



Dr. Lloyd Glenn Ingles,
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common name	Coyote
scientific name	<i>Canis latrans</i>
phylum	Chordata
class	Mammalia
order	Carnivora
family	Canidae
habitat	most common in grasslands, sagebrush, and deserts; also found in chaparral and forests
size	up to 94 cm long, plus a 28-40 cm tail

- description** The Coyote is gray with reddish-gray legs, feet and ears and a whitish belly. Its tail is bushier and nose more pointed than most dogs. It makes high-pitched "yaps" and "whinnies" in the evenings and early mornings.
- fun facts** The Coyote relies on its keen senses for hunting. The Coyote can hear voles or gophers moving around in their underground tunnels. It can dig so fast that it can sometimes corner the vole or gopher in a dead-end tunnel. In colder areas Coyotes can even hear voles moving under the snow. The Coyote drives its head into the snow at just the right place to clamp its jaws upon the unsuspecting vole.
- life cycle** Female Coyotes breed once per year, starting when they are 2 years old. They give birth to 5 to 10 pups during April or May. These young are born and raised in a den dug deep into the ground, or in natural caves or hollow trees. In 6 to 9 months the pups are ready to live on their own.
- ecology** The Coyote is somewhere between an omnivore and a carnivore. It hunts rabbits, voles, mice, and gophers. But it also eats berries, grass, and other plant materials that it happens to find. Coyotes are at the top of the food web.
- conservation** Coyotes can live for 15 years. However, more than half the Coyotes born never reach adulthood. Most of these deaths result from Coyote control programs. Some farmers, ranchers, hunters and government agencies have long poisoned, trapped and shot the Coyote. Coyotes do kill some sheep and goats, but

probably killing so many Coyotes is unwise. What effects might the killing of so many Coyotes have on its food web?

investigate

You can find the [scat](#) of Coyotes lying on the pavement of roads in the grasslands at Mather Field. The Coyotes leave their scat where it is clearly seen and smelled, to mark their territory and keep other Coyotes away.

Coyotes may appear to be at the top of the food web, but consider that Coyotes are not large animals during their whole life. Coyote pups are small when young. What animals in the vernal pool ecosystem might prey on Coyote pups?

