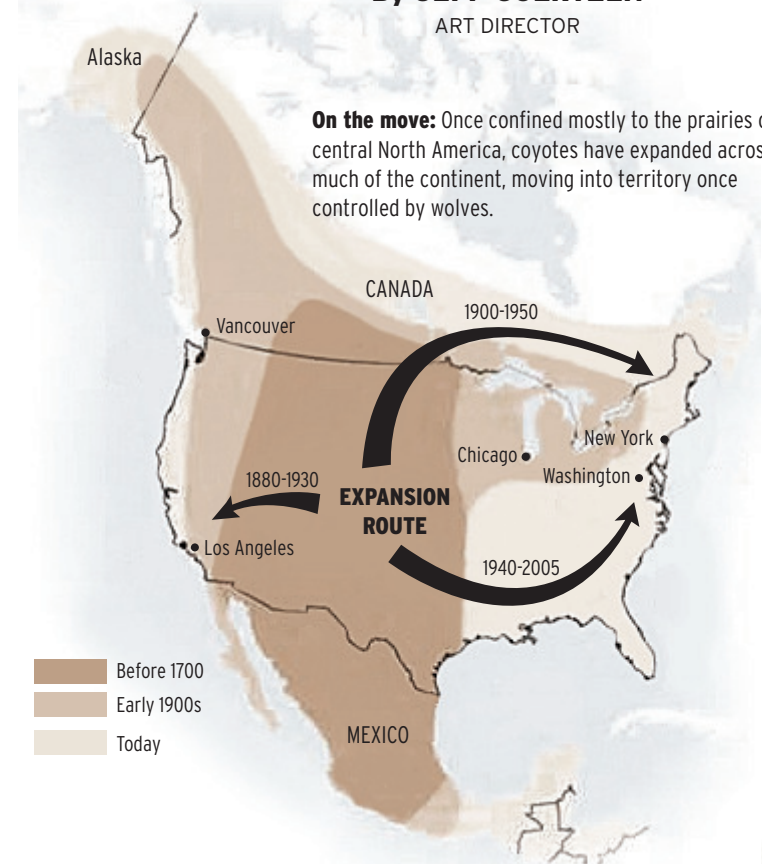


Focus | COYOTES

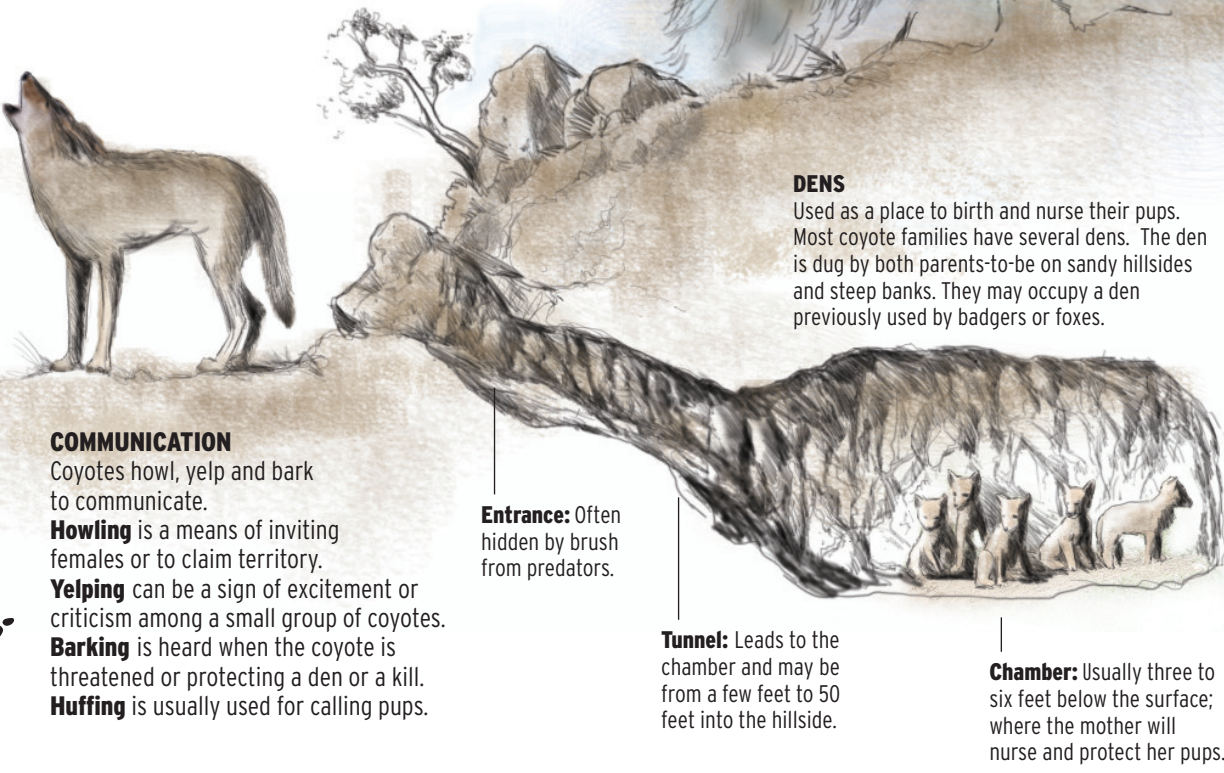
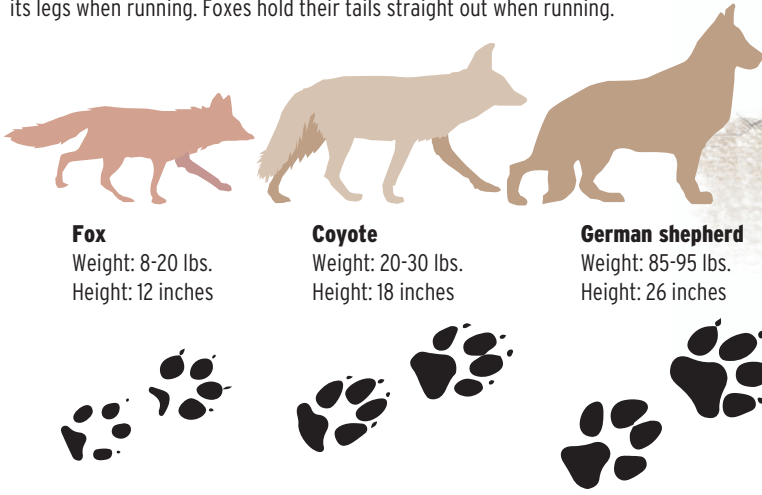
WILY CANINES

