



“Protecting Yourself from Wildlife”

Part Two of Two

(In case you missed it, you can read part one of this article on my website in the North Georgia News Articles section.)

Protecting yourself from a possible attack by a wolf or coyote would be basically the same as if being attacked by a vicious domestic dog. You would for one not look them square in the eye, this may be their interpretation of a challenge. Be as calm as you can possibly be and walk slowly away. If the canine is continuing to follow you, make sure you have something in your hand to protect yourself, like a stick, large rock, etc... Hopefully a shelter is nearby (your car, or a building), that you can quickly get into and away from the canine. In the event an attack happens, the best thing to do is of course fight back with all your strength, hitting them with anything that you can, and yelling the entire time at the top of your lungs. By yelling you may frighten them away, and this will also draw attention to you hopefully by a nearby hiker, or family member. After the canine has left, call 911 immediately and report the vicious animal, and if you have been injured, tell them you need medical attention, and your location. It is rare in this part of the country that someone is attacked by a coyote or wolf, but the knowledge of what to do in the event of an attack is the difference between life and death.

In a recent article I wrote about donkey's living in the North Georgia area. I had wondered what the purpose of having so many around here was, other than them just looking extremely picturesque on the roadside. I was contacted via email by several people including: *Carol Demme, Kathy Berkes, and Bob Ramay, among*

others, who own these beautiful animals in this area, and was told of how they protect the young cows from attacks by coyotes and wolves.

Using a donkey as a guard animal is no different than a security guard, in that in order to provide protection they must both be in the right place at the right time. The more time guard donkey's are with the herd of cattle or flock of sheep the more likely it will be present when needed. The donkey's herding instinct combined with its dislike and aggressiveness towards coyotes and problematic domestic dogs can make it an effective livestock guard animal...if managed properly.

Donkeys rely predominantly on sight and sound to detect intruders. When approached, sheep will tend to move so the guard animal is between the intruder and themselves. The donkeys' loud brays and quick pursuit will scare away predators and may also alert the farm owner. In most instances donkeys will confront



and chase dogs or coyotes out of the pasture. If the canines do not retreat quickly the donkeys will attack them by rising up on their hind legs and striking with both front feet. A solid blow can injure, kill or, at the very least, discourage the predator. They may also offer some protection from foxes and bobcats. However, larger predators such as mountain lions, grey wolves and black bears may prey on donkeys. Donkeys are compatible with most traditional methods of predator control and can be used in an integrated predator management program. Additionally, donkeys can forage with sheep or goats, are inexpensive to acquire and maintain, and have an expected useful life of 10 to 15 years as guard animals.

Now, a diversion away from the four-legged creatures that live in our area, to those without legs-snakes. Among the snakes that live among us are

the: Copperhead, Canebrake or Timber Rattlesnake, Eastern Diamondback Rattlesnake, Pigmy Rattlesnake, Cottonmouth (Water Moccasin), and the Eastern Coral Snake. As I have discovered first hand since moving here, the most common of these is the Copperhead. Last summer my dog Gollum was barking persistently at something under my deck, after close investigation I saw that there was a four foot Copperhead caught in deer mesh that I had put under there to keep my dog out. Little did I know a snake can get caught up in it. So I grabbed a garden rake with a handle that didn't seem long enough, and pulled the snake out. Knowing it was a Copperhead, I decided to make it where it was no longer a threat to me, or Gollum, and (I won't go into the details...).

Protecting yourself from a snake bite is fairly simple. If you are working in brush or a wood pile, or taking a hike, the best protection is boot guards, or tall working boots, long pants and gloves. Snakes are normally very skittish, and will usually slither away. Most snake bites occur when a human comes too close to one, by walking past it on a hiking trail, stepping on one when walking in a field, overturning rocks and debris, or sleeping in a tent. If you are bitten by a snake that you believe may be venomous:

-Call for emergency assistance immediately

-Wash the bite with soap and water.

-Immobilize the bitten area and keep it lower than the heart.

-Cover the area with a clean, cool compress or a moist dressing to minimize swelling and discomfort.

-Monitor vital signs.

-If you are unable to reach medical care within 30 minutes, the American Red Cross recommends:

-Apply a bandage, wrapped two to four inches above the bite, to help slow the venom. This should not cut off the flow of blood from a vein or artery - the band should be loose enough to slip a finger under it.

On a lighter note; this is a wonderfully, beautiful area that we are blessed to live in, and living in harmony with the creatures that we share it with will make living here more of a pleasurable experience.