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Coyote Sightings

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BY \_\_\_\_\_ DEPUTY

City Council Member,

I have been in the Wildlife field for over 20 years. I hold State, Federal and USDA permits to rehabilitate wildlife in the State of California, 2 years ago I acquired the City of Simi Valley Permits to rehabilitate and release Coyotes.

**The Cities main concern was the safety of the people not the coyote, I explained, we can keep both safe.**

I have been rehabilitating Coyotes for over 15 years in Los Angeles and Ventura Counties. I have become educated on the behaviors and habits of these canids with in the urban environment, which, as you know is changing from the behaviors we know them to have in the wild open spaces, where on occasion, they allow us to view them from a respectable distance.

Urban Coyotes have been in our cities hunting at night for as long as cities have been here, the difference is we didn't know they were here because they didn't allow us to see them, they were afraid of our daily activities. Urban Coyotes have "learned" and are still learning and teaching with each generation that cities have everything they need in the way of food, shelter and water and they are learning not to fear people. These animals are byproducts of the community and the environment they live in. They are not unlike our domestic dogs, if a behavior is not corrected it will continue, If there are coyotes behaving badly or even just out on the streets during the day then we need to look to the residents who live there and how they are responding to the animals presence. Turning a blind eye and not scaring him off is telling the coyote it is ok to be here but when he does something we don't like or harms a pet or property we then want to take action.

These are timid, shy, extremely resourceful, smart and adaptable animals. They can learn what is acceptable behavior with in a space...but that training has to come from the public at large at the moment that the animal is where he is not wanted. Taking action after the fact may curb sightings for a while but it isn't teaching these coyotes anything other than to move to a new area. The problem still exists because the people haven't learned anything or how to change their behavior towards the Coyote. So the cycle will repeat itself.

California is a migratory state ...for people, we are constantly getting new migrants from other states and countries who do not understand the plethora of wildlife that live in our cities. People have to adapt to this changing environment as the Coyotes have - only then can get these animals get back to a place where they are not seen during the day on city streets and have learned to fear people again. Complacency by the homeowner and public will only perpetuate the problem.

People need to be educated not to fear this timid wild canine and have the props at hand to haze and scare him off, he will listen.

In closing, before I could approach the City I had to get the support of my community, I live in an HOA with 650 homes. We went door to door explaining what rehabilitation was and what animals were involved and unanimously they voted in favor of the wildlife.

**When addressing the City with the same information:**

- 1) Alleviating any fears they had on wild animals being a danger
- 2) Wild animals have very predictable behaviors, if they remain wild
- 3) How education would be the best long term solution going forward
- 4) Habituated wildlife will pose a problem, treat the specific geographical area, we can't punish the population at large by the actions of a few.

They too unanimously saw the benefit in educating the public, which inadvertently will also help the wildlife so that both our citizens and Native Wildlife remain safe.

I live against the foot hills and there used to be such exaggerated fears with in my community when people just saw a coyote, but with steadily educating people on what they were witnessing and how to read behaviors...then how to respond and how to keep pets safe it has empowered a community so now they enjoy seeing the coyotes at a distance and if they feel they are a little to close for comfort they are not afraid to stand their ground and scare them off. The community views the situation from a different perspective they now have the tools and the knowledge they need to handle a situation with confidence should it arise and long before it becomes a problem...they are also very enthusiastically educating others. And the coyotes in our neighborhood, they keep their distance...when and if we even see them.

Thank you  
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