

Solutions to living with animals in Tahoe so everyone is happy

By Cheryl Millham

Believe it or not, Tahoe people care about their wildlife.



A good friend of ours has a lot of seasonal neighbors. One of the families leaves in the fall and does not come back until late spring or early summer, so the house is empty and quiet all winter.

Every year, a family of coyotes makes their den under the house. It is a perfect, quiet neighborhood to raise their family. However, on Memorial Day, the humans who own the house came up to Tahoe to start their summer vacation. When they realized the coyotes are living under their house, they panicked. They want them killed.

Our friend (who is also a trained volunteer with LTWC) took it upon herself to harass the coyote mom to move her family out from under the house over to the meadow. People come up to their second home in Tahoe never realizing they share their home with a coyote family who have been there all winter and spring.

Then, we have a few people that just don't seem to care about the life of little birds. I received a call from a lady who panicked because she had a nest with three live Steller's Jays, which were all crying for food with one dead.

As the story goes, two boys decided to have "pet" birds. They took down the nest (I am assuming that their mother either knew nothing about it or did nothing about it). After two days

of feeding them the wrong diet, one of the jays died. (Obviously, the boys were tired of their new toy.) It was at this point that a neighbor decided to take it upon herself to intervene. She took the nest of jays and called LTWC.

I am happy to say the three remaining jays are doing well.

Then, I received a call from a man who found out – the hard way – that there was a mother raccoon living in his chimney on top of the flu. (He thought the raccoon had fallen in.)

His friend got up on the roof and looked down the chimney. Not only was there a one large raccoon, but there were babies also. LTWC gets at least two calls per week with raccoons down chimneys. I think he was a little disappointed. He thought he was the only person with a raccoon down his chimney. I went over with him how to get the mom to take her babies out of his chimney and then how to cap off his stovepipe so this wouldn't happen again.

He said he would do what I told him, but that he didn't think it would work. His friend told him that, "No way would a raccoon be able to climb up and down inside of a chimney, let alone carry the babies out."

After a few more calls – to answer more of his questions – I reassured him it would work and he said he would try.

Well, I got a call the next day. It was the man with the raccoon family in his chimney. He told me it worked. He woke up at 2am to a lot of noise coming from his fireplace. The next morning, they looked down the chimney. No more raccoons.

A happy ending for that family – the raccoons and the humans.

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