

Costa Mesa Police Department

Memorandum



DATE: July 20, 2020

TO: Bryan Glass, Chief of Police
Victor Bakkila, Captain

FROM: Clint Dieball, Lieutenant

SUBJECT: COYTOE MANAGEMENT PLAN REPORT – FY19-20

PURPOSE

To provide an update of the City's Coyote Management Plan to include a summary of data from the *Coyote Cacher* reporting website.

BACKGROUND

In April 2017, the Police Department implemented a new Coyote Management Plan to provide guidance to City staff and community members regarding coyote activity within Costa Mesa. The plan was modeled after similar plans successfully utilized by other cities and endorsed by the California Department of Fish & Wildlife (CDFW) and the University of California, Division of Agriculture and Natural Resources (UCANR). The Coyote Management Plan is based on coyote behavior education, ways to remove coyote attractants, coyote hazing, as well as more aggressive strategies utilized by Animal Control personnel and trained volunteers should situations warrant. Success in managing the existence of coyotes within the community rests on the collective and cooperative effort between the City and Costa Mesa community.

During the same time, UCANR launched the internet-based coyote reporting website, *Coyote Cacher*, <https://ucanr.edu/sites/CoyoteCacher/>. *Coyote Cacher* is a reporting and tracking mechanism highlighted within our Coyote Management Plan that allows community members to self-report coyote activity, from sightings to more serious coyote activity. Similar to the City's crime mapping software, the public is able to view the location and nature of recently reported coyote activity. Further, the Police Department's Animal Control staff is able to view historical data, as well as contact persons reporting activity in order to gain further information, if required. Dr. Niamh Quinn from UCANR considered one of the foremost coyote experts in California, administers the *Coyote Cacher* website and uses its data to conduct research and track coyote activity.

As part of the rollout of the Coyote Management Plan and *Coyote Cacher*, the Police Department hosted a town hall meeting that included Dr. Niamh Quinn and Lt. Kent Smirl from CDFW. Approximately 30 residents attended, in addition to those who viewed the meeting online via the Police Department's Facebook page (this video has approximately 2,600 views on Facebook to date). The Police Department also debuted

two PSA videos regarding coyotes and strategies to mitigate their presence within the community.

On March 19, 2019, the City Council voted to make April Coyote Awareness Month. In April 2019, the Costa Mesa Police Department created the email coyote@costamesaca.gov enabling citizens to add any pictures and videos of their coyote encounters. This email is directly linked to the Animal Control Lieutenant's email, so he receives an immediate update on any coyote reporting. This email complements the alerts the lieutenant receives from the *Coyote Cacher*, via his smart phone.

On April 15, 2019, and April 23, 2019, the Costa Mesa Animal Control provided two community meetings on coyotes. Dr. Quin from UCANR and Dave Dodge and two others from CDFW were also present. Both meetings were well attended with approximately 25 citizens at each meeting. On April 22, 2019, Lieutenant Bakkila attended the Newport Mesa School District annual principals' training. Lieutenant Bakkila gave them training on coyotes in the district and the challenges we face on their campuses, mainly dealing with children feeding wildlife. During this training, Lieutenant Bakkila gave the principals shaker cans, a copy of our coloring book and Coyote Management Plan.

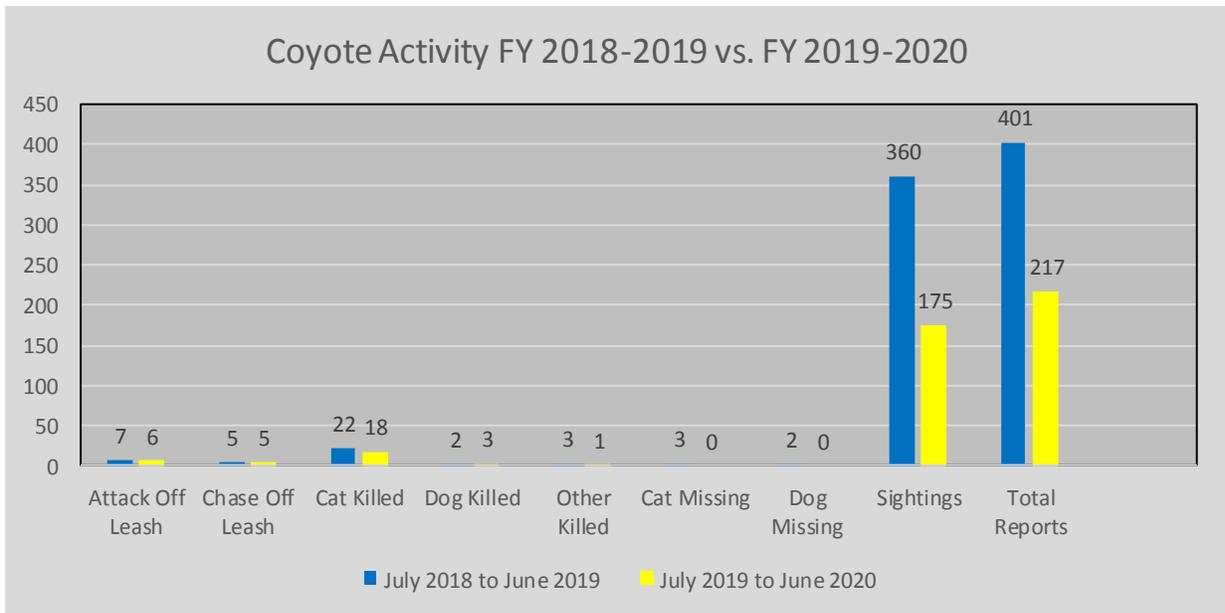
The Costa Mesa Police Department Animal Control planned two community meetings for Coyote Awareness month on April 7 and April 16, 2020. Due to the COVID 19 pandemic and restriction, these meetings were cancelled. Community meetings may be tentatively scheduled once they are practical under City, County, and State restrictions and/or guidelines.