For more than a century, the chaparrals of Orange County have been home to the coyote. But urbanization has created a situation in which coyotes coexist with humans to the point the animals show little fear when searching for food and water, putting pets and sometimes humans at risk. Tonight, residents of Seal Beach will meet with the City Council to address this issue.

By JEFF GOERTZEN
ART DIRECTOR

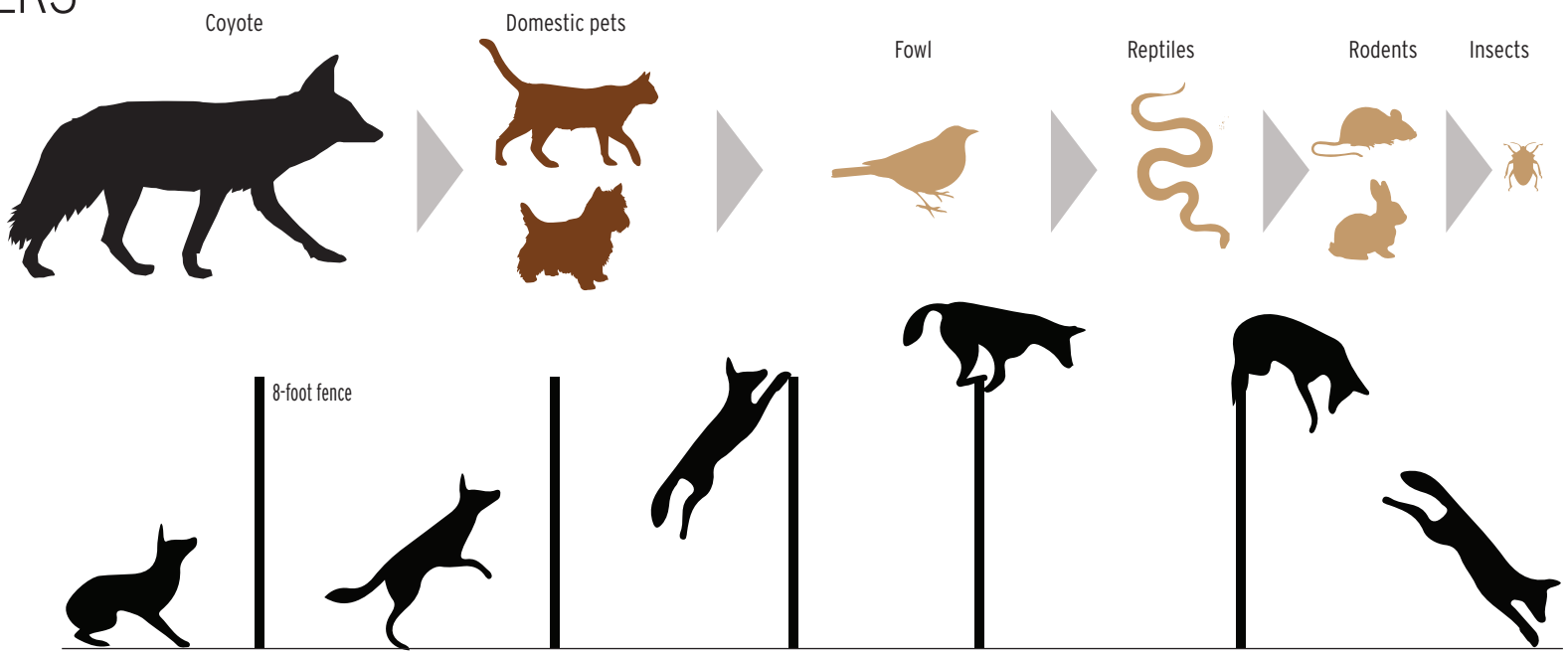


The coyote may look like a dog, but it can be distinguished by a pointed nose and bushier tail. Although it resembles the larger wolf, it differs by keeping its tail between its legs when running. Foxes hold their tails straight out when running.



CLOSE ENCOUNTERS

TOP OF THE FOOD CHAIN
Barring mountain lions, which don't typically hunt coyotes, in Orange County, coyotes are at the top of the food chain in the animal kingdom. They frequent neighborhoods, associating humans with food sources such as garbage and domestic pets. Coyotes are omnivorous with a diet that consists of mice, rabbits, ground squirrels, other small rodents, insects and even reptiles, and fruits and berries from wild plants.



SCALING FENCES
When searching for food in neighborhoods, coyotes are known to scale perimeter walls and fences. Coyotes can easily leap an eight-foot fence or wall. They have been spotted climbing over a 14-foot cyclone fence.

POPULATION CONTROL
About 80 percent of coyotes live in families of three to seven. Efforts to control or exterminate the coyote by acceptable methods has produced an animal that is extremely alert and wary. Killing coyotes often results in just as many or more within a year or two. Because the coyotes' reproductivity is influenced by food, water and shelter availability, eliminating these sources along with selective killing produces more effective results.

