find an abundant supply of food in these areas, since coyotes are willing to eat garbage, rodents and even small pets, such as cats. Scientists estimate that as many as 2,000 coyotes may be living in the Chicago area.

Because of its adaptability, the coyote is not an endangered species, or even a threatened species. It has been classified as "least concern," which means it has the lowest risk of extinction.



*The coyote communicates with other coyotes by howling or yipping.*



*A very young coyote pup*

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### Cite the Source

Find two examples from the text that support the idea that the coyote adapts to survive.

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