

Wildlife Watch Testimonials

City of Newport Beach

“The program has been an incredible resource to us in the City of Newport Beach. We have been in a season of increased coyote activity since the spring of last year (2015), like most California communities. The city was getting a variety of residents complaining about coyotes and demanding extermination. Knowing the ecological fallacies of an extermination approach to wildlife management, we resisted, but had no alternative to offer beside attractant reduction. Wildlife Watch, with Lt. Kent Smirl and Natural Resource Volunteer Dave Dodge came to our rescue. The program is so simple and based off an existing concept similar to Neighborhood Watch. The idea of educating and empowering people to organize their neighborhoods to address wildlife issues is terrific. It was exactly what we needed to help our residents understand that extermination is not the answer and give them the tools (hazing, attractant removal and communication) to take their neighborhoods back from coyotes.

Kent Smirl and Dave Dodge are tremendous presenters and did a fabulous job presenting to our community meetings. The message and the answer spread quickly through our community. We developed an online coyote sighting reporting and mapping system to allow Wildlife Watch and other residents to communicate and report sightings and animal losses. We developed information door hangers and yard signs to distribute in impacted neighborhoods. We even made ‘coyote whistles’ and logo tote bags to pass out and help with the hazing and program identification process.

The end result is that we have a group of residents throughout the city that have been accurately educated on the behaviors of coyotes and what to do to reduce coyote impacts. We now have a legitimate science-based alternate to extermination. It works! Through the education process, our reported animal losses have been reduced and residents feel more comfortable and empowered to do things about coyotes in their neighborhood.”

– Tom Fischbacher, Lieutenant, Newport Beach Police Department

City of Irvine

“My neighborhood has seen a significant decrease in aggressive coyote encounters over the past year as a result of our Wildlife Watch Program. My neighbors and I have had the good fortune to work closely with a group of very dedicated representatives from the Department of Fish and Wildlife and the Irvine Police Department, who have taught us how to coexist with the wildlife in our community.

Through neighborhood events and newsletters, we have educated our neighbors on small changes we can make to decrease wildlife attractants on our streets, such as removing food sources in our yards and managing trash. We have additionally worked with the city to trim/cut back bushes along our streets where coyotes may hide. Most importantly, we have established a uniform neighborhood wildlife reporting and communication system to ensure coyote activity on our streets is timely reported and accurately tracked.

As an added benefit of the program, we have strengthened our relationships amongst neighbors and with various government agencies. My neighbors and I now feel empowered rather than helpless and have clear direction on how to cohesively move forward in a positive direction.”

– Lana Encheff, Block Captain for Jasper Native Trails Wildlife Watch in Portola Springs, Irvine