In spite of being hunted and trapped for over 200 years, there are more coyotes today than when the United States Constitution was signed.
Living in Harmony, Living in Conflict

Living in harmony . . .
Most of the time, coyotes and humans live in harmony.
• People enjoy watching and hearing these clever animals.
• Coyotes eat rabbits, rodents and other animals that conflict with people.
• Coyotes are scavengers. They help keep areas free from dead animals.
• Coyotes are part of the food supply for animals like wolves and mountain lions.
People can help keep coyotes from becoming a problem if they:
• Do not feed coyotes.
• Pick up and securely dispose of trash.
• Keep pets inside at night.
• Don’t leave pet food and water outside at night.

Living in conflict . . .
Conflicts can arise between coyotes and humans.
• Coyotes kill livestock like sheep or calves.
• Coyotes kill cats and dogs.
• Coyotes sometimes carry rabies or other diseases.
• Coyotes sometimes will kill endangered or threatened animals that people are working to protect.
• Coyotes may hunt the same game mammals and birds that people hunt.
• Coyotes may be a hazard to aircraft.

Preventing Damage Done by Coyotes

Many methods are used to prevent damage caused by coyotes. Some methods are lethal and result in the death of the coyote. Some methods are nonlethal which do not result in the death of the animal. Often, many methods are used. This is called integrated pest management or IPM. The purpose of IPM is to stop or reduce damage rather than eliminate the coyotes.
Some examples of damage done by coyotes include:
• killing of lambs and calves
• killing of cats and dogs
• eating watermelons and other fruit
• chewing drip irrigation systems
• killing endangered animals like the black-footed ferret, San Joaquin Kit Fox and California Least Tern. Some examples of nonlethal ways to reduce damage done by coyotes to livestock include:
  • using net-wire or electric fencing to keep coyotes away from livestock
  • shortening the length of calving or lambing seasons
  • confining livestock in a coyote proof corral at night when coyotes are most likely to attack livestock
  • using lights above corrals
  • removing dead livestock so coyotes won’t be attracted to scavenge
• removing habitat that provides homes to natural prey of coyotes, like rabbits, from lambing and calving area
• using strobe lights and sirens to scare coyotes away
• using guard animals like dogs, donkeys and llamas to protect livestock.
Some lethal methods include:
• regulating sport hunting and trapping of coyotes to keep coyote populations in balance
• working with the USDA Wildlife Services to remove problem coyotes by selective hunting and trapping.

Distemper and canine hepatitis are the most common diseases occurring in coyotes. Rabies and tularemia also occur and may be transmitted to humans and other animals. Coyotes often carry parasites which include mites, ticks, fleas, worms and flukes.
Economics of Damage

Value of livestock killed by coyotes:
- lamb and sheep: $14,534,000 ___________ %
- cattle and calves: $21,800,000 ___________ %
- goats: $ 1,605,000 ___________ %

MATH ACTIVITY:
What is the total value of the above animals lost to coyotes?

Legends and Folklore

There is much folklore about the coyote. From the Aztec and Mayan civilizations of Mexico to almost all Native American peoples living west of the Mississippi River, legends about coyotes are plentiful. These cultures believed the coyote had magical powers.

In Indian folklore, the coyote brought gifts to the people. According to Zuni legend, the coyote taught man to hunt. The Sioux believe it taught humans about useful plants. Indians of the Pacific Northwest tell how the coyote put salmon in the rivers and taught men how to make fish traps and salmon spears. The Sen people say the coyote taught them to take the sweet juice out of cactus.

When the world was first created, the buffalo had such keen eyesight that hunters could not come close without the buffalo running away. The coyote is said to have taken pity on the hunters. The coyote kicked sand in the buffaloes’ eyes to make them nearsighted, a condition that remains to this day. The tales were meant to amuse as well as to teach moral lessons.

Because the coyotes were such an integral part of life in the American West, several proverbs from that region deal with coyotes. When one said, “The coyote won’t get another chicken from me,” it meant that one had learned a valuable lesson. To have “heard the coyote bark” meant that one had extensive experience.

Your turn...

Coyotes that live near cities and towns sometimes kill dogs and cats. Coyotes help control populations of dogs and cats that are feral (domestic animals that have become wild). People get upset when dogs and cats killed by coyotes are pets.

There is a coyote family living in your neighborhood. What do you suggest be done to keep coyotes from killing neighborhood pets?

Establishing a value...
Talk to your friends. Find out how many have pets. Make a list of these pets. Now ask them “What is the value of each pet?” “How much did the pet cost?” “How much has their family spent caring for their pet?” “If their pet was killed by a coyote, what would their loss be?”

Was it easy or hard to determine a value of pets?

DOWN: 1. lambs, 3. scavenger, 5. nonlethal, 6. feral, 7. howl, 10. habitat
Math Activity: total $37,939,000; lambs and sheep 38%, cattle 57%, goats 4%
**CROSSWORD REVIEW**

**ACROSS**
1. young sheep  
2. animals that eat both plants and animals  
4. scientific name for coyotes  
9. resulting in death  
11. traditional beliefs, legends or customs  
12. integrated pest management  
13. dead animal

**DOWN**
1. young sheep  
3. an animal or organism that eats dead organic matter  
5. not resulting in death  
6. domesticated animal that has gone wild  
7. sound made by coyotes  
10. the natural home of a plant or animal

**Canis latrans** is the scientific name for coyote and means barking dog. The unique barks, yips and **howls** make a few coyotes sound like a large number of coyotes. The complex series of yips, howls and barks provide a communication system for the group.

**Additional Resources**

Wildlife Activity Book and 1998 Wildlife Issue  
Colorado Reader  
Colorado Foundation for Agriculture  
P.O. Box 10  
Livermore, CO 80536

1994 Season of the Coyote  
HarperCollins Publisher, Inc.  
10 East 53rd Str.  
New York, New York  
10022

Prevention and Control of Wildlife Damage CD ROM or Handbook  
202 Natural Resource University of Nebraska  
P.O. Box 83819  
Lincoln, NE 68583

Jack H. Berryman Institute for Wildlife Damage Management  
Utah State University  
Logan, Utah 83431-5210

*This activity sheet has been developed by USDA Wildlife Services. For more information about coyotes contact your state’s Wildlife Services office or USDA Wildlife Services at (301) 734-7921.*