



THE ASSOCIATION FOR THE  
**PROTECTION**  
of Fur-Bearing Animals

179 W. Broadway  
Vancouver, BC, Canada V5Y 1P4

Telephone: 604-435-1850  
Fax: 604-435-1840

[fd@furbearerdefenders.com](mailto:fd@furbearerdefenders.com)  
[furbearerdefenders.com](http://furbearerdefenders.com)

---

*December 21, 2015*

## **Open letter: if you can't change wildlife behaviour, change your own**

Dear Councillor Meyers,

We read with interest your concerns regarding coyotes and bears in your ward of Sault Ste. Marie today. It is admirable that you are speaking out on behalf of your residents, and looking for assistance to a situation that is clearly causing concern. We would, however, recommend looking at the situation in your community through a different lens.

Bears and coyotes are common animals in Ontario, particularly in Northern Ontario, where larger amounts of land and resources are available. An unusual congregation of any wildlife in a single area is not indicative of a problem with wildlife; it is indicative of a problem with the environment.

In many similar situations, The Fur-Bearers, other non-profits, government employees, and even scholars, have found that food sources are to blame for increased sightings of wildlife of many species. It is highly possible, and quite likely, that at least one individual in the neighbourhood with increased sightings is directly or indirectly feeding coyotes.

Overfilled bird feeders, for example, will attract rodents, and rodents will attract coyotes. Alternatively, unsecured waste or compost, outdoor feeding of pets, or direct feeding of wildlife can attract animals such as coyotes.

While looking to the Ministry of Natural Resources to live trap and remove animals from a neighbourhood may appear to be a solution, it is a bandage at best; without removing the cause of the behaviour, the behaviour will resume.

We strongly recommend working with your colleagues on council to develop and/or implement wildlife feeding by-laws and an appropriate reporting system to determine the cause of the behaviour you find undesirable. This is a long-term solution to preventing conflict that will ensure that all of your constituents – taxpayers and wildlife alike – can have a happy holiday.

With warmest regards,

Michael Howie

Spokesperson, The Association for the Protection of Fur-Bearing Animals (The Fur-Bearers)

[www.TheFurBearers.com](http://www.TheFurBearers.com)

---