
SCIENCE in the Park

Coyote

Canis latrans

Family: **Canidae**

Predator/ **Omnivore**

Non-native to Virginia



The coyote is a skilled hunter who has adapted well to the urban environment. Highly territorial, their numbers are regulated by territory size and available prey. They can be seen any time of the day or night, but are most active at dusk and dawn. Rodents, rabbits, and birds make up the bulk of the coyote diet, but they also enjoy fruits and vegetables. When living in urban and suburban areas, they can be attracted to pet food and garbage. As they acclimate to back yard food, they may become aggressive towards humans and pets.

Fun Facts

- Coyotes are monogamous and mate for life.
- Coyotes breed in the winter, producing between 3 and 12 pups that are born from March to May.
- In the wild, coyotes will hunt cooperatively with badgers. They chase the prey above ground and allow the badger to continue the chase underground, if the prey slips into its burrow.
- Coyotes often reduce the number of feral cats, helping to preserve natural populations of songbirds.
- Due to the absence of bears, wolves and cougars, the coyote is now the apex predator in the James River Park System (as far as we know).