

## DECEMBER 1 - 14, 2018 NATURAL HISTORY NOTES

By Dick Harlow

### **BLOOD ON A GARAGE DOOR**



**(1) Two-car garage door. Blood center and about 2.5-3 feet on the door.** © Dick Harlow



**(2) Close-up of the blood stain!**  
© Dick Harlow

### **Wildlife Murder Mystery**

**Context:** The EastView community (established in 2010-2011) is in open field and very near Otter Creek. This wildlife "murder" occurred within the confines of this retirement community. There are two settling ponds on this property. All plantings on the property are between 1 to 8 years old. There are NO free roaming domestic dogs or cats. All pets must be on a leash when taken outside. There is very little to no outside activity or human roaming at night as well as no or very little vehicle traffic within the confines of the community either day or night.

The community is made up of an Inn with apartments and free-standing cottages. It is located at the edge of a suburban town and on the border of rural meadow/farmland that abuts the property.

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The wildlife seen visibly, heard, or specific tracks observed adjacent to or within the confines of the EastView property are several. In addition to diurnal and nocturnal birds, some of the mammals are: coywolf, red and gray fox, raccoons, skunk, weasel, deer, voles, mice, rabbit, squirrel, muskrat.

**Picture #1** shows a double garage door with a blood stain in the middle about 2.5 to 3 feet up on the door. An up-close look at the stain showed a few strands of mammal hair. A cropped image of the stain is **picture #2**.

To the left of this garage door is another double garage door. Adjacent to the second garage door there is another cottage with a front entrance. In that entryway there is a white two-person bench that also has a blood stain on the back of one of the slats of the bench, see **picture #3**.



**(3) Blood stain on back of bench in adjoining neighbor.** © Dick Harlow

### Sunday, December 2, 2018

**Weather:** Cloudy, temperature in the 40's coming down from the 50's with the prediction of rain early following morning.

**Events:** Neighbor heard a loud crash against her garage door, but nothing after that. Her pet dog, who otherwise, goes out regularly to do her business before bedtime, did not want to go outside for her nightly routine.

The next-door neighbor heard a crash at their front door. They came to the door and noticed their bench was turned upside down with a blood stain on the back of it. **(See picture #3)** As well, they noticed a small blood stain on the opposite wall to where the bench was facing, but they did not see any animal and therefore, could not figure out what could have caused their bench to turn upside down and the blood stain on the back of it.

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That night I heard a coywolf just outside my bathroom window. It was not howling but making sounds not consistent with what I have heard a coyote make; consequently, why I felt it was a coywolf.



**(4) Coywolf**, © Jonathan G. Way  
Research Scientist, Clark University

**Picture (4).** This picture is of a Coywolf. Notice the heavy coat, wolf-like size and facial features as well as its heavy coat and dark coat markings mixed with colors found on coyotes, unlike the rather constant yellowish tan coat color found on a true coyote. The following quoted paragraph suggests the animal has been called many different names. However, there is no current published genetic evidence that this animal contains the DNA of a dog.

“There is considerable debate and disagreement among scientists over what to call a canid inhabiting the northeastern United States. In the course of this creature’s less than 100-year history, it has been variously called coyote, eastern coyote, coydog, Tweed wolf, brush wolf, new wolf, northeastern coyote and now coywolf, with [nature documentaries highlighting recent genetic findings.](#)”

It should also be noted that three cottages down from us those neighbors within the week saw a Coywolf early one morning, walk across their patio.

This episode that happened is certainly a mystery, but there are a few salient facts that can help in analyzing what might have happened; and, although we will never know exactly without actual visual sightings, our guess might be close.

Whatever caused the first crash against the garage door and the second crash turning the neighbor’s bench upside down had to be an animal of some weight. Since this happened in the evening, we can remove diurnal hawks from a list of possible culprits. We can also remove nocturnal owls since it is unlikely that they have the force necessary to make such a loud noise against a garage door or turn over a two-person bench.

The blood with a few strands of mammal hair on the garage door suggests the prey (guessing) could have been a rodent such as a rabbit, but we really don’t know.

The only evidence we have is what people heard and observed - noise and blood stains. Everything else is guess work.

The fact that Zoe, a standard poodle, did not want to venture outside that night suggests she heard and smelled danger, unlikely an owl, but more likely a Coywolf.

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**(5) Eastern Coywolf** © Unknown, internet picture.

Coywolves tend to hunt together or in close proximity to each other. I have not found evidence that when hunting around human habitation, they let their presence be known by barking, howling or for that matter make any noticeable sound. If one finds a prey item, kills it, the other coywolf could show some form of competitiveness for that meal without making too much fuss about it.

At least that is my guess! Two coywolves vying over one kill that caused the ruckus and blood stains.

## **OBSERVATIONS**

### **MAMMALS**

Coywolf calling.  
Gray Squirrel

### **Weather Tidbits**

**Month of DECEMBER 1-14, 2017**

*All Measurements taken at solar noon (1230 EST).*

### **PRECIPITATION**

**Total Precipitation: 23.8 mm or 0.94 inches**

**Overcast Days: 5**