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Coyote Watch King Township formed

By Shelagh Usher

I write this letter in hopes that other pets won't suffer the same outcome as did our much-loved dog. I write so readers might learn and take heed from the devastating loss our family has experienced.

Recently, a pair of Eastern Coyotes (aka Coywolves) jumped into our fenced yard and killed Monty, our two-year-old Terrier/Whippet mix. Our fence is 5' high. This happened mid-week at 2:30 in the afternoon. Monty was alone and unmonitored for less than 10 minutes.

Despite mourning Monty's horrific death, I began to wonder how many other dogs and cats have been killed by this hybrid species (called ?canids?) in recent years? Have domestic animals become part of the Coywolf's diet? Can the Coywolf survive in this region without pets and livestock kills?

Coyote Watch King Township is the name of a Facebook Group I've started in order to share and gather information from others who, like us, live amongst this growing and increasingly brazen hybrid coyote/wolf/dog.

This is some of what I've learned so far:

? The Ministry of Natural Resources (MNR) takes no reports of incidents involving domestic animals. They consider coyotes and the counterparts ?pests.? They suggested I call my local animal control. I was given a link to their article: ?Preventing and managing conflicts with coyotes, wolves and foxes.? They also gave me the name of 3 trappers.

? Trapping in a sub division? Not a good idea, according to the trappers. Besides, is trapping the humane way to deal with this?

? Animal Control said much the same. They also don't deal with these predators and suggested I call the Township of King and get a permit to hunt them.

? Due to the size of my property, King Township could not issue me a permit. They do not keep track of domestic animals killings in their jurisdiction. They suggested I call the York Region Police (YRP) to make an incident report.

YRP told me this was an MNR problem.

From my point of view, this is beginning to look like a problem that won't go away. In fact, despite the lack of recorded information by regional or provincial agencies, there are enough media reports to suggest the number of domestic kills by canids is increasing, as are the numbers of coywolves living among us.

Times are definitely changing where I live, in King. I see this, however, as a case of balancing our cohabitation with wildlife throughout York Region and throughout Ontario!

In order to find out if there is a growing problem of domestic animal kills by area wildlife, we need to have statistical information. I believe that it is time that more attention is given to this issue. Studies should be done and municipalities, townships and/or the Ministry of Natural Resources should be accountable for doing them.

What can you do?

? Read the article from the MNR linked above. Educate yourself and be vigilant in following the suggestions they offer.

? Contact and ask your elected officials municipal and/or provincial levels why no agency among them is taking incident reports or tracking the number of domestic kills by wildlife where you live.

? Join Coyote Watch King Township. Add your voice, ideas, sightings.

I believe responsible pet owners ought to be able to feel their dogs are safe when exercised in our neighbourhoods or on the trail systems that attracted us to live here. I certainly believed my dog was protected in my 5' high fenced back yard.

I can't express how devastating his loss, and the way he died, is for my family and me. ?Forewarned is forearmed.?