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Ford's raccoon rant misses target

National advocacy group offers advice to homeowners, Council on raccoons

TORONTO – If there's anything we thought Mayor Rob Ford would understand, it'd be food motivation. That, at least, is the most likely reason for an apparent rise in the number of raccoons across the City of Toronto.

Today, Mayor Ford announced that unless raccoons are attacking children, he won't seek to have them killed – and that's good news. But he's missing the obvious problem – and simple solution – facing Torontonians.

“Raccoons have the same desires as any other animal – including Mayor Ford: food, water, shelter and reproduction,” explains Michael Howie, Ontario spokesperson for The Association for the Protection of Fur-Bearing Animals. “When populations spike – and they naturally do every few years – it's critical to remind residents to keep food attractants like garbage and compost secure from wildlife.”

The City of Toronto does have by-laws regarding availing food to wildlife under property maintenance policies. Raccoons are more visible right now as the juveniles are in search of new homes.

“It's important for residents to learn more about these natural sleuths,” Howie adds. “They're intelligent, social animals that belong in our ecosystems – it's a wonderful learning opportunity for children and adults alike.”

Homeowners concerned about wildlife in their yards should contact a reputable and truly humane wildlife control operator like Gates' AAA Wildlife Control to have their homes wildlife proofed and any animals safely removed.