



Graham Paine/Metroland

A local woman is urging caution after a recent encounter with a coyote.

WOMAN SEEKS TO RAISE AWARENESS FOLLOWING COYOTE ENCOUNTER

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A Georgetown woman is trying to raise awareness following a recent coyote encounter.

Gen Johnson said she was walking her two large dogs with a friend along a sidewalk in the area just north of Eighth Line and 15 Side Road on June 8 at around 2 p.m. when something came out of the nearby bushes and lunged at one of her dogs.

"I didn't even see it come out. It happened so fast," said Johnson. "It thought it bit my dog's leg."

Johnson said the animal, which she believes was a coyote, quickly withdrew, but then turned around and watched as the group left the area.

"That was a little scary," she said.

The Georgetown woman said her encounter made her think back to another incident, which occurred a week prior.

She said she had been driving in the same area when she saw a woman and her dog run into traffic to get away from an animal, which she now believes was a coyote.

Johnson said it turned out her dog was not injured

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during the June 8 incident, but she still thinks people need to know about the encounter so they can be cautious in this area.

Lesley Sampson, founding executive director of the wildlife organization Coyote Watch Canada, said if the animal was a coyote, its behaviour could be explained by young pups being in the area.

"We are right in the heart of pup rearing season now. So, mom and dad are totally protective ... In coyote world, every coyote that is not related to them and every dog is considered another predator," said Sampson.

"They want to protect their family so they will do things like a 'bluff charge' and then they might watch or follow to make sure the people with the dog are leaving."

She said coyotes that are harassed by off-leash dogs can also have a more aggressive response during

future dog encounters, even when those dogs are on-leash.

Sampson said people should keep their dogs on-leash in this area and avoid listening to music or talking on a cellphone while walking there.

She said coyotes will make noises, such as yips, when they become aware of a dog's approach and hearing this could allow a dog walker to give these animals some space and avoid an encounter.

Another option, Sampson said, is for dog walkers to avoid the area until coyote pupping season is over in late July.

It should be noted that the relocation of a coyote more than one kilometre away is not permitted under Ontario's Fish and Wildlife Conservation Act as doing so can spread disease or just move a problem animal to another municipality's jurisdiction.

For more information about coyotes visit <https://www.coyotewatchcanada.com/site/home>.



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