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Nova Scotia needs to go to summer school on biology

Government policy shows lack of understanding of ecosystems

HALIFAX – Media outlets in Nova Scotia are reporting on all kinds of wildlife issues – from deer munching on crops to raccoons harassing neighbourhoods. And the one thing that every story is missing is likely the key to it all: coyotes.

For years, Nova Scotia has been killing coyotes by the thousands. Today, the animals they will often prey upon – or help control through their very presence – are causing problems.

“It is exceptionally frustrating to us,” says Lesley Fox, Executive Director of The Association for the Protection of Fur-Bearing Animals (APFA). “Science has shown us repeatedly that human interference in nature will cause unknown results. Nova Scotia is experiencing that firsthand. Yet instead of looking at the larger issue of biodiversity and ecosystems, more killing is being considered.”

For every single one of the animals causing perceivable issues for Nova Scotia residents, non-lethal methods are available.

“Feeding by-laws can help prevent raccoons, domestic cats and other small critters from hanging out near households,” Fox says. “Appropriate fencing and use of domestic dogs can keep ungulates at bay. And coyotes can live peacefully in urban and rural settings when co-existence and educational strategies are implemented.

“Continuing to try and manage individual problems without examining the symptoms will only exacerbate the frustration of Nova Scotia residents,” she concludes. “But if we understand biology, ecology and wildlife behaviour, along with a healthy dose of respect, there is no reason why nature and people cannot co-exist.”