

Wildlife vs. the city: Can't we get along?

Article

Comments (16)

Published On Fri Sep 23 2011

Email | Print | (16) | Facebook | Twitter | LinkedIn | StumbleUpon | RSS

Michael Woods Staff Reporter



Toronto's raccoon population has exploded since the advent of the green bin program, just one of several human-animal conflicts that occur regularly within the urban boundary.

BILL TAYLOR/TORONTO STAR FILE PHOTO

If there's a raccoon on your property and you want it to leave, there are better methods than hitting it with a shovel.

That was one of the messages coming out of an inaugural Toronto conference devoted to improving the way urban dwellers interact with wildlife.

"People try inhumane solutions — using rat traps for squirrels, poisons for raccoons. There are always humane alternatives," said Brad Gates, a speaker at the conference and owner of Scarborough's AAA Gates' Wildlife Management.

The problem is that most people, even city workers, aren't trained in how to properly deal with wild animals, said conference spokesperson Adrian Nelson.

Some resort to drastic measures, such as the Toronto man arrested in June and charged with beating a baby raccoon with a shovel. That, along with an increase of coyote attacks on farm animals in Ontario, has made wildlife interaction a "hot news item" in Toronto, Nelson said.

- Advertisement -

Save up to 35% with PAY NOW RATES

Budget BOOK NOW

SPEAK YOUR MIND ABOUT THE 2011 ONTARIO ELECTION

Facebook Activity

healthzone.ca
Read the latest health news, find local doctors, walk-in clinics and more.

Must Reads

- » [Leafs beat the Senators 5 - 3](#)
- » [Looking for true Canadian English, there? Go north](#)
- » [Murder, incest, rape: Comedy gold or off limits?](#)
- » [THE GRID: Why do Torontonians bother with brunch?](#)
- » [THE KIT: 'Girl With The Dragon Tattoo' goes Vogue](#)

Follow The Toronto Star

Facebook Twitter RSS News Alerts Mobile Subscribe

Making News

Cohn: McGuinty parries attacks with the tried and true
It was a battle of sleepy statistics versus...

McGuinty's secret during debate? Hand

Rather than simply killing the animals, long-term solutions, particularly eliminating their easy access to food, are more effective.

Toronto Animal Services doesn't keep track of human-wildlife confrontations. But Gates estimates Toronto's raccoon population has spiked 25 per cent since the green bin program was introduced in 2002.

"It's like one-stop shopping for a raccoon to open up that bin. It would normally take a week to forage and find that much food."

The conference, held at the Metropolitan Hotel, was organized by the Association for the Protection of Fur-Bearing Animals, a Vancouver-based non-profit group. Calls to the organization from across the country are up 20 per cent, including a flood of calls regarding beavers and coyotes. The conference was organized to explore solutions beyond short-term fixes such as trapping.

Gates said he's been doing more work involving beavers of late, so he was also present to learn from beaver experts such as Colorado's Sherri Tippie.

Tippie is a hairdresser by day but has moonlighted as a beaver relocater since 1985. She claims to have "the best record of anybody in the United States, if not the world." She finds landowners and government agencies that need the beavers for habitat restoration.

Tippie was on hand to explain ways to prevent beaver-related flooding — such as a pipe system or water-flow device — rather than the oft-preferred method of simply shooting them.

"These animals are literally a keystone species to an aquatic ecosystem. And when you shoot them, they always return," she said.

The roughly 100 attendees from across North America ranged from trappers and fur industry workers to wildlife rehabilitation workers and other wildlife advocates. Discussion topics ranged from how to lobby politicians on the treatment of wildlife to dealing with coyotes properly.



gestures and changing postures

Liberal sources said Dalton McGuinty wanted to...



Horwath proves she's a 'Steeltown scrapper'

There's only one person for the top job in the...

See for Yourself »



Reactions to new cigarette labelling



Cigarette warning labels



We Day

More Photos and Videos »

[Email](#) | [Print](#) | [Add to Favourites](#) | [Report an error](#) | [Facebook](#) | [Twitter](#) | [LinkedIn](#) | [Google+](#) | [RSS](#)

Top Stories:

[Ontario leaders' debate turns nasty midway](#)

[The best and worst of the debate](#)

[Teen charged after dirt bike, cop cruiser collide](#)

[Bloody knives shown in mayor's ex brother-in-law's trial](#)

[New tick-borne disease discovered in Canada](#)

Top Comments

[Comment on this story »](#)

Invaders: We are the invaders!! ... [Howard9](#)

Raccoons galore: My son lives in a bachelor apartment on the third floor of a building on Queen Street East. He has a..... [RichardGanton](#)

Here to stay: Raccoons are here to stay. Let's face it when you have "green bins" as snacks and "garbage strikes"..... [Ivan Lussier](#)

I have the same problem as RichadGanton's son. I have a small deck for a backyard. This AM, four..... [Agemon1](#)



Other Star Sites

[moneyville.ca](#) | [Whccds.ca](#) | [parentcentral.ca](#) | [yourDome.ca](#) | [healthzone.ca](#) | [TORONTO.COM](#)

Web2PDF

converted by [Web2PDFConvert.com](#)



Canadian Tire to offer home installation services



The least and most expensive cars to insure



Hot toys for the holidays



Bring natural hues indoors for fall



More coffee, less depression, study shows



Bars Guide: Toronto's most buzzworthy bars, lounges and pubs

thestar.com

- [Corrections](#)
- [Contact Webmaster](#)
- [FAQ](#)
- [Site Map](#)

Toronto Star

- [About](#)
- [Atkinson Principles](#)
- [Statement of Principles](#)
- [Subscribe](#)
- [My Subscription](#)
- [Contact Us](#)
- [News Releases](#)
- [Star Internships](#)
- [Careers @ the Star](#)

Advertise with us

- [Media Kit](#)
- [Online Advertising](#)
- [Print Advertising](#)
- [Special Sections](#)

Initiatives

- [Santa Claus Fund](#)
- [Fresh Air Fund](#)
- [Speakers Bureau](#)
- [Classroom Connection](#)
- [Community Giving](#)

Stay up to date

- [RSS Feeds](#)
- [Twitter Updates](#)
- [News Alerts](#)
- [Newsletters](#)
- [Mobile Devices](#)

[wheels.ca](#) | [toronto.com](#) | [Stock Photography](#) | [Cheap Flights](#) | [New in Homes](#) | [Car Insurance Quotes](#) | [Leasebusters.com](#) | [Save.ca](#) | [ShopTV](#) | [starsavers.ca](#) | [more](#)