A Coyote Manage Plan annual report is created each fiscal year (July – June) to illustrate the annual activity and reporting of coyotes in Costa Mesa. This report is the third to be developed.

Coyote Cacher Data

The *Coyote Cacher* was introduced in mid-April 2017. Since implementation, the *Coyote Cacher* now has over three years of consistent data on coyote activity that can be calculated and compared. The below table and graph show the reported coyote activity from July 2018 through June 2020.

Activity	July 2018 - June 2019	July 2019 - June 2020
Attack Off Leash	7	6
Chase Off Leash	5	5
Killed	27	22
	<i>(Cats – 22, Dogs – 2, Chicken - 3)</i>	<i>(Cats – 18, Dogs – 3, Chickens – 1)</i>
Missing	2	0
	<i>(Cats – 2, Dogs – 0)</i>	<i>(Cats – 0, Dogs – 0)</i>
Sighting	360	175
Total Reports:	401	217



Comparing the data from July 2018 through June 2019 to July 2019 through June 2020, there was a 46% decrease in reported activity.

When an incident is reported in the *Coyote Cacher* where an animal is chased, attacked, or killed, Dr. Quinn’s team at UCANR will attempt to contact the reporting person to obtain further information to better understand the incident. Based on that information, Dr. Quinn may consult with the local animal control agency where the incident occurred, if necessary. Dr. Quinn maintains that coyote activity in Costa Mesa over the past years was normal and consistent with the size and geographical properties of similar cities.

Calls for Service Data

From July 2018 through June 2019, Costa Mesa Animal Control personnel received 51 coyote-related calls for service that were generated through the City’s Communications Center, Coyote Hotline, or the *Costa Mesa* QAlert app. In comparison, there were 26 calls for service from July 2019 through June 2020.

During this same time, Costa Mesa Animal Control deployed traps at several locations throughout the city. From July 2018 through June 2019, there were 334 self-initiated incidents where traps were set and/or checked by Animal Control staff. From July 2019 through June 2020, there were 117 self-initiated incidents by Animal Control where traps were set and/or checked within the community of Costa Mesa.

Collaborative Efforts within the Community

Costa Mesa Animal Control staff continues to dialogue regularly with Dr. Quinn from UCANR and representatives from CDFW. They represent invaluable resources that the Police Department relies heavily on to provide expert barometers for coyote activity and suggested Animal Control responses in concert with the Coyote Management Plan.

Additionally, Animal Control staff work closely with staff from the Newport Beach Police Department (NBPD) Animal Control Unit. The City of Newport Beach employs a similar Coyote Management Plan. NBPD is sensitive to coyote activity that occurs in neighborhoods on the Costa Mesa side of their city's border.

CONCLUSION

Animal Control staff has continued to talk with a number of residents throughout the year regarding coyote concerns. Discussions included the Coyote Management Plan, *Coyote Cacher*, CDFW's Wildlife Watch Program, and ways they and the City can work together to mitigate coyote activity within their neighborhoods. The Police Department will continue to bring awareness through social media posts, community outreach events, Neighborhood Watch, and the CDFW Wildlife Watch Program. The goal is to continue to be proactive in addressing concerns and to maintain dialogue with experts in the field to be adaptive to emerging coyote trends.

As indicated above, the reporting of coyote activity in Costa Mesa decreased this reporting year compared to last year. The City's multipronged approach in the Coyote Management Plan can be a contributing factor to the decrease in activity and reporting experienced for FY 19-20.