

CROSTOWN TRAIL

SPECIES: COYOTE



COYOTE – *Canis latrans*

Coyotes cruise the town!

Coyotes (*Canis latrans*) have found their way into many urban areas including San Francisco. Dens are well hidden in the more wild pockets of our City parks. Coyotes have a central den site which is used for rearing the pups and sleeping. They scent mark the area around the den and defend it from other coyotes. The den can be a burrow dug into the ground, or under a rock outcropping, a tree or a bush. If the area gets disturbed the mother will often move the pups to a safer location. Coyotes “sing” as a way to communicate with other coyote families and as a way to keep track of their own family members. They are adaptable to many habitats, even populated neighborhoods, particularly because there is a lot for them to eat. Primarily Coyotes eat small mammals, such as voles, prairie dogs, ground squirrels, and mice, though they will eat birds, snakes, and lizards, as well as large insects. Coyotes are carnivores, so please leave pet food and cats inside! Coyote will also feed on any species of bird that nests on the ground. Though they will consume large amounts of carrion, they tend to prefer fresh meat. Fruits and vegetables are a significant part of the coyote’s diet in the autumn and winter months.

RESIDENT OR MIGRATORY

Resident

KEY HABITAT FEATURES

Adaptable to all habitats from desert scrub, grasslands, foothills as well as in populated neighborhoods.

DIET

Primarily eat small mammals, such as voles, prairie dogs, eastern cottontails, ground squirrels, and mice, though they will eat birds, snakes, lizards, deer, javelina, and livestock, as well as large insects and other large invertebrates. The coyote will also target any species of bird that nests on the ground. Though they will consume large amounts of carrion, they tend to prefer fresh meat. Fruits and vegetables are a significant part of the coyote’s diet in the autumn and winter months. As such, coyotes have been known to eat human rubbish and domestic pets.

ASSOCIATED PLANTS & ANIMALS

California Blackberry – *Rubus ursinus*, *Coyote Bush* – *Baccharis pilularis*, *Toyon* – *Heteromeles arbutifolia*, *Blue Wild Rye* – *Elymus glaucus*

NESTING INFORMATION

Coyotes have a central den site dug under the ground which is used for rearing the pups and sleeping. They will scent mark the area around the den and defend it from other coyotes.



ROUTE HIGHLIGHTS

- » Crosstown Trail, Cayuga and Lamartine Mini Park, Balboa High School, Cayuga Playground



Credit: images.northrup.org