

Letter from the Editor



THIS ISSUE OF *Human–Wildlife Interactions* features a special section highlighting the urban coyote (*Canis latrans*). The special section is entitled “Cosmopolitan Coyotes,” not because coyotes are present in practically every metropolitan center, city, and town across North America, but more so because I just like using alliteration. In reality, coyotes are on the move, and more and more urban areas are providing them with suitable refugia. Many urban residents are in denial as to the cause, while still trying to get used to their new neighbors and their predatory habits.

A few years ago, the stark reality of the predatory habits of the cosmopolitan coyote hit my daughter up close and personal. She was attending college in San Diego, California. She was also playing on the women’s varsity soccer team. On her way home after practice, she picked up her little dog, Kona, at a friend’s place. The friend was taking care of Kona, shown below, while she was at practice.



When she arrived at the apartment, she got out of her car, and Kona—all 5 pounds of her—bounded after her, nipping at her heels, as they walked to apartment. Here is where the details get a little fuzzy. All we had to go on was the frantic call of a young woman who just saw a cosmopolitan coyote running off into the darkness clutching her struggling and yelping Kona in its jaw.

All I could make out between her hysterical

sobs was, “Yoda got Kona, Yoda got Kona!” Now, I am not a real big *Stars Wars* fan, but I do know who Yoda is and was wondering what the heck Yoda was doing in San Diego, let alone with Kona. After I calmed her down, I realized she was screaming, “Coyote got Kona!”

Being an athlete and in a panic, she had tried to chase the coyote and Kona down, but lost them in the darkness. However, soon after she called us, she found Kona crawling back to her from under a bush. The dog had deep wounds in her chest, but she was alive. After \$800 in veterinary bills, which we had to pay upfront, and an anxious few nights, the dog bounced back and now is a permanent part of my household. We don’t know how she got away, but she is wiry and definitely has attitude. I now affectionately call her “coyote bait,” but again not to my daughter or the dog’s face. That would be just plain mean.

Over the years, I had fielded numerous calls from urban residents where this scenario has been repeated, but the end result was different. Although there has been an increase in citizen awareness about the cosmopolitan coyote, there remains a great deal of misunderstanding among city residents about coyote behavior, their role in urban ecology, and how to manage the risks. The papers in this special section of *Human–Wildlife Interactions* will clear up common misconceptions and shed more light on this adaptable canid and its future in cosmopolitan communities.

Terry A. Messmer, Editor-in-Chief
