

# How to deal with an increase in coyotes

With residents reporting a recent increase in the number of coyote sightings in Costa Mesa, we want to again share some tips on what to do to if a resident has a coyote encounter and how to make your home or backyard less inviting to these predators.

The public should keep in mind that historically, coyote attacks upon humans are extremely rare. In a study presented at the 2004 North American Wildlife and Natural Resources Conference, there were only 56 reported coyote-versus-human attacks resulting in injuries in Southern California in the previous 25 years.

This figure is extremely small when compared to an average 4.5 million people who are bitten by dogs nationally each year. While not normally a danger to humans, coyotes will display defensive behaviors if threatened or cornered. Therefore, it is important to leave a comfortable distance between you and a coyote.

Small pets can easily become coyote prey. Cats and small dogs should not be allowed outside alone, even in a fenced yard. It is highly recommended that small pets always be accompanied by their owner. Though coyotes generally hunt between sunset and sunrise, they can be observed at all hours of the day and will not pass up the opportunity for an easy meal. A dog or cat left in a backyard can be taken in a matter of moments.

Many steps can be taken to protect you and your property from nuisance animals like coyotes and other wildlife:

- Fence off animal enclosures (fully enclose if possible).
- Keep cats and small dogs indoors or in the close presence of an adult.

- Feed pets indoors.
- Store trash in covered heavy-duty containers.
- Keep yards free from potential shelter such as thick brush and weeds.
- Enclose the bottoms of porches and decks.
- Eliminate potential food and water sources, such as fallen fruit and standing water.
- Eradication and/or relocation of the urban coyote is not effective. These programs actually provide a vacuum in nature, causing these animals to have even larger litters, ultimately increasing the coyote population.
- Practicing these measures will help minimize the nuisances and losses caused by urban coyotes.
- If you locate an injured or potentially dangerous coyote in Costa Mesa, call CMPD Dispatch at 714-754-5252, or for general inquiries leave a message with Costa Mesa Animal Control Services at 714-754-5311.

For even more information, we encourage residents to watch the following Public Service Announcement regarding coyotes and ways to discourage them.

---

## **Prostitution Crackdown Results In 32 Arrests, Mostly At Local Motels**

Costa Mesa PD Special Investigations Unit (SIU) made 32 arrests for prostitution over the last two weeks, according to Police Chief Rob Sharpnack.

The majority of these arrests have come from the Vagabond Inn and the La Quinta, Sharpnack said.

These arrests involved both in-person solicitations and meet ups secured through online advertisements, he said.

Additional investigation has shown the prostitutes have left for other cities and the word from multiple interviews is that the Costa Mesa Vice Unit is cracking down and Costa Mesa is not a safe haven for prostitutes.

---

## **CMPD Park Ranger Returns from Deployment**

January was a month of achievement and celebration for the Costa Mesa Police Department with several new hires and promotions.

In addition to four new officers joining the department, on Jan. 21 the CMPD welcomed home Park Ranger Lorna Lyttle who had been deployed to Bagram, Afghanistan as a member of the U.S. Army Reserves.

Lyttle joined the CMPD Feb. 19, 2006 and worked for the department as a park ranger for four years before her decision to enlist with the U.S. Army Reserve. Her service in the Army Reserves began on May 17, 2010 and she was deployed to Bagram Afghanistan in April of 2014.

“You don’t feel the full affect until you land and realize where you are,” she said.



Lyttle spent a year as a convoy escort protecting and assisting with the move of fuel and U.S. military equipment between bases.

Lyttle is glad to be back, "It was an experience that I will never forget and now that I am home, I am just trying to get back to the daily grind and back to living life as I knew it before I left with a whole lot more gratitude for being a US Citizen."

When she is not working Lyttle enjoys spending time with her family, relaxing and going for a good drive.

Lyttle's long term goal is to further her education and promote through the army ranks. She currently holds a sergeant title and hopes to attain rank of an officer.

In the meantime, she is happy to be home and back with the CMPD; her other family.

"They are my other family, you see them every day and spent a lot of time together," she said.

---

# Chief Sharpnack names Jennifer Ruffalo as new Communications Supervisor

The Costa Mesa Police Department continued a trend of new hires and promotions this Wednesday Feb. 17 as Chief Rob Sharpnack announced the promotion of Jennifer Ruffalo to Communications Supervisor at a swearing-in and badge-pinning ceremony outside his office.

