

Vector Control District
County of Santa Clara
Consumer and Environmental Protection Agency
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SCCVector.org



Media Advisory

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
April 3, 2019

Wildlife Warning for Coyote and Mountain Lion Activity

SANTA CLARA COUNTY, CALIF. – April begins coyote and mountain lion season in Santa Clara County, with warmer weather increasing wildlife activity. Loss of their natural habitat and the search for food and water have forced them to expand their range. New landscaping designs that include ivy, eucalyptus, and other non-native plants attract rodents that are food sources for coyotes and mountain lions. Additionally, the use of vegetation and increased fencing alter wildlife's natural corridors, forcing them to pass through more urban areas.

Coyotes and mountain lions adjust rapidly to changes in their environment making them accustomed to humans. The number of attractants within residential properties, such as food and water, can lead to increased interaction between these animals and people. You can take preventative actions to discourage these encounters during the peak reporting season from April-October.

"Regular contact makes wildlife accustomed to humans and as a result they lose their fear of people. More sightings have been noted due to the prevalence of surveillance cameras around private properties. We recommend people take preventative measures such as removing fallen seeds and fruits that attract rodents, a principal prey for coyotes and mountain lions. It is also important to bring pets in at night," said County of Santa Clara Vector Control District Manager Nayer Zahiri.

You can take the following steps to avoid attracting wildlife:

- Trim and clear dense vegetation around your home that could provide hiding places and habitats for rats and mice
- Avoid planting ivy, eucalyptus, mini-vineyards, and other non-native plants at home as these attract wildlife and alter the paths animals use
- Pick up fallen fruit that could attract rodents and coyotes
- Ensure fencing is at least 6 feet tall and is secured below ground level
- Always supervise small children when playing outside
- Keep pets on a fixed leash when walking them and pay attention to their body language; pets can often sense other animals and may begin to act nervous or frightened
- Do not leave pets out at night
- Clean bird feeders and fallen seeds often; seeds attract rodents and rodents attract both coyotes and mountain lions
- Secure chickens and livestock in cages or pens at night
- Install motion sensor lights around the home; flashing lights frighten both coyotes and mountain lions.
- Secure garbage cans with locking lids or place bungee type cords over the top of the can while in storage

If you encounter coyotes or mountain lions outside of the home, take the following steps:

- Use loud noises to scare them away
- Do not run away or turn your back on a coyote or mountain lion
- Attempt to leave the area calmly
- If followed by a coyote or mountain lion, make yourself look big by lifting your purse or backpack on top of your head
- Do not bend down with your back facing a coyote or mountain lion when attempting to lift a pet or child
- Be aware and avoid distractions; adjust headphone volume low enough to be able to hear animals walking across dry leaves, and assess the environment before stopping for any reason

Mountain lions and coyotes are beneficial for the environment, helping to control rodent and deer populations in the surrounding areas.

For free assistance with wildlife sightings, preventative inspections, and informational material, the public can contact the District office by calling (408) 918-4770 or filling out a service request online at SCCvector.org.

ABOUT THE COUNTY OF SANTA CLARA, CALIFORNIA

The County of Santa Clara government serves a diverse, multi-cultural population of 1.9 million residents in Santa Clara County, the sixth largest county in California. With a \$7 billion budget and more than 70 agencies/departments and more than 20,000 employees, the County of Santa Clara plans for the needs of a dynamic community, provides quality services, and promotes a healthy, safe and prosperous community for all. The County provides essential services including public health protection, environmental protection, medical services through County of Santa Clara Health System hospitals and clinics, child and adult protection services, homelessness prevention and solutions, roads, park services, libraries, emergency response to disasters, protection of minority communities and those under threat, access to a fair criminal justice system, and scores of other services, particularly for those members of our community in the greatest need.

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