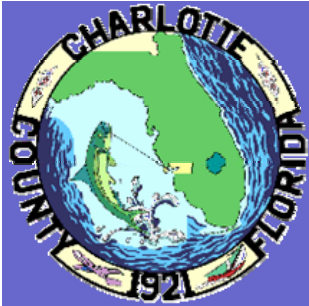


# ANIMAL CONTROL NEWSLETTER



## RACCOONS: DEALING WITH WILDLIFE IN RESIDENTIAL AREAS



Our department spends a great deal of time dealing with citizen complaints regarding wildlife problems in urban areas. Be-

cause of the diversity of habitat types, Florida is home to more wildlife species than most other states.

cause of the diversity of habitat types, Florida is home to more wildlife species than most other states.

Misunderstandings are common causes of many frustrations and fears that people have about wildlife but understanding *why* wildlife comes onto your property is the key to solving the problem.

Some of the most common wildlife predators that come into residential areas are opossums, foxes, snakes and alligators. But one of the most common complaints that we receive is for raccoons. Florida has a very high population of raccoons and they are also the most common carrier of the rabies virus.

Raccoons can cause many frustrations such as getting into garbage cans, destroying gardens and damaging your home. If they want something bad enough, they can and will be persistent enough to get it.

So how does one go about deterring these creatures from coming onto their property? Well first of all, every situation is different but the first thing we look at is *why* the raccoon is coming onto their property. Sometimes it is apparent while other times it is unknown. Most people who are experiencing raccoon problems have something on their property that they want. Some of the most common things are garbage left out, food

left out, bird baths and bird feeders. Some people actually leave food out specifically for raccoons. There was a law passed in Florida legislation in 2003 which now makes it illegal for people to feed and entice raccoons.

Raccoons are natural hunters and do not need our help in eating. When people feed raccoons they can lose their natural born fear of humans. And when they lose their food source, they can start foraging through neighborhoods in search of their next food source.

Trapping is also an effective solution. But keep in mind, if you don't eliminate the source of the problem, you are probably only offering a temporary solution and it will just be a matter of time before more come along. Here are some tips that you can follow to deter wildlife from coming onto your property:

- **Do not leave garbage out overnight. Take it out in the morning**
- **Remove any bird feeders or bird baths**
- **Make sure that there are no holes in your screened-in lanai**
- **Check the perimeter of your house and make sure that are no entry points that wildlife may enter (including chimneys)**
- **Do not leave any food outside (i.e. dog food, cat food)**
- **Keep your lawn mowed and free of debris (this is effective for snakes)**

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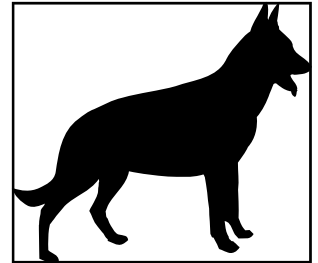
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## DEPARTMENT SPOTLIGHT: ANIMAL CONTROL BECOMES EVOC CERTIFIED

On July 6th, Charlotte County Animal Control became EVOC (Emergency Vehicle Operation Course) Certified. We are now classified as official emergency response vehicles. This will allow this department to respond to emergencies utilizing lights and sirens. This certification will be useful when a human life is in immediate and apparent danger and will be used at the request of the Charlotte County Sheriffs Office.



This certification has been a “work in progress” for the last two years and all officers and respective staff have successfully completed the classroom and field training. Charlotte County Animal Control is proud to say that we are one of the few animal control agencies in the state of Florida to accomplish this.



## FLORIDA BLACK BEAR IMPOUNDED IN PUNTA GORDA



Shortly after Hurricane Charley, we received a call from the Punta Gorda Police Department stating that a Florida black bear was foraging through a neighborhood in the Punta Gorda Isles area.

Several agencies besides ours responded to the call, including the Punta Gorda Police Department, Florida Fish and Game Commission and the Charlotte County Sheriffs Office. The bear also attracted some curious

onlookers hoping to get a glimpse. Fortunately, we were able to corner the bear at the end of a waterfront cul-de-sac so he couldn't stray too far. Although the bear did not appear to be aggressive, he did seem to be very timid and afraid of people getting too close to him. He was wandering through several of the back yards eating garbage.

Knowing that we did not have the proper resources to impound the bear, we contacted a specialist from Collier Co. to assist. He arrived on scene about two hours later and darted the bear. After this was complete, the bear was placed into a transport cage and was re-located.

The specialist advised us that the bears natural habitat was probably severely compromised due to the hurricane which flushes them out and into residential communities.

**Lost your pet?**

**Make sure you contact the Animal Welfare League at 625-6720 and the Suncoast Humane Society at 474-7884 to file a “lost” report.**

# FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

**Q:** Is it against the law for me to bring my dog to a public beach?

**A:** Yes. County Ordinance 1-4-36 states that it is a violation for any person to take an animal into or on any public beach. This ordinance is also for public parks, public playgrounds, public school premises and public buildings. It should be noted that any dog trained to assist or aid disabled persons and is actually being used for the purpose of assisting such persons are exempt from this ordinance. People found to be in violation of this ordinance may be subject to a fine of \$65.00 (1st Offense).

**Q:** Is it uncommon to see raccoons out during the daytime?

**A:** No it is not uncommon. Raccoons are nocturnal by nature but due to community development over the last few years, it has flushed raccoons out of their natural habitat and closer into residential areas. This puts an end to the common myth that seeing a raccoon in the daytime hours would mean that it is rabid. This is simply not true. Whatever time of day they may be seen, people should never approach or go near them.

**Q:** What should I do if I am bitten by a dog?

**A:** You should report it to this department immediately. An officer will respond to meet with you to document the incident and to meet with the owner of the dog. Dogs that have bitten someone are required by Florida State law to be quarantined for 10 days (from the date of the bite) to ensure that the dog will not exhibit any unusual signs that would indicate it is sick or acting unusual. This rule applies to both vaccinated and un-vaccinated dogs. Also, our department highly recommends that you seek medical attention from a hospital or medical facility to get the bite treated.



DID YOU KNOW...  
CHARLOTTE COUNTY ANIMAL CONTROL RESPONDS TO OVER 11,000 CALLS PER YEAR

DID YOU KNOW...  
OUR DISPATCH TEAM RECEIVES APPROX. 20,000 INCOMING PHONE CALLS PER YEAR

## ANIMAL CONTROL AT THE "FURRY SKURRY" IN VENICE



Lt. Brian Jones & Office Coordinator Tracie Baird with beagles "Kenai" & "Marty" at Furry Skurry

Thousands of people showed up to the 7th annual "Furry Skurry" on March 19th which was held at Blalock Park in Venice. It was a fun filled day with such activities as police dog demonstrations, arts and crafts, agility and obedience demonstrations, food vendors and live entertainment. We had the opportunity to mix and mingle with a lot of great people and meet their animals as well. We were there to promote responsible pet ownership and dog bite prevention.

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then "animal con-  
trol"*



"ALL IN A DAYS WORK"



## IN MEMORY OF SHIRLEY MCVICKER

On July 8th, 2004 Shirley McVicker passed away after a long battle with cancer. Shirley was the Executive Director for the Animal Welfare League in Charlotte Harbor for 19 years. She retired last October due to health reasons. Shirley was dedicated to her work and was respected and admired by all who knew her. She will be sadly missed.



The CC Animal Control Newsletter is written and edited by Lt. Brian Jones. You can reach him at [Brian.jones@charlottefl.com](mailto:Brian.jones@charlottefl.com) or contact him directly at (941) 764-4325 with any comments or suggestions.