“These promotions are so uplifting for our department,” Chief Sharpnack said.

Sharpnack noted that the department’s communication staff answered more than 120,000 calls for service last year. And he had high praise for Ruffalo, who began her career with Costa Mesa police in 2004. Two years later, she was already a training officer and shift lead.



“You gain such an appreciation for what these folks do day in and day out,” Sharpnack said. “Jennifer is a team player who always puts the organization first.”

In 2009, Ruffalo was working with a trainee who had taken a call from a person in distress who was unable to speak. Working closely with the trainee, they were able to assist the caller with their emergency situation.

Later that year, the trainee was given an Award of Recognition at the State 911 level for exemplary performance, and that 911 call is still used in the department’s communication’s training program.

Ruffalo had her badge pinned on her by her sister Courtney as several high-ranking officers, city staffer and members of the communications team looked on.

“I thank you all for your support,” she said.

---

## **Le and Brown are named new sergeants for CMPD**

The Costa Mesa Police Department has two new sergeants today as veteran officers Bang Le and Jimmy Brown were sworn in Thursday outside Chief Rob Sharpnack’s office.

“We couldn’t be prouder of these two individuals,” Chief Sharpnack told the crowd, which included Mayor Steve Mensinger, several top ranking officers and police staff and family members who had gathered in support.



Le is a Garden Grove native who joined the department in 2000 and was the first in his family to pursue a career in law enforcement, Sharpnack said.

Brown was born and raised in Orange and also started his law enforcement career in the year 2000, first joining the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department. He became a Costa Mesa officer in 2005.

[http://cityofcostamesanews.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/02/MVI\\_5210.mp4](http://cityofcostamesanews.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/02/MVI_5210.mp4)

Le thanked the chief and his fellow officers for entrusting him and Brown with these leadership roles.

"It's something we take seriously and we promise we won't let you down," Le said. "It's a privilege and honor to carry on the great traditions of this department."





Brown also welcomed the challenge.

"I look forward to leading the next generation and moving forward with the department," he said.



During the badge pinning, both men had their children do the honors, with Brown having his daughter pin his badge and Le had both his son and daughter take part in the ceremony.

Sharpnack pointed out how important the families are to these officers and others in the department and he thanked them for their support. And he reiterated that these promotions are symbolic of where the Costa Mesa Police Department is headed in the future.



“Our department is on the rise,” he said. “And we are going to seek excellence in all we do.”

---

## **CMPD adds another officer this week**

Costa Mesa Police Department brass and ranking city leaders welcomed new Police Officer Nick Wilson in a swearing-in ceremony early Tuesday morning.

Police Chief Rob Sharpnack officiated the ceremony with some welcoming words for the new lateral hire officer, who formerly worked as a Los Angeles County Sheriff’s deputy. Sharpnack noted Wilson’s already impressive career achievements.

“He really embodies what we embody as a city and a police department,” Sharpnack said. “I’m excited to welcome Nick. We are fortunate to have him.”

Wilson is one of three boys raised by John and Antonia Wilson in the small town of San Marino, nearby Pasadena. He is a graduate of San Marino High School, where he played high school baseball. He served as a cadet for San Marino Police Department from 2008-2011.

Wilson’s father is a retired 31-year veteran of the California Highway Patrol and one of his brothers is an officer for the San Marino Police Department. Wilson graduated from Rio Hondo with an Associates of Science degree in Administration of Justice in 2011.

Wilson was hired by the Los Angeles Sheriff Department in 2012. Since then he served in the custodial environment and is currently assigned to the courthouse in Compton.

Several family members attended the ceremony, including his father and brother. Also attending was his wife, who placed his badge on him after he was sworn in by City Clerk Brenda Green.



Mayor Steve Mensinger and Councilmember Katrina Foley, City CEO Tom Hatch and Assistant CEO Rick Francis, and several members of the police command staff were also in attendance.



The department's three new academy graduates, Brandon Kim, Tyrus Ranck and Matthew Richie, also made an appearance to support their fellow officer.

Chief Sharpnack noted that the department continues to move in the right direction with these new hires, which puts the staffing levels now at 112 sworn officers.