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Town experiences increase in coyote activity

By Vera Kochan



The reported July 9 coyote attack occurred near the Moraga Commons Park restrooms. Photo Vera Kochan

One of the more recent coyote sightings occurred July 9 near the Moraga Commons Park restrooms, when a 2-year-old boy was bitten on the leg by what was reportedly a coyote. The toddler was in the company of a caregiver at the time. According to Moraga Police Department Lt. Brian South, "The child was treated and released that same day with non-life threatening injuries."

MPD closed the Commons Park early the following evening out of an abundance of caution due to coyote activity becoming more prevalent beginning at dusk. The park reopened July 11 at regular hours.

However, later that evening, around 7:45 p.m., more coyote activity was reported in the Rimer Drive area of Moraga. A small coyote was spotted approaching an individual on foot and then running toward a bicyclist. There were no injuries reported, and the animal was spotted running away to a nearby orchard.

"Coyote sightings are historically not unusual in Moraga," stated South. "Since the bite incident, sightings have occurred and residents have been sharing their observations of coyote activity in various areas of town. We have been working with the California Department of Fish and Wildlife and sharing this information with them."

A man visiting Moraga Country Club was bitten on the leg July 17, but he didn't see the animal and it was unknown if it was a coyote. The man was treated for minor injury at a local hospital, according to South.

There has been an increase in wild animal sightings across the Bay Area since the coronavirus pandemic began. "When humans retreat, due to lockdowns and stay-at-home orders, the landscape of fear that we create retreats with us," explained ecologist John Laundre of Western Oregon University in Monmouth. "Animals common in suburban areas, such as coyotes, might normally restrict their activities to the evening and night. But, the fewer people they see around, the more willing they are to come out during the day."

CDFW recommends residents to "stash your food and trash." Keep garbage cans closed, remove all sources of water, bring pets in at night, pick up fallen fruit and cover compost piles. Added precautions include to never feed a coyote, do not leave small children unattended, install motion-sensitive lighting, and trim hiding places such as ground level shrubbery. If followed by a coyote, make loud noises or throw rocks in the animal's direction. If attacked, contact MPD at (925) 284-5010 or call 911.

Lt. South can be reached at: south@moraga.ca.us

Reach the reporter at: vera@lamorindaweekly.com

[back](#)

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