

Opinion

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Let's learn to live together

Don't feed the animals. It might seem cliché but it's the best advice the Oakville and Milton Humane Society and Toronto Wildlife Centre can offer in an attempt to minimize conflicts with coyotes.

Coyotes are frequent visitors to Halton's communities, including Milton. They've been calling this town home for years. And, let's face it, they aren't going anywhere anytime soon.

So what are Halton residents to do? Learn to live with them.

Residents and coyotes can co-exist. We just have to make sure we are all adhering to a few basic rules to ensure everyone's safety. These include not feeding the animals, not interacting with them and not enticing them.

By doing otherwise, we're encouraging the coyotes to come closer, which will bring them into conflict with us and our beloved pets. This can be fatal — for the coyote and Fido.

Helpful reminder

While there are no known reports of local dogs or cats being lost to coyotes so far this year, it's important to remember that mating season for the wild animals is near. Their food supply is not as plentiful and coyotes are left with little choice than to adapt if they want to survive. And whether we want to admit it, we are helping to shape this behaviour modification.

Feeding coyotes, intentionally or otherwise, entices the animals. Once fed, coyotes will return looking to fill their bellies. If no food is available, they may get pushy as a reminder to us humans that they are anxiously awaiting their next meal. Their assertiveness, under some circumstances, could be interpreted as aggression, which could lead to law enforcement officers taking matters into their own hands in an attempt to protect the public and ensure our safety.

That's why experts say it's so important to let coyotes be, reducing the potential for conflict and danger. Residents who spot a coyote are encouraged to use common sense and watch over children. They are also urged not to leave small pets unattended.

To prevent unwanted encounters with coyotes, residents should consider securing their garbage cans, stop dumping trash in parks and refrain from discarding food outside.

SNAPSHOT



COYOTE UGLY: *Champion* reader Jain McLay captured this coyote making its way across a field at Derry Road and Fourth Line. Do you have an interesting, fun or cute photo taken in Milton that you would like to submit to be considered for Snapshot? Send submissions (minimum 600 KB resolution) to editor@miltoncanadianchampion.com. Please include the name of the photographer, a description of the photo, including where it was taken.

My View

Dog days of winter

Old Man Winter is wreaking havoc on my routine. Daily — twice on weekdays and more often on weekends — I take my furry four-legged pal Gordo for a walk. It's an activity we both enjoy.

While Gordo burns off steam, I get a healthy dose of vitamin D and exercise.

However, with the mercury dipping below zero degrees Celsius, we've been cutting our outdoor adventures short for a number of reasons.

Firstly, the cold can make spending long periods of time outside unbearable, de-



Catherine O'Hara
Acting Editor

spite being bundled up from head to toe. Getting ready to head out the door also cuts into our jaunts.

Not only must I lace up my boots, zip up my winter coat, wrap a scarf around my neck and pop a toque on my head, I've got to dress Gordo, who has made it very clear that he is not a fan of winter.

Without his coat and boots, this dog refuses to venture beyond the property line. Gordo quivers like a leaf the moment his snout is exposed to cool air. He holds up his paws the moment his pads come into contact with snow. These antics leave me with no other option than to dress my dog as a parent would a child.

But this takes a considerable amount of time and effort.

Is it spring yet?

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