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Test confirms captured coyote did not have rabies

By Vera Kochan

The coyote that DNA linked to five known attacks on humans in Lafayette and Moraga was captured on March 11 and later euthanized in order to perform a rabies test. The UC Davis veterinary staff performed the test and reported the results to the California Department of Fish and Wildlife on March 17.

"The results are in and are negative, so that's good," stated CDFW's Captain Patrick Foy. "We had to respectfully notify each of the families first which took until the evening. It was a 38-pound male. We're hoping the community has some additional level of relief that rabies was not a factor in the local coyote population."

When asked if Foy had any theories as to why the coyote in question exhibited such bold and aggressive behavior toward its victims, he responded, "Lots of questions about why attacks of this nature occur, especially after taking rabies out of the equation, but we have no way of speculating on the motive of an attacking bear, mountain lion, or coyote in this case, other than engaging in its natural predatory behavior." The Humane Society of the United States confirms that a coyote that doesn't run away from humans has most likely been fed within the area by handouts, pet food left outside, or by gaining access to the contents of garbage cans. "Often, coyote attacks are preventable by modifying human behavior and educating people about ways to prevent habituation."

For more information about coyotes and other animals that share our environment visit: www.keepmewild.org.

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