

Distinguishing Wolves from Coyotes



Department of Environmental Conservation

Wolves are very rare in NY, with only 3 confirmed in the past 25 years, including one harvested by a coyote hunter in 2021. Wolves are protected in NY as an endangered species. They can be distinguished from coyotes by their larger size, typically weighing between 70-100 pounds and measuring over 2 feet tall at the shoulder.

Wolves have proportionally small, rounded ears and a shorter, blockier snout than coyotes. Their feet are larger, with tracks measuring about 5 inches long by 4 inches wide.



Eastern coyotes are common in NY, found throughout the State. There are regulated hunting and trapping seasons for coyotes in NY. Eastern coyotes have a mix of coyote, wolf, and dog ancestry and are larger in size (about 40 pounds, on average) than coyotes west of the Mississippi. They are smaller than wolves, rarely weighing more than 50 pounds and standing less than 2 feet tall at the shoulder.

Coyotes have long, narrow snouts that end in a point. Their ears are large relative to the head and are pointed in shape. Coyotes have smaller feet than wolves; their tracks typically measure 3 inches long by 2 inches wide.

If you have a canine in a trap that is over 4.5 ft in length and is over 50 pounds, contact DEC law enforcement (1-844-332-3267) before dispatching the animal.

