

# Collegeville Wildlife Statement

Collegeville residents enjoy living on tree-lined streets next to natural areas for many reasons including the serenity and privacy they offer. As we encroach on the once pristine wild areas that had been home to various forms of wildlife, we find ourselves sharing our neighborhoods with them. Collegeville's natural areas and neighborhoods are abundant in native wildlife such as fox, raccoons, hawks, deer, groundhogs, rabbits, opossums, bats, myriad insects, and snakes, possibly even coyotes. They all have a role to play and make significant ecosystem contributions.



For example:

- The opossum is a veritable tick vacuum. A single opossum might eat an astonishing 5,000 ticks in a week.

- Squirrels play a huge role in forest regeneration due to their food storage habits.
- A single little brown bat can consume up to 3,000 mosquitos in a single night.
- The fox is a predator of small rodents such mice and rabbits.

We encourage you to care... and share! Help keep wild animals wild; this means we need to keep our distance from wild animals!

## **Some basic techniques for discouraging wildlife interaction with humans:**

- Don't leave pet food outdoors or accessible from the outdoors on a screened porch
- Keep yards well lighted, especially if your yard is used by a household pet
- Keep your cats inside
- Monitor household pets when they are outdoors, especially at night
- Keep housecats inside (in addition to being prey for coyotes, they damage the ecosystem by killing enormous numbers of birds)
- Do not approach a wild animal, even if they appear injured or sick
- Discourage wildlife approaching your property by making loud noises from a safe distance.
- Most animals will not approach if they feel threatened

## Wildlife on Parkland

Some of our neighborhoods border on parkland. This includes along the Perkiomen Trail and the Central Perkiomen Park, which backs onto areas of Collegeville, including Collegeville Crossing, and is on the Perkiomen Creek. There are specific rules from the Montgomery County Parks, Trails and Historic Sites Division of the county government for interacting with wild animals on these lands, for example:

Hunting, Trapping, Feeding, Disturbing, or Harassing Wildlife –Hunting and trapping on County property is prohibited, except under special conditions established by PTHS. Feeding, disturbing, or harassing any wildlife is prohibited.

Read more [here](#).

### Coyotes – What do You need to know?



There have been coyotes in Montgomery County for decades. They are the largest species of wildlife other than deer that we have here. The average coyote is 25 to 40 pounds, has pointed upright ears and a pointed snout. Its tail typically hangs down and they walk in a loping fashion. While not always visible, coyotes make their home in our communities and are present even if not visible. There is a long-time pack of wild

coyotes that live in Norristown Farm Park. The park runs educational programming to help residents learn to live with coyotes. Learn more [here](#).

Coyotes remain in areas where there is a ready food source – and they'll eat anything that's available (fruits, grasses, insects, carrion, small animals (yes, including cats and small dogs which are just small animals to them)). Coyotes are highly adaptable which has allowed them to survive in suburban and even urban areas. That said, they prefer areas with plenty of cover from trees and shrubs, so areas that have those characteristics are more appealing to them (think park land).

Education is critical to understanding coyotes. Just a few residents providing food outdoors for squirrels or other small mammals provides the coyote with a readily available food source and attracts them to residential properties.

Coyote attacks on humans are extremely rare. In fact, you are more likely to be attacked by a deer than a coyote. Caution, however, is always key and residents should consider all potential risks when allowing small children to play outdoors unattended.

We strongly recommend that if you have pets, you keep your cats inside at all times and dogs either inside or outside on a leash or in a fenced yard.

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### Rabies

Rabies can be a serious threat and even bites from non-rabid animals can be painful. Stray cats and dogs roaming your neighborhood can pose a real danger as they may be unvaccinated. One of the best ways to protect yourself and your family from rabies is to vaccinate your pets and avoid contact with wild and stray animals. Do not feed or handle these animals even if they seem friendly. If you see an animal acting strangely (limping, staggering or a wild animal approaching you without fear), report it to animal control or call 911. To learn more about rabies, visit the CDC [webpage](#) on the disease.

### Lyme disease

Deer and small mammals are also carriers of the deer ticks that cause Lyme disease. Keep your distance. To learn more about Lyme disease, visit the CDC [webpage](#).



### **Learning about wildlife:**

Collegeville works with The PA Game Commission to support residents with their wildlife conflicts and inform them of actions they can take to address wildlife issues.

The PA Game Commission website on virtual learning about wildlife contains great resources for learning about all sorts of animals that you might see outside your window. Click [here](#) for kids' activities as well as continued learning for adults.

It is illegal to hunt for game out of season or to hunt for game on parkland where it is specifically prohibited. Learn more here: PA Game Commission: [Operation Game Thief](#).

Or call the PA Game Commission at:  
1-888-PGC-8001