

## Living Safely with Coyotes

 **Never feed coyotes or leave out foods that might attract them.** Don't feed their puppies. Secure trash. Coyotes eat everything: fruit, cereals, meats, small animals, and garbage.

 **Never feed pets outside.**

 **Bring your small pets inside at night or accompany them in heavily used coyote areas.** Any pet woodchuck size or smaller is at risk.

 **A safe cat is an indoor cat.** Outdoor cats or cat colonies are a magnet for coyotes.

 **If coyotes are staring at you, or following you, they probably think you are going to feed them.** Remember many coyotes are trained to expect food from people.

 **If you are uncomfortable with coyotes near you, act big, mean, and loud.** A soda can full of pennies makes a good noisy shaker and should scare them away. If noise alone does not work throw something. Coyotes are very nervous animals and should leave especially if it looks like you are going to approach them.

 **If you feed them you are part of the "coyote problem."** Remember: fat coyotes are fertile coyotes. They have plenty of natural foods here - including mice, rats, woodchucks, rabbits, geese and deer - they don't need more.

 **Habituated coyotes are dangerous because they are apt to approach people and may become aggressive.** Problem individuals will need to be removed and euthanized. You are not doing a coyote any favor by feeding it: a fed coyote is a dead coyote.

## Management and Coexistence

The NBCS is working with local and state government and the public to develop viable management and coexistence strategies for the eastern coyote in RI. We are addressing the issue of coyote subsidization and population growth by creating a unified plan to reduce coyote numbers to a level sustainable by the natural environment.

The Narragansett Bay Coyote Study (NBCS) is a project of The Conservation Agency. NBCS is committed to conducting cutting-edge research on coyote populations in Rhode Island and sharing its findings with the local communities.

The Conservation Agency is a scientific, non-profit, 501(c)(3) organization based in Jamestown, RI. The Conservation Agency is dedicated to the conservation of natural biodiversity through exploration and discovery as well as conservation and preservation. For 25 years, TCA has studied wildlife, habitats, and complex ecosystems around the world. Our research and expertise have provided governments, communities and residents with the information needed to create effective management strategies and policies. Contributions tax deductible. I.R.S. 05-0392995.



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## Coyote Coexistence Guide for Naval Station Newport



Prepared by  
**The Narragansett Bay Coyote Study**  
a project of The Conservation Agency

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## Coyotes on Naval Station Newport

Beginning in 2005 coyotes became a regular sight on Naval Station Newport even during the day. Captain Todd Malloy, CO, responding to a clear increase in community concern about coyotes, and apparent increases in their numbers on the Base, contracted The Narragansett Bay Coyote Study (NBCS) to conduct a sub-study on the base.

The NBCS is currently working on Jamestown and Aquidneck Island to develop regionally tailored management and coexistence strategies. NBCS research indicates that throughout the Islands increasingly noticeable coyote presence has a lot to do with food.

## Coyote Biology Relates to Management

 Coyotes are different from deer, which depend on predators to control their population size. Since coyotes are top predators they have to control their own numbers – nobody eats them and brings their numbers down.

 Coyotes regulate population size by varying the number of offspring each pack produces. More food resources mean more puppies and higher coyote population density.

 With less food both coyote numbers and population density decrease.

 It follows that if we can identify and control the availability the food resources the coyotes are using, coyotes will bring their own numbers down. NBCS calls this “Passive Management.”

## Why not shoot them?

Nationwide lethal control methods have proved futile. Trying to get rid of coyotes by killing them is a logistically impossible task since most of them are discrete, shy, and virtually invisible. Inevitably, the ones that are missed sense the increase in available food, produce more pups, and rapidly restore the population to former levels. Killing coyotes to control them is like bailing a boat with a sieve.

## How does NBCS Science Help?

The NBCS has designed and deployed a novel study methodology that reveals resources that might be contributing to coyote abundance. Our team is capturing representative coyotes from each of 10 packs currently occupying Jamestown and Aquidneck Islands. NBCS uses unique tracking collars that transmit the hourly GPS coordinates of each tagged coyote to special telemetry receivers. When the GPS location data are overlaid on GIS digital map layers (orthophotos, landuse, etc.), they reveal information about movement and resource use in a detail never before possible.

When GIS maps reveal that coyotes are regularly visiting a location, scientists “ground-truth” the spot and figure out what resources are attracting them

## People Cause Coyote Problems

Using GPS tracking, NBCS has found that coyotes on both islands are being heavily subsidized by humans who directly and indirectly provide thousands of pounds of food to them each year.

## Human Handouts

 Intentional and unintentional coyote subsidies:

- Road-killed animals, especially deer, are dumped not properly disposed of
- Deer shot but not recovered, gut piles
- Dead farm-livestock dumping
- People feeding feral cats or wildlife foods coyotes eat
- People Intentionally feeding coyotes

 Problem:

- fat coyotes are fertile coyotes
- coyotes respond to abundant food resources by producing more offspring.
- coyote populations are increasing
- coyotes are getting bold – they expect food from people and may get aggressive

The coyotes on the Navy Base flow onto the base from all over Aquidneck Island. Excessive coyote production occurs anywhere coyotes are being subsidized significantly by food. Coyotes can produce many more offspring than they need to replace pack members. The young spread out and fill any available habitat on the island. For that reason there is no such thing as an isolated coyote problem on Aquidneck Island. Aquidneck Island’s problem is the Navy Base’s problem and visa versa.

## Solution

We can manage coyotes - get them to drop their own numbers - if we aggressively manage ourselves and decrease the food subsidies we are providing to them.