



Frequently Asked Questions Regarding Sick/Injured Coyotes in our Community

As a California native wildlife species, coyotes are a vital part of Marin County's ecosystem and provide many ecosystem services such as rodent control. Managing, monitoring, and responding to their health issues requires a delicate balance between protecting animal welfare, human health, and public safety.

We are aware of coyotes in our community suffering from mange. We appreciate the community's concern and assistance in tracking these animals. Below are the most common questions surrounding these challenging cases.

1. Who is responsible for responding to calls about sick coyotes in Marin County?

In Marin County, Marin Humane handles field response for sick/injured wildlife, and WildCare provides wildlife rehabilitation services, when feasible. The California Department of Fish & Wildlife (CDFW) is the lead state agency charged with addressing public safety wildlife issues, potential or imminent threats to human health and safety, and helping counties and local communities to address (1) human-wildlife conflict; (2) animal welfare issues (e.g., sick, injured, orphaned wildlife); (3) strategies to monitor, assess, and respond to wildlife disease outbreaks; and (4) public education about wildlife conservation.

As agency partners, we are working together to increase public awareness and understanding surrounding the coyotes in the community suffering from advanced mange. It is hard for all of us to observe and not be able to successfully intervene. We appreciate the public's concern and help in tracking them.

2. I've seen a coyote who appears very sick/mangey. Why can't Marin Humane, WildCare or CDFW capture and treat this sick coyote?

Trapping or "treating" free-roaming coyotes is rarely feasible, effective, or humane. As wild animals, they do not respond predictably to humans and may flee, hide, or become defensive if approached.

Even the stress of capture can be life-threatening, and there are no safe or practical ways to provide ongoing care in the wild.

If a coyote is still mobile (regardless of injury or illness) Marin Humane typically will not send an Animal Services Officer, as capture is *stressful to the animal and often not* successful.

3. Can mange be treated in these coyotes?

Mange is a skin condition caused by parasitic mites. While it can look severe, it sometimes resolves on its own in healthy animals as their immune system responds. Mange is often easily treated in most pets. However, *wild* animals present unique challenges that make successful treatment highly unlikely.

Attempting to treat a wild coyote for mange is problematic for several reasons:

Reinfection: Coyotes are social animals that usually live in family groups. To effectively stop the spread, the entire family group (and their den!) would need treatment at the same time, or reinfection is inevitable. Trapping even one wild coyote is difficult; trapping an entire pack is highly unlikely. Captivity for treatment would also cause extreme stress, often leading to further illness or death.

Habituation: Providing treatment through food can habituate coyotes to humans, increasing the risk of conflict and putting both the coyotes and community at risk.

Animal Safety: Mange treatments must be carefully dosed by the weight of the animal. Incorrect dosing can cause seizures or death, and other animals—wild or domestic—could be harmed if they ingest the medication.

4. Why are some coyotes so susceptible to mange?

Often, the underlying cause is secondary poisoning from rodenticides (rat poison). When coyotes eat poisoned rodents, their immune systems are weakened, making it difficult to fight off mites and allowing mange to become severe or even deadly.

5. Why can't you use tranquilizer darts or set a trap to capture them?

Use of tranquilizer darts requires specialized training and certifications. Marin Humane Animal Services Officers are not currently certified to dart animals in the field.

If mobile coyotes are darted, they run away and are not easy to track, which would leave a sedated animal vulnerable and lost. These drugs do not work immediately. A darted coyote will often sprint away, and in Marin's populated areas, open spaces, and changing landscape, the coyote may run into traffic or unsafe areas, making capture difficult.

Setting traps is rarely effective for coyotes as they are highly intelligent. One Marin Headlands coyote learned to flee and hide at the sight of a Marin Humane truck during repeated capture attempts. Even "humane" traps carry risks, as animals often injure themselves trying to escape. Additionally, whenever using traps, there is always the risk of trapping unintended animals who could injure themselves, including wild, feral or stray animals, and unleashed pets.

The California Department of Fish & Wildlife does not intervene in the treatment of mange in native wildlife species that are not threatened or endangered. Mange is present in most coyote populations, so reinfection is likely and easily spread between animals.

When & How to Take Action

When can Marin Humane intervene?

Intervention is reserved for cases where a coyote is **clearly immobile, unresponsive, and suffering**. This decision is made solely with the animal's welfare in mind. An animal is considered truly immobilized if it:

- Is unresponsive to traditional "hazing" (yelling, loud noises, arm waving).
- Is unable to run away or does not get up for several hours.

In these specific cases, Marin Humane can respond to determine if the animal requires humane euthanasia to relieve suffering.

What should I do if I see a sick or injured coyote?

1. **Keep your distance:** Do not attempt to approach, feed, or assist the animal yourself.
2. **Observe behavior:** Note if the animal is mobile or immobile, its reaction to your presence, and any specific behaviors.
3. **Keep pets away:** Mange is contagious to pets. Keeping a safe distance is essential for your pet's health.
4. **Report the sighting:**

Mobile Coyotes: If the coyote is still moving around, please submit a report to Marin Humane at marinhumane.org/report. We track these sightings to monitor activity patterns and health trends across the county.

Immobile Coyotes: If the animal is truly unresponsive and unable to move, please call Marin Humane at 415-883-4621 so an officer can assess the situation.

Tips for Healthy Coexistence

- **Never use rodenticides:** These poisons live in a rat's system and if the rat is ingested by a coyote, owl, or other animal, that animal is affected as well. It can kill the very animals who eat rodents, thereby reducing rats' natural predators.
- **Remove Attractants:** Secure your trash cans and never leave pet food outside.
- **Do Not Feed:** Feeding wildlife—intentionally or accidentally—is the quickest way to create dangerous habituation. It is also illegal.
- **Protect Pets:** Keep dogs leashed and cats indoors. When letting your dog(s) out in your yard, especially in the evening, make sure to first make some noise to scare any wildlife away before allowing your dog outside (this also helps prevent accidental skunk sprays!). Never

leave pet food outdoors. And, if approved by your veterinarian, make sure your pets receive their monthly flea treatments to prevent spreading mange.

- **Practice Hazing:** If a coyote lingers near your home, use loud noises, yell, or wave your arms to appear large and encourage them to move along.

For more information about coyotes in general, visit [Project Coyote](#), [WildCare](#), or [Marin Humane](#).

March 25, 2026