

Coyote Death, and Species-specific Wildlife Protocols:

In November, 2014, the outgoing City Council approved the Humane Wildlife Conflict Policy.

<http://sire.london.ca/cache/2/g0nloj45eiwpgkehytbjeif/1650610127201503270424.PDF>

The intent of that policy was to act as a guide for the development of species-specific protocols that define how to respond to conflicts between wild animals and humans.

The policy states:

“The City will strive to not interfere with wildlife and their natural processes where possible; and will strive to implement proactive and preventative measures in order to promote coexistence, and to prevent potential conflicts where possible.”

A coyote was shot and killed last weekend in the Wortley Village area of London, as the actions of that coyote were seen as disturbing to some local residents. The coyote was going onto the porches of homes and according to some photos, seemed to be crouching against doorways.

This recent lethal action demonstrates that peaceful coexistence with wildlife requires preventative programs and policies, fulfilling the commitment to: “strive to implement proactive and preventative measures in order to promote coexistence” as included in the policy.

At the time of this submission, we do not know the physical condition of this animal before he or she was killed, or why the coyote was going onto the porches of homes and seemingly crouching by doorways - the activity that caused fear in some residents and that led to the coyote being shot.

It has been suggested that according to published photos of this coyote that he/she may have been suffering from mange, a treatable condition. Reports of bleeding around the neck could have been caused by the coyote scratching him/herself in a response to the discomfort of mange or another condition.

Mange can cause an animal to feel unusually cold, and crouching by doorways may have been because this animal was trying to find warmth. While we do not know at this time if the coyote was sick, we do know that there are few cases of rabid wild animals reported in Ontario, and that there are many other reasons for wild animals to change their usual behaviour other than infection by rabies. It seems reasonable that rabies be considered as a possibility, but not as the only possible condition that an apparently distressed animal could be suffering from.

It is unfortunate that efforts were not made to live-trap this animal to provide veterinary care if needed, as a first line of response. According to the direction of the Humane Wildlife Conflict Policy, attempts to humanely live-trap the coyote would seem to be the best place to start.

This recent lethal action points to the urgent need for AWAC members and the broader community to work with Civic Administration to develop species-specific protocols so that local agencies will have a well-defined plan in place before future events occur. It may be necessary to research what agencies or groups can be brought in on short notice to do live-trapping if that is the preventative action required.

Part of this research on protocols will likely require the involvement of groups that specialize in working on behalf of specific species to promote peaceful co-existence with wild animals.

Proposal:

That AWAC research and ask for assistance from groups that can help develop protocols that will be guided by the Humane Wildlife Conflict Policy, and that will fulfill the commitment to create preventative and pro-active protocols so that future lethal actions will be prevented.