

You're on your own if you want wildlife removed

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according to Merksamer. That, however, wasn't the last time the coyote would pay the Merksamer property a visit.

The coyote returned later that same day and stared down Merksamer, who headed indoors as fast as she could. She then saw it dig up a dead rabbit in her yard.

"I wondered why the coyote was so territorial," she said.

It made a return visit the following day and had a stare-off with a neighbour who was on his riding mower.

The coyote was hanging around the Loretta Crescent area earlier this month because a family of six burrowed under a shed on property owned by the Longman family.

The Longmans didn't even know they were there until May 19 when another

neighbour left a note on their door informing them of the squatters.

"It was a little bit alarming," Jan Longman said of the coyote family, which included mom, dad and four babies, under the shed at the back of their one-acre property.

She suspects they've been there since April and it is where the pups were born.

Longman said she contacted the Ministry of Natural Resources (MNR) to have them removed, but they would not come out. A wildlife removal service did.

"MNR's role is to provide education and advice to landowners on how to prevent and address conflict with wildlife. If there is a public safety risk posed by wildlife, people should contact their local police or call 911," spokesperson Jolanta Kowalski said in an email.

Animal control and Town of Whitchurch-Stouffville bylaw officers are not equipped to deal with wildlife, according to senior bylaw

officer Linda Mainprize.

Longman said a removal company worker went to the shed and was greeted by a growling mamma coyote. He told Longman there was nothing he could do but also thought by him approaching their den, that might be enough to make them move on.

It might have worked. They have not been seen since. However, coyotes are territorial so it is possible they may return.

"It's something we're always going to have to be aware of," Longman said.

Coyotes are opportunistic feeders and will eat meat, dead animals, fruit and vegetables. In the winter, they mostly consume rabbits and deer. In the spring and summer they turn to small mammals, wild berries and birds.

"The worst part is these things are so incredibly adaptable and they are getting more and more brazen," John Ellis of Jelson Wildlife Control told yorkregion.com in 2011.

In her 15 years as a bylaw officer, this is the first time Mainprize has heard of coyotes setting up house under a resident's shed.

"We're moving into their areas. They're finding safe places to have their litters. I wasn't shocked at all," she said.

On May 6, a fox attacked Meegan Garnto's cat. Garnto saw a fox across the street from her Victoria Street home around 7 p.m.

"A couple hours later, my cat never comes home," she said.

Truffles, a 12 to 20-year-old outdoor cat, was attacked that night on Clark Street near Sunset Boulevard. A resident saw the incident take place, scared the fox away and called animal control, according to Garnto.

Animal control came and took Truffles to a veterinarian clinic in Alliston. She was returned to Stouffville once Garnto found out where she was. She spent four days in a local clinic and racked up a \$1,000 bill getting her damaged left shoulder treated.

"She was a little bit banged up," she said. "They didn't know if she was actually going to make it or not because she was traumatized."

Truffles now has a "wonky leg" but is on the road to recovery and even caught a chipmunk this week, according to Garnto. Her days of wandering local streets are, however, over.

In 2011, a coyote or two were spotted wandering around the Hoover Park Drive and Reeve's Way area. In one incident, a resident claimed it followed a woman down the road.

WHAT TO DO

How to prevent conflicts with coyotes:

Never feed them, as that makes them less fearful of humans

Keep your garbage and compost containers secured and in an enclosed space

Use motion sensors on your property

Close off spaces under porches and sheds

How to protect your dog:

Small dogs may be viewed as prey

Keep on a leash

Carry a flashlight on nighttime walks

Clean up after your dog as coyotes are attracted to dog feces

Source: Ministry of Natural Resources website ontario.

WHITCHURCH-STOUFFVILLE PRAYER BREAKFAST

Our 13th Annual Prayer Breakfast has been Celebrated and enjoyed by all who attended

PURPOSE STATEMENT: To affirm the strong Christian roots and heritage of the Town of Whitchurch Stouffville and to be a voice of the community, along with many other voices that say we still hold true to this heritage and faith today. And further to demonstrate that the Christian Faith is real and valid and that the community is stronger and better because of the faith of its residents. The Whitchurch-Stouffville Prayer Breakfast offers an opportunity, at least yearly, for all members of the community, including those who may not worship regularly, to give thanks and worship our Lord and to pray for His guidance to all our politicians and political decisions at the Federal, Provincial and local level and to pray for our Emergency Services and others who help to keep our community strong, safe and loving.

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