

Animal Control reminds citizens to be mindful of foxes

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Leonardtown, MD - St. Mary's County Animal Control wants to remind citizens that foxes are out during the day, especially this time of year. If you see one outside during the day, it's no cause for alarm. They will usually run away from you as soon as they detect your presence. If not, the fox has probably learned to associate people with food (likely because someone has been feeding them), and may exhibit a boldness or even approach you. These foxes can easily be scared away by making loud noises such as yelling or blowing whistles, dousing them with water hoses or squirt guns and throwing objects such as tennis balls toward them.

Here are a few facts to put the presence of foxes in your yard in perspective:

Foxes are not dangerous to humans, except when they are rabid (which is very rare) or when they are captured and handled. Even then, a fox's natural tendency is to flee rather than fight.

Foxes may prey on small pets or livestock (such as rabbits, guinea pigs or chickens), so pets should be kept indoors or housed in sturdy structures.

Foxes will also eat various fruits, but they usually do not bother garden vegetables.

Sometimes foxes are blamed for damage they did not cause, such as when they are spotted eating from spilled trash when neighborhood dogs or other animals were responsible for the overturned trashcan.

A fox cutting through your yard is probably just passing through on their way between hunting areas and no action is necessary on your part.

Before calling to report a fox or ask for assistance, take time to observe the fox's behavior, and look for these signs:

Partial paralysis or the inability to use their limbs well.

Circling or staggering as if drunk.

Self-mutilation.

Acting aggressively for no reason.

Acting unnaturally tame.

If you observe these signs, do not approach the fox—remember exposure to rabies is primarily through bites or saliva. Contact St. Mary's County Animal Control at 301-475-8018 if you see a fox showing the above signs.

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