



April 24, 2019

Reward offered in strychnine investigation

Non-profit wants to bring poacher and dog killer to justice

KITCHENER, BC – A \$1,000 reward is being offered by a non-profit to identify and convict the person(s) responsible for an act of poaching that has killed a beloved family member and created a threat to domestic and wild animals alike.

The Conservation Officer Service confirmed to media recently that a tail-less raccoon and meat pile found on a trail were laced with strychnine – a poison that creates incredible suffering before killing animals that ingest it.

A beloved family member was likely killed by strychnine poisoning on March 23, when Andrew Stolz went for a run with a friend as well as his dog, Topaz, a German Shepherd who had accompanied Stolz on runs for years. According to media reports, Topaz's back leg seized and she fell. Despite Stolz's best efforts to get aide, Topaz died, suffering an excruciating death in her companion's arms. Another dog was also likely poisoned – but survived thanks to emergency intervention.

“Strychnine is a horrific way for an animal to die, and it is illegal for use in British Columbia,” says Michael Howie, spokesperson for BC-based non-profit The Fur-Bearers, which is offering the reward. “This was poaching. This was a crime that someone committed knowing full well that they would cause suffering to any animal who came ingested the bait. We know the people of British Columbia oppose this – and we hope that this reward will help prompt those in the community come forward with information that will lead to justice for Topaz and any other animals who were inhumanely killed.”

Some media have reported that there are predator killing contest in the area.

“We don't know – and we may never know – if the poison was set out as a part of a predator killing contest,” says Howie. “But we do know that encouraging the unscientific approach of predator killing or culls can increase poaching, as demonstrated by Drs. Guillaume Chapron and Adrian Treves in a 2015 study. Today, however, we want to focus on the fact that someone in this community likely has information that can provide investigators with the leads they need to identify and convict those responsible.”

Anyone with information is asked to contact investigators through the Report All Polluters and Poachers (RAPP) line at 1-877-952-7277.

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The Fur-Bearers is a non-profit that was formed in 1953 to advocate on behalf of fur-bearing animals in the wild and in captivity. They promote community co-existence with wildlife through science-based policy and education.

2015 Chapron and Treves study: http://faculty.nelson.wisc.edu/treves/pubs/Chapron_Treves.pdf

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