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Moraga keeps Contra Costa County Animal Services busy

By Vera Kochan

Summary of animal activities and actions in 2017

	Total	Live	Dead
Deer	119	38	81
Bird	43		43
Cat	15	12	3
Dog	14	12	2
Raccoon	12		12
Skunk	7	2	5
Snake	5	5	
Bat	2		2
Opossum	2		2
Coyote	1	1	
Guinea pig	1	1	
Squirrel	1		1

Countywide, Moraga represents 1.6 percent of the Contra Costa County Animal Services' total service area and uses 0.98 percent of the total services provided.

That's a surprisingly low statistic given that wild critter sightings are common in Moraga - whether it be deer, raccoons, skunks, snakes, bats, coyotes and even the less wild variety, guinea pigs. But those are the ones that got away.

Steve Burdo, media and community relations manager for CCAS, delivered an update presentation during the Oct. 24 Moraga Town Council meeting outlining many of the services CCAS provides to the area. According to Burdo, CCAS protects public health and safety by enforcing animal ordinances, uses rabies control measures, runs field patrols and responds to dead animal impounds. The animal services department also encourages and coordinates adoptions and is involved in

the transfer and intake of animals, providing daily care in facilities, including care and treatment of injured animals and spay/neuter surgeries. In addition, CCAS utilizes approximately 250 dedicated volunteers who are a valuable asset in the animal socialization process, offering help with adoption paperwork, counseling future pet owners, providing lost and found duties and assisting with mobile adoptions.

Moraga kept CCAS busy in 2017. There were:

97 Deceased animal impounds

79 Stray animal impounds

46 Noise/animal/inhumane ordinance investigations

87 Human bite investigations (animals biting humans; not humans biting animals)

75 Animal/animal bite investigations

68 Inhumane investigations

33 Noise investigations

65 Other investigations

9 Animal rescues

6 Local agency assists

(with police, fire, code enforcement, etc.)

CCAS response times coincide with priority levels ranging from one to five with Priority 1 having a response time of no more than two hours and Priority 5, five days. Out of 52 dispatches to Moraga, 23 of them ranked Priority 1; two ranked Priority 2 (12 hours) and 27 dispatches were Priority 3 (24 hours). Burdo stressed, "It must be taken into consideration that a crew is dispatched from Martinez. Unless a crew happens to be in the near vicinity of a call, a two hour response time for a Priority 1 is standard for Moraga."

Until the town council adopts a noisy animal ordinance, noise complaints can't be serviced in Moraga. However, on the bright side, a rooster ordinance was passed in 2018, which allows CCAS to investigate and enforce rooster fighting in Contra Costa County.

According to Burdo, "Rising costs are burdening CCAS. We are tasked with balancing life saving endeavors, quality of care and length of stay with an ever increasing volume of animals due to continuous population growth (including pets)." An updated processing system and an increase in staff are necessary to meet the demands.

A \$0.17 rate increase for the fiscal year 2018-19 will raise the per capita costs for Moraga from \$5.94 to

\$6.11, according to the county contract. Most Bay Area cities pay approximately \$8.70 per capita.

CCAS encourages pet adoption from a local shelter and stresses the importance of getting pets licensed and microchipped. In doing so, a lost pet has a better chance of being reunited with its owner.

Volunteers are needed at the Martinez or Pinole Shelter; the public can sign up to take a tour of either facility. The tour includes various aspects of what CCAS does - field work, medical procedures, shelters and adoptions. For answers to any questions call the main phone line at (925) 608-8400 or visit the Contra Costa Animal Services website: ccasd.org.

Reach the reporter at: info@lamorindaweekly.com

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