

As some of you are aware, there has been an increase recently in coyote sightings in the Spring Valley and Hilshire Village areas, most specifically in the Brighton Place subdivision and in areas along Spring Branch Creek. As a result, your police department has been gathering information on possible remedies to this situation. The control of wild animals in residential neighborhoods presents a number of challenges. Harris County Animal Control does not handle or address issues involving wild animals. The Texas Wildlife Services Department has advised us that they also do not offer such assistance to our area. They have provided the following information in an effort to educate the public regarding the control of coyotes in urban areas.

- There are some common sense precautions people can take to manage coyotes:
 - Do not feed coyotes! Keep pet food and water inside. Keep garbage securely stored, especially if it has to be put on the curb for collection; use tight-locking or bungee-cord-wrapped trashcans that are not easily opened.
 - Keep compost piles securely covered; correct composting never includes animal matter like bones or fat, which can draw coyotes even more quickly than decomposing vegetable matter.
 - Keep pets inside, confined securely in a kennel or covered exercise yard, or within the close presence of an adult.
 - Walk pets on a leash and accompany them outside, especially at night.
 - Do not feed wildlife on the ground; keep wild bird seed in feeders designed for birds elevated or hanging above ground, and clean up spilled seed from the ground; coyotes can either be drawn directly to the seed, or to the rodents drawn to the seed.
 - Keep fruit trees fenced or pick up fruit that falls to the ground.
 - Do not feed feral cats (domestics gone wild); this can encourage coyotes to prey on cats, as well as feed on cat food left out for them.
 - Minimize clusters of shrubs, trees and other cover and food plants near buildings and children's play areas to avoid attracting rodents and small mammals that will in turn attract coyotes
 - Use noise making and other scaring devices when coyotes are seen. Portable air horns, motor vehicle horns, slingshots, and thrown rocks can be effective.

Texas Wildlife Services has advised that they would welcome your calls if you need further information. Their phone number is 979-845-6201. You should ask to speak to Linda.

Meanwhile, the police department will continue to research other options in an effort to remedy this problem.

Gary Finkelman
Chief of Police