News

Predators on course

BY MATT ROCHELEAU FOR THE SUN CHRONICLE — Friday, July 11, 2008 1:11 AM EDT

Aerial photograph from the Massachusetts Geographic Information System shows Highland Country Club and the immediate surrounding area. Coyotes have been spotted on the golf course recently — this, in an area where there are also two elementary schools, one middle school and one high school, not to mention numerous homes nearby.

Coyotes have been 'playing' on Highland Country Club, just a chip shot from downtown

As if golf was not frustrating enough, imagine walking toward your next shot with the ball placed neatly in the middle of the fairway only to have it snatched up and taken away by a coyote.

That's what happened recently to a golfer at Highland Country Club in Attleboro, where numerous coyote sightings are beginning to concern some club employees, members and nearby residents.

The sightings of both adults and pups began last fall and have increased in recent weeks, club President Kevin Bowler said.

The country club, off Mechanic Street, is surrounded by a densely populated residential area less than a mile from downtown, where pet owners and parents of young children especially should keep a watchful eye.

"Personally, I would be very concerned about our neighbors," Bowler said. Bud Cobb, a club member who lives across the street from the course, has seen the coyotes but is not worried because he does not have pets.

(Photo by Associated Press)

"As long as I don't go out at night," he added.

The club notified its membership of the situation Tuesday via e-mail and planned to begin alerting surrounding neighbors, club PGA Pro Drew Chapman said.

The country club contacted the Massachusetts Fisheries and Wildlife Authority earlier this week to have an observer check out the situation, Chapman said.

Coyotes are protected by the state. Environmental officials told the club that any type of removal of the animals would be done as a last resort, Chapman said.

"To me, it's kind of crazy. It seems like something that would be a public health problem," Bowler said.

What has been most troubling, Bowler said, is how relatively comfortable the coyotes are

Top Headlines

Rise in domestic violence has state called to action

Want to be auxiliary city police officer?

Prepare for stormy summer, officials say

Mansfield slaying drug deal gone awry, say police

Handicapped residents get to use Norton senior center

Print this story
Email this story
Photo Reprints
RSS
Forums
AddThis

around humans.

Coyotes do thrive in suburban and urban areas close to people, however, they are usually shy and elusive, seen only during non-daylight hours, either individually or in small groups.

The animals are afraid of loud noises and bright lights, according to the MassWildlife Web site.

But in a recent incident, a grounds keeper at the golf course encountered numerous coyotes on a course green in daylight, Bowler said. When the grounds keeper drove toward the pack in his cart, the coyotes stood their ground and did not disperse until an air horn was sounded multiple times, Bowler said.

Also, earlier this year, a pro shop worker retrieving golf balls in the ball collection machine on the course's driving range was approached by a couple of coyotes, Bowler said.

Though the sightings are not an every day occurrence and the closest the coyotes have ever come to a human is about 30 feet, Chapman said club officials are worried.

"My fear is that something serious is going to happen," Bowler said.

The state offered some advice to club officials and local residents to make the coyotes feel unwelcome, including being aggressive towards scaring them off.

The entire grounds crew has been equipped with air horns, Chapman said, although most golfers rarely carry such equipment.

"It's a lot easier said than done," Bowler said of deterring the coyotes.

Wildlife officials also advised that no food, trash or habitable areas be left available to the animals.

Return to Previous Page

Post Your Comments

NaturalCasing wrote on Jul 23, 2008 8:34 AM:
" The city also has dangerous 'animals', except they are not beautiful and covered in fur. Coyotes are nothing. "

kingston73 wrote on Jul 11, 2008 6:22 PM:
" I'm glad it seems like a majority of people don't seem too worried. I don't think there has ever been a documented case of a coyote attaching a person in the history of the US. Yes, they will eat your small pocket dog or your cat if you leave them outside unattended, but you have more to worry about with a tick or mosquito than you do with a coyote. HELP, maybe you should move to the city, where you won't be exposed to any "dangerous" animals. "

harry hindsight wrote on Jul 11, 2008 5:25 PM:
" Help:
Heartless people, most of the comments are for the care and well being of the coyote. That shows heart that people are willing to put their own self gain of the pleasure of golf after the coyote's right to live and thrive.
The most damaging thing said is the chemicals used by the golf course could be harming the coyotes. So shame on the golf course. "

concepteur wrote on Jul 11, 2008 5:22 PM:
" Take a look at The Narragansett Bay Coyote Study conducted by the Conservation Agency:
http://www.theconservationagency.org/coyote.htm

Their Safety Tips and Facts:
http://tinyurl.com/62w9q7
help to provide some guidance. They have been living with coyotes on the islands of Narragansett Bay for some time.

Never feed coyotes or leave out foods that might attract them. Secure your trash. They eat fruit, cereals, meats, small animals, and carrion.

Never feed pets outside.

Bring your small pets inside at night or accompany them in heavily used coyote areas any pet woodchuck size or smaller is at risk.

A safe cat is an indoor cat. Outdoor cats or cat colonies are a magnet for coyotes.

If coyotes are staring at you, or following you, they probably think you are going to feed them. Remember many coyotes are trained to expect food from people.

