

## North Westdale Neighborhood Association P.O. Box 642522, Los Angeles, CA 90064

[www.northwestdale.com](http://www.northwestdale.com)



North Westdale

[groups.yahoo.com/group/NWNA](http://groups.yahoo.com/group/NWNA)

Coyote traveling on Ceilhunt towards Richland.



Photo by  
Jeff Overton

### WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW ABOUT COYOTES

by Joan Winters, NWNA Secretary

When your pets are kept safe, wildlife will be better controlled

I along with two NWNA neighbors recently attended an evening community meeting held at the WLA Animal Shelter on Pico Blvd. Wildlife Officer Hoang Dinh gave a presentation with the topic, "Wildlife in the City of L.A."

We wanted to attend this meeting because last month at least one coyote was sighted in our neighborhood. Neighbors living on streets surrounding Richland Elementary School used social media to document the coyote traveling up and down streets in North Westdale. Because it was seen by so many, in broad daylight, and in the area by the school, there was reason for concern. Animal services was called and came out into the community. People were told that they don't remove wildlife from neighborhoods unless they actually see and can document an actual attack--at which point the animal will be removed.

We had been working to schedule Officer Dinh to speak at our March 28 NWNA meeting, but unfortunately he had a conflict. We are requesting that he speak at our June 28<sup>th</sup> NWNA meeting.

At the meeting we three attended at the animal shelter, there were about 12 in attendance, mostly from outside of our immediate area. The wildlife officer conducted the meeting for over two hours, including a question-and-answer session. His presentation was excellent and very informative.

What I learned was surprising to me. Coyotes are actually native to our area, whether we see them or not, they have been here over 50 years, and had done a pretty good job of staying out of sight. Coyotes are highly adaptable to an urban setting. They can be more visible in the Spring, and in the daylight hours between 8 AM and 5 PM. From my meeting notes I thought the following would be of interest to the community: It is L.A. City policy not to remove the coyote from a neighborhood, nor is the City responsible for damage. Coyotes keep the rodent/insect population in check, and they are an important part of our ecosystem. The largest coyote found weighed 37 pounds. They can travel up to 26 miles per night. If some are removed from their established area, more will come to take their place. There has been one human fatality in 1981, in the city of Glendale. They can actually jump or climb over a tall fence or wall if they suspect it would be worth their while. Wildlife is protected from us harming them--it is against the law. If bothered on a walk, throw pine cones or sticks towards them. Pepper spray doesn't work on repelling coyotes. "People change the dynamics in a neighborhood--we need to have a change of thinking," said Officer Dinh, speaking from a humane point of view, and explaining ways to coexist with wildlife. The Humane Society of the United States is also in agreement. He mentioned it is important to target the conditions that attract coyotes. Most important, do not provide food, water and shelter for them, or socialize with them--these are wild animals. No pet food should be left outside for your pet that is in an unprotected area. Keeping your pet safe will help to control wildlife. Change your walking routine when walking your dog. Definitely keep your dog on a six-foot leash, no longer. And Officer Dinh noticed that many dog walkers are distracted by talking on cell phones instead of actually observing and being ready to protect the pet they are walking. In the city, he pointed out that coyotes can habitate in brush areas around freeways, such as we have in our community. They like to sleep in thick shrubbery where they are basically out of sight. The officer mentioned that construction sites are popular coyote hangouts because coyotes learn that discarded food is readily available; also, gardeners have been seen throwing leftover food to coyotes, or leaving it on the property where they work. So basically, what I learned from this meeting is that there are things that we can do to protect ourselves by acknowledging that there are coyotes around, hopefully not in sight, and we can protect our loved ones, including pets, by being vigilant and not making the area attractive for wild animals to have a comfortable life by having food, water and shelter provided to them. This way we can coexist with our native wild animals in a humane way.

**Next Meeting - May 23: Election of Officers** if necessary, since no one has expressed interest in running, **Interested in running?** - submit your statement of intention **by April 23** to be posted in the May newsletter.





