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**Ever-adaptable Coyote Plays a Valuable Role in
Our Ecosystem**

By: John Gladden, Communications Coordinator

Coyotes are shrouded in mystery -- and it's easy to understand why. Having adapted to share habitat with humans, coyotes are active mostly at night, when people aren't around. So, we don't cross paths with them as often as we do with other wildlife. And because they are unfamiliar, they can become objects of fear -- sometimes exaggerated by the news and entertainment media.



While not native to the Buckeye State, coyotes are found in all 88 Ohio counties, in both urban and rural areas.

Coyotes deserve our respect -- like all wildlife -- but there's little reason to be afraid. Once we learn more about them, we may even find something to admire in these resilient animals and the valuable role they play in our environment.

Some people mistakenly identify coyotes as wolves, which are much larger and have been extirpated from Ohio since 1842. Coyotes are more similar in size and appearance to a medium-size dog, weighing 20-50 pounds, with tan, to reddish, to brownish-black fur. While not native to the Buckeye State, coyotes are found in all 88 Ohio counties, in both urban and rural areas. Their expansion into the state was a natural progression in response to the removal of other top-of-the-food-chain predators.

They're omnivores -- mostly eating small mammals like rabbits and mice, plus insects, grasses, and berries. It's not unusual for coyotes to hunt in pairs or in small family groups. Hearing them bark or yelp after dark should not be cause for concern. Like domestic dogs, it's how they communicate.

Coyotes avoid contact with people, but if a coyote were to venture out during the day, it most likely would be this time of year, in search of a mate or food for hungry pups. Coyotes breed in February and March; offspring are born in April and May. Like other animals -- and people, for that matter -- coyotes are protective of their young. Dogs in particular may trigger their defensive instincts. Additionally, a small pet roaming around outside could be perceived by a coyote as prey. It's safest for cats to be indoors and for dogs to be on leashes.

Healthy coyotes rarely display aggression toward humans, but if a coyote appears to be intentionally entering your line of travel or following you, it's best to stop and back away slowly in the direction you came. This often will take you away from a den or pups and resolve the situation.

If you should encounter a coyote in your yard that stands its ground or advances while growling or barking at you or your pet, this should be considered a display of aggression. Standing tall and waiving your arms to make yourself appear larger and yelling at the animal in a deep voice should send most coyotes running off. Care also should be taken to maintain control of leashed pets. If these encounters happen repeatedly, then removal of an aggressive animal may be necessary. Check local ordinances, as removal conducted within city limits likely will need to be performed by a licensed animal control professional. Like dogs, coyotes can sometimes carry rabies. A sick animal may display aggression towards humans in the latter stages of the disease. This unusual behavior should be reported to local law enforcement.

Coyotes have been in Ohio for more than 60 years and serve as an important predator in the ecosystem. They act as a natural control on small-mammal populations, as well as on growing numbers of feral cats, feral dogs, Canada geese, and deer that can damage home landscapes and natural resources. Removing coyotes is generally a last resort -- knowing that new individuals likely will fill the void and claim any vacated territory.

Coyotes are wary animals that prefer to avoid contact with us, and it's important that we help maintain this relationship. By eliminating food sources (like pet food and garbage) and stopping intentional feeding of wildlife, we can help prevent coyotes from getting comfortable around people and pets. And in return, coyotes will help keep rabbits, raccoons, groundhogs, and other nibblers out of our gardens.

To learn more, please visit wildlife.ohiodnr.gov or urbancoyotereseearch.com.

Park District to Manage Brunswick Lake Park

By: John Gladden, Communications Coordinator

Medina County Park District has assumed operation of Brunswick Lake Park following Brunswick City Council's approval of a 25-year lease agreement at its January 23 meeting.

The park district has operated Susan Hambley Nature Center at the 79-acre park since 2008 and collaborated with the city on the creation of the one-mile all-purpose Brunswick Lake Trail in 2014. The nature center and trails are used extensively for park district programs and events throughout the year.

Located in a thriving residential and commercial area in the heart of Medina County's largest community, the park brings nature to the city's doorstep. Other features of the site include a 13.2-acre lake and a 0.5-mile nature trail that takes visitors through a mature stand of beech, maple, and oak trees. In season, the woods, lake, and wetlands are home to turtles, frogs, wood ducks, mink, and a showy collection of spring wildflowers.

Medina County Park District will create a master plan for Brunswick Lake Park with input from an ad-hoc committee of city residents and council members. One potential goal is to create additional connections to the all-purpose trail from the surrounding neighborhoods. The park district also is exploring a future trail connection to Plum Creek Park in Brunswick Hills Township.

To learn more about Brunswick Lake Park and Susan Hambley Nature Center, and to find a calendar of upcoming programs, please visit www.MedinaCountyParks.com.



Brunswick Lake