

31-Oct-2012

Regarding the Daily Pilot article "Coyotes are Here to Stay" (30-Oct-2012), I found the attitude of our public service agencies, typical of those expressed in this article, to be utterly condescending and infuriating. These people who say "just live with it" and "there's nothing that can be done" are missing the point. No one denies coyotes exist, but some of the statements were just ludicrous. Who feeds coyotes? Why would anyone compare tracking coyotes to reporting stray cats? Coyotes are wild animals, as much as any mountain lion or bear, that should be regarded in a developed area as a serious public safety concern, but far more numerous and adept at concealment. This widespread deference to coyotes is beyond comprehension.

The point is there are far too many of them, way too close to humans (and pets), with too much freedom to terrorize the neighborhoods as they have been this year and in the recent past. The point is that the coyotes among us, both on sightings data and on an anecdotal basis, are worse than they've ever been in this area during the almost 30 years I've lived here. Just last week, I had my own close encounter chasing away a coyote on my street in the middle of the night. The point is that the population needs to be "managed" (i.e., exterminate a number of them) to reduce the chances of something terrible.

We're told they're important for the ecology. Maybe so, but they're eating our pets! From personal experience, it is horrific enough to lose a pet in this way where we've invested both emotion and money in their health and well-being, and then be blamed for letting the animal out in its own yard. Any feedback for solutions from public agencies has been both insulting and frustrating. I hear that Huntington Beach charges for the pick-up and removal of remains (usually of a pet) left by a coyote on one's property. Also, Animal Control in my own City of Newport Beach had the audacity to tell me what I've been reading is exaggerated. If no one on the public side is keeping track, as stated in that article, how could they make such a statement? Other responses trivialize the threat and disregard logic as we're told there are more dog bites than coyote bites or that there are more cats killed by cars than coyotes. If unrestrained dogs can command public safety's attention, then so should the unpredictable, indiscriminate, and increasingly frequent encounters with residents and casualties to our pets from these wild dogs called coyotes.

No one expects 100% eradication, but what we don't need are more tips on how to let them control our behavior.....in our own homes, on our own property. We need solutions for reducing the anxiety, minimizing the aggravation, and regaining some peace of mind. Since it's a multi-jurisdictional problem, the easy route for any city is to pass it off and ignore it. According to some notifications, coyotes are rarely seen in December and January. So, once again the issue will go dormant..... temporarily. However, next spring we can anticipate more of the same, maybe worse. "Just living with them" isn't a very good option. It's just a matter of time before a serious incident (for example, with a child or a deadly disease) motivates some action, be it public or private, to adequately address the problem.

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