

# The Critter Chronicle

## FALL, 2017

A quarterly newsletter designed to provide you with information on best practices for coexisting with urban wildlife in Old Agoura!



### What's the "I Wish" and the "Why" behind the newsletter?

Hi neighbor! I'm Carolyn Trocino, member of the Old Agoura Homeowner Board and a 14-year, Old Agoura resident. The "I Wish" is for tips I wish I knew when I moved to Old Agoura. The "Why" is for the desire to share ideas and learn from you and other neighbors about coexisting with our urban wildlife.

### In this newsletter:

- ◆ Best practices in chicken coop construction and chicken management
- ◆ The "scoop" on SNAKES
- ◆ Living with coyotes



### Join us Oct. 8th

#### Coexist With Urban Wildlife Event

**When?** October 8, 2017 from 4:00 to 6:00

**Where?** Agoura Bible Fellowship, 5564 Foothill Drive, Agoura Hills

**Speaker?** Cathy Schoonmaker, Urban Wildlife Specialist with the National Park Service in partnership with the Santa Monica Mountains Fund

**RSVP via our website:**

<https://www.oldagoura.org>



# Chickens

Every time I go running up Fairview Place, I find myself turning “green” with envy over one of the finest chicken coops I’ve ever seen!

The Kornreich family knows how to care for their chickens. If you are thinking of getting chickens and you have questions about predator proofing your coop, Dale has graciously volunteered to help you out.



**I spoke to Dale about best practices regarding chicken coops and chicken management.**

## **What I learned:**

- ◆ Install high fencing (six feet or higher) and wire mesh on the fencing to deter wildlife from entering your property
- ◆ Hardware cloth wire mesh 1/4 inch is a good protective wire choice for coops
- ◆ Seal up small openings to keep small birds, rats, and snakes out of your coop
- ◆ Predators like to dig and it is important to ensure protective wire is extended 18 inches underground
- ◆ It is important for chickens to have ample room in a covered and secured run
- ◆ Double-lock your coop for added protection
- ◆ Separate Bantam chickens and larger chicken breeds
- ◆ It doesn't hurt to have three beautiful Siberian huskies guarding your property (Kodiak, Kiera, and Kiana)
- ◆ Sometimes feather loss is a result of a lack of protein and you can mitigate issues by feeding your chickens meal worms
- ◆ Cover your coops so you do not have to worry about raptors (hawks) attacking your chickens
- ◆ Free-range chickens are easy prey for the diurnal coyote



Helpful links:

<http://www.mypetchicken.com>

<http://www.greenchickencoop.com>



# Snakes

Our Neighbor, Dale Kornreich is extremely knowledgeable about the snakes in our area. He is happy to help you relocate your snakes. If you live in Old Agoura and need assistance with the relocation of a snake or you have questions on a particular type of snake, contact Dale.



I took this picture of a snake in my backyard. This is a **California Kingsnake**. These snakes are non-venomous snakes and they eat rattlesnakes and rodents.



Sherry Mangel-Ferber, a tireless advocate for our area wildlife and a resident of Liberty Canyon, provided me with a picture of a non-venomous **Gopher Snake**.



A non-venomous **Garter Snake** picture courtesy of the National Park Service.



A **Rattlesnake** picture courtesy of the National Park Service.

## Why Snakes Matter....

If you want a **natural way to control rodent populations**, leave snakes alone.

**Inform your gardeners** about the different types of snakes so they are aware of venomous and non-venomous snakes. Bird seed attracts rodents that attract snakes. **Snakes are shy** and will usually move on if you leave them alone.

For more information, visit the **Santa Monica Mountains Nature Neighbor Project** site:

<http://www.nps.gov/samo/learn/management/nature-neighbor-project.htm>.

# Coyotes



I thought the Critter Chronicle would not be complete without a page devoted to our area song dog.

One of the things I've experienced is coyote visits increase when there is a food source and decrease when that food source disappears.

I have several wildlife cameras and I've noticed coyotes out during the day and the evening. Due to this behavior, **it is never safe to leave small children, small dogs, or cats unsupervised in backyards.** It is also important to **pick up your small dog** when you are walking your dog and see a coyote. Carry a whistle with you and learn techniques on coyote hazing.

Did you know coyotes are omnivores? They will visit your open compost piles and consume fruits from trees (especially figs and date palms). Fruit is a tasty food source for coyotes.

I mentioned the song dog. When you hear coyotes vocalizing at night, they are often in a conversation with other coyotes. It doesn't indicate they've killed an animal. When it sounds like there are a lot of coyotes, it could just be a few coyotes.

Coyotes are part of our community. They are important for controlling rodent populations. They are often seen in "families" and their denning season is from February to June. **It is advised to never feed a coyote!!!**

**Coyote Questions? Here's some great resources!**

**Project Coyote:** <http://www.projectcoyote.org/>

**California Wildlife Center:** <http://cawildlife.org/>



## Got ideas?

I'd love to hear about them! Please send me a message via

<http://www.coexistwithwildlife.com/>

We can work together at creating an environment where we can peacefully coexist with urban wildlife!

**Carolyn Trocino, Director of Urban Wildlife Education and Communication, Old Agoura Homeowners**

