



Preventing Cat-Coyote Conflicts

The relationship between a coyote and any outdoor cat is one of predator and prey. If there are coyote sightings in your neighborhood, your indoor-outdoor cat should be kept strictly indoors, until the coyotes have moved on. Coyotes do not know that these are your beloved pets: to them, it's an opportunity for an easy meal. Humans are ultimately responsible for keeping their furry companions out of harm's way. However, if you cannot keep your cat indoors, or you are a caregiver managing a feral cat colony, there are ways to protect your cats and discourage coyotes from coming around the area.



First, observe and identify the species that is coming around for the cat food left outdoors. Coyotes may be more interested in the cats than in the cat food.

- If it's raccoons, skunks, and opossums: establish a daytime feeding schedule for the cats, where the food is left out during daylight hours and taken in at sunset, since these animals are nocturnal.
- If it's coyotes, establishing a feeding schedule will not make a difference because coyotes are diurnal, meaning they are out during all times of the day, depending on the availability of prey.

Second, make the outdoor cats inaccessible to predation, which will discourage coyotes or any other predators from coming around the area. This can be done with escape tunnels and climbing posts.

Escape Tunnels

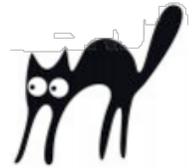
1. "Escape tunnels" provide protection for your cats from both coyotes and bobcats. PVC tubing works best. It must be at least 6 feet in length, and the opening around 12 inches - wide enough to accommodate the largest kitty, but not so small that they can get stuck. You can paint the tubes to blend in with the environment and strategically place them in bushes along the path that the kitties use, or in areas that you've seen them scatter to, when startled.

2. The tubes must be wedged on either side by heavy concrete blocks (found in the gardening department of any home-improvement store) to keep it stationary. Otherwise the tubes will roll.

3. Introduce the "escape tunnels" to your cats, by placing a little bit of wet food inside the tube. It will pique their interest, and encourage them to explore. Do this frequently until they become familiar with where the tubes are located.

4. Check the tubes frequently. Please call the AWARE Wildlife Center in Atlanta for help to extract any wild animals that are stuck inside the tubes. Their phone number is (678) 418-1111.

The opening of the tube will not be large enough to accommodate a coyote or bobcat. The kitties will be safe inside the tubes, until the coyote or bobcat loses interest and moves on.



Climbing Posts

Additionally, in areas devoid of large trees, thick wooden posts can also be constructed with a platform on top that the cats can sit on. The post should be at least 7 feet tall, and covered by a material that cats can climb with ease, i.e. carpeting or thick twine wound around the post. This would deter coyotes, but not bobcats.

It is highly recommended that there be both the escape tunnels and posts to provide maximum protection for your outdoor cats.