Read the rest: http://tinyurl.com/62w9q7 "

realist wrote on Jul 11, 2008 4:53 PM:
" I meant "You'll be fine". Sorry it's been a long day of preaching and sarcasm. "

realist wrote on Jul 11, 2008 4:52 PM:
" What do you suggest? Exterminate all wild life so that people can enjoy nature? Leave the coyotes alone, don't let your cat wander the streets, don't leave pet food, or any food outdoors. You'll be find. "

jose21 wrote on Jul 11, 2008 4:44 PM:
" Help - your on the worng website. These guys will tell you it's your fault for having kids, and proabably for having a pool. "

HELP wrote on Jul 11, 2008 4:05 PM:
" WOW! HEARTLESS PEOPLE THAT LIVE IN OUR TOWN
THINK ABOUT OUR POOR CHILDREN WHO COULD POSSIBLY BE ATTACKED BY THESE COYOTES
I'M CONCERNED
I LIVE IN S ATTLEBORO AND HAVE HAD A COYOTE RUNNING THRU MY YARD FOR THE PAST MONTH WHILE MY FAMILY AND I ARE ENJOYING OUR POOL "

gingersnap wrote on Jul 11, 2008 2:25 PM:
" Why is the picture of a coyote in the snow? Shouldn't it be on green, plush greens? Are the photographers unable to capture a picture of these? "

realist wrote on Jul 11, 2008 11:40 AM:
" I have been dealing with coyotes in my neighborhood for years. I have never worried about going outside day or night. Of course my dog is larger than most coyotes. "

hope2008 wrote on Jul 11, 2008 10:41 AM:
" Skeptic: The goose that was beaten to death with a golf club because it "frightend" a golfer - was killed at Locust Valley Golf Range. Unfortunately, I witnessed the scene. If a golfer found a goose that "frightening", imagin how a golf-ball stealing coyote will affect golfers. Watch out! "

mmarcia wrote on Jul 11, 2008 10:38 AM:
" There have been packs of coyotes in this area for years. One lives in the now closed North Attleborough Landfill. Yes, they have been known to wander through the surrounding neighborhoods (mostly at night), and they really hate police and fire engine sirens (their howls make the hair on the back of your neck stand up!) but we have to share the land. More and more developments are being built, woods are being cut down, and where are these animals supposed to go?

It's also a good reminder to NOT let your cats and small dogs wander out alone. They won't attack and dog their own size, but small animals are their food source. "

realist wrote on Jul 11, 2008 10:26 AM:
" I also haven't seen a road runner in a while? A coincidence, I think not. "

realist wrote on Jul 11, 2008 10:20 AM:
" hope2008 has a point. You can have a satellite picture of Bristol County if you want to show where coyotes live. Their range is through out the state -except for one of the islands, I forget which one.
They have as much a right to exist as the cute little squirrels and the birds in the backyard.
I have noticed fewer skunks in my neighborhood since I have been seeing more coyotes. "

hope2008 wrote on Jul 11, 2008 9:34 AM:
" The entire tone of this article as well as the title - screaming of a predator - is designed to create hysteria. An ariel shot of the area pointing out schools, homes, etc. Usually these ariel shots are reserved for swat team articles. Homeowners should immediately sell their homes and the schools should shut down as all of the children are at risk of being eaten alive. This is what this biased article implies. Does it point out that this area borders a wildlife corridor? Does it mention the conservation land in that area? No, this artcle, as it was written is designed to frighten people and justify what will probably happen to these animals. The chemicals on that golf course are a lot more danderous than the coyotes. Where is the mention of that? I also do not think that the coyotes are stealing golf balls! "

skeptic wrote on Jul 11, 2008 9:26 AM:
" I think the golfers should notice a drop in the goose populuation. Didn't the beating incident happen at a different course? "

Kathy Garrey wrote on Jul 11, 2008 9:10 AM:
" Club President Kevin Bowler is a spoiled yuppie cry BABY. That golf course was built on the coyotes habitat. Learn to live with them or go golf somewhere else. What a little weenie!! Or better yet - instead of being a yuppie 24/7 - go volunteer somewhere and make yourself useful. "

hope2008 wrote on Jul 11, 2008 9:03 AM:
" Lets remember that these creatures are a protected species and treat them with the respect that all creatures deserve. Lets not have the hysteria begin. Several years ago a patron of the golf course became "frightened" of a goose on the course, and proceeded to beat it to death with a golf club. Remember? Who exactly is the "predator"? "

Harry Hindsight wrote on Jul 11, 2008 8:25 AM:
" "Shop at ACME", good one realist. "

realist wrote on Jul 11, 2008 8:02 AM:
" Actually the canine predator in this area was the wolf until colonial times. The coyote was a smaller scavenger. The current eastern coyote, say some experts, appears to be a natural hybrid of the western coyote and wolves from Canada that has moved into the area to fill the niche left by the indigenous wolf extinction. The eastern coyote is much larger than a western coyote (neither really shop at Acme). That being said, they are part of the nature that golfers are always claiming to love as they pour tons of insecticide and fertilizer on the grass. Think of them as the northeast's version of the natural hazards on Florida courses. alligators. They will eat the smaller rodents like groundhogs and squirrels. Imagine how different the movie Caddyshack would have been if it were a coyote and not a gopher on the course.
Of course I'm a bit skeptical of the story that the ball was snatched by a coyote. Maybe he lost it... "

spookey wrote on Jul 11, 2008 7:54 AM:
" AMEN, to you harry. man kind have driven these animals out of their natural territory, with development everywhere. the old saying is "you reap the harvest that you soe!" "

Harry Hindsight wrote on Jul 11, 2008 7:39 AM:
" Before everyone starts crying about safety of children and pets, blah blah blah, let's remember that this was and is their natural territory. We built houses into the woods and fields that were the coyotes hunting grounds and pushed them into the only local open space they could find, the golf course.
They are protected by the state and anyone harming them should be arrested. even the expert from the state says that removal is a last resort.
Let nature take it's course, when they eat the food source at the golf course, they will move to another area to hunt. It is the balance of things. They help keep the rodent and rabbit population in balance. "

*Member ID:

*Password:

Forgot Your Password?

Login

or

Sign Up!

© The Sun Chronicle, Attleboro-North Attleboro, MA.
All rights reserved. | Unauthorized reproduction is prohibited.