

Coyote

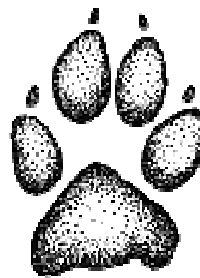
What does the coyote look like?



- The coyote is a member of the dog family. In size and shape the coyote is like a medium-sized Collie dog, but its tail is round and bushy and is carried straight out below the level of its back.
- Coyotes have grey or reddish-grey fur with buff underparts and long rusty or yellowish legs.
- They have prominent ears and arresting yellow eyes.
- On average, coyotes weigh 20-40 pounds.

Can you identify a coyote track?

The coyote track closely resembles that of a dog or fox although the coyote tends to follow a straight path across open areas where the others will wander or follow aspects of the landscape. The print is a rough oval shape with four toes bearing claw prints. The larger front foot has a much larger pad than the smaller rear foot.



FRONT



HIND

What does the coyote like to eat?

The coyote is omnivorous which means it eats both plants and animals. They will eat fruits, grasses, and vegetables along with small mammals, insects and reptiles.



Where does a coyote live?

The coyote can live in many different places. Coyotes are found out West, on the grassy plains, in the mountains, in the desert and in northern Canada.

The coyote lives in a den or burrow. It may dig a hole in the ground or on the side of a hill. A hole in some rocks makes a good den for this animal.



How do coyotes communicate?

The coyote is one of the few wild animals whose vocalizations are commonly heard. At night coyotes both howl (a high quavering cry) and emit a series of short, high-pitched yips. Howls are used to keep in touch with other coyotes in the area. Sometimes, when it is first heard, the listener may experience a tingling fear of primitive danger, but to the seasoned outdoorsman, the howl of the coyote is truly a song of the West.

- **Howling** - communication with others in the area. Also, an announcement that "I am here and this is my area. Other males are invited to stay away but females are welcome to follow the sound of my voice. Please answer and let me know where you are so we don't have any unwanted conflicts."
- **Yelping** - a celebration or criticism within a small group of coyotes. Often heard during play among pups or young animals.
- **Bark** - The scientific name for coyotes means "Barking dog," *Canis latrans*. The bark is thought to be a threat display when a coyote is protecting a den or a kill.
- **Huffing** - is usually used for calling pups without making a great deal of noise.

What are the coyote's mating habits?

At the beginning of the mating season in January, several lone male coyotes may gather around a female to court her, but she will form a relationship with only one of them. The male and female desert coyote may travel together before mating in January or February.

The female bears one litter of 3 to 9 puppies a year, usually in April or May when food is abundant. The gestation period is from 63 to 65 days.

The pups are born blind in a natal den, but their eyes open after about 14 days and they emerge from the den a few days later. They suckle for 5 to 7 weeks, and start eating semi-solid food after 3 weeks. While the male helps support the family with regurgitated food, the mother does not allow him to come all the way into the den.

The pups live and play in the den until they are 6 to 10 weeks old, when the mother starts taking them out hunting in a group. The family gradually disbands, and by fall the pups are usually hunting alone. Within a year, they go their own way, staking out their own territory, marked with the scent of their urine.

