



Coyotes are becoming more at ease at entering into urban areas, including parks that people often frequent.

Photo courtesy Torstar News Service

Farmers can lose up to 10% of their lamb flocks to coyotes

even young children are safe because they are significantly larger than the mammals (mostly rabbits and mice) that are their usual prey.

Coyotes that adapt to urban life will occasionally kill cats and small dogs, and make a nuisance of themselves by scavenging garbage.

“People can coexist with nature, even in urban areas, if they respect it. After all, increased encounters with coyotes are more a function of towns expanding into the wild spaces that are their habitat.” says Norm Miller, Communications Advisor for Conservation Halton.

“It’s important that we remind people to properly secure all potential food sources for wildlife, including compost and garbage, since wildlife will stay in areas where there are food sources. Pets, as always, should be kept in yards.”

Concerns regarding coyotes in relation to farming are far more real. Because of their predication for small game, including sheep, calves, and poultry, coyotes and farmers have always been at odds. In fact, in the United States, bounties were placed on their heads in 1825, a mere two years after the species had first been described for science.

“Coyotes have a severe impact on farming, and



Coyotes have had a severe effect on the herds of area sheep farmers.

Photo: Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources
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sheep farming in particular,” says Chris Kennedy, Vice-Director of the Ontario Sheep Marketing Agency.

“Farms can lose up to 10 per cent of lambs, and these losses are one of the things stopping sheep farming from expanding in Ontario. Consider this: only 40 per cent of lambs eaten in Canada are grown in Canada, the rest is imported. This is unlike beef, where we are a net exporter. This disparity is largely the result of coyote predation.”

Of course, even cattle farmers are not immune from coyote predation. Some calves fall victim and, on occasion, coyote packs will take 5-600 lb. cows by driving them into deep mud or snow.

The cost of predation to taxpayers is high, as the government pays an estimated \$1.3 million each year for killed livestock. Though high, this number covers only 20 per cent of losses suffered by farmers, thanks again in no small part to coyotes. The government requires a corpse in order to compensate farmers, but with coyotes one rarely finds a dead animal.

“Various things can work against coyotes on occasion, but there is no silver bullet,” says Kennedy. “Most farmers use a variety of methods, including



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