

SOLF Presents: Coyotes

[This post on mysouthborough.com is part of a special guest series focused on appreciating nature in Southborough, contributed by the Southborough Open Land Foundation (SOLF), a non-profit dedicated to preserving and stewarding natural resources here in town.]

by Brett Peters on April 3, 2023



Above: With coyotes in our region, SOLF encourages residents to keep an eye on small outdoor pets but appreciate the important benefits these canines provide. (photo of Eastern coyote courtesy of Jon Way of Eastern Coyote Research)

Coyotes may not be the first animal that comes to mind when you think of New England wildlife. They are not native to our state, but were first spotted in Massachusetts in the 1950s. And now, these clever canines have made themselves right at home in the region.

Their ability to thrive in a variety of habitats makes them quite capable of living across various environments, whether wilderness, rural or urban. As a result, neighbors may find themselves asking: are they a risk to us and our pets and should we remove them?

Well, coyotes are opportunistic eaters, which means they'll chow down on just about anything they can find. They can run up to 40 miles per hour, helping them catch small mammals like rabbits and rodents, and also enjoy fruits, insects, and even carrion. Additionally, they aren't above taking down a domestic animal if the opportunity arises, so it's best to keep an eye on your smaller outdoor pets!

To be clear though, coyotes rarely cause problems for humans. They're highly social creatures that live in packs, and they communicate with each other using a range of vocalizations and body language. Our risks are low and coyotes offer far more benefit than harm to our community!

Since moving into our region, they now play an important role in the ecosystem as predators and scavengers. Critters like rodents and deer can have their populations held in check and, as a result, all species are more healthy and stable in the long run by having coyotes in their community.

So the next time you're out for a walk in New England and you hear a strange howling or yipping sound, don't be too alarmed. It's probably just a group of coyotes, going about their business and adding a little bit of wildness to our otherwise civilized corner of the world.

Want to learn more about coyotes? SOLF is sponsoring a talk at the library on Thursday, April 27 at 7 pm. All are welcome!

Have a good photo or story of your local coyote encounters? Let us know!

Want to learn more about SOLF, or volunteer or donate? Check out our site, we'd love to hear from you.

Brett Peters, Trustee
SOLF – Southborough Open Land Foundation