



Living with Nature in Somerset

Howling Coyotes and Solar Eclipses

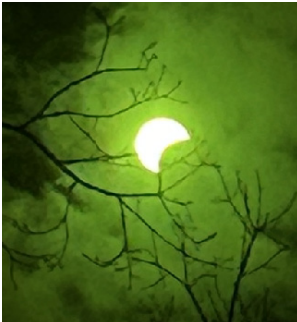


Photo Credit: Sabrina Rubenstein, Dorset

Two major events happened in Town this month. There was a sighting of a white coyote (forgive my poetic license, I'm not sure whether it was howling) and a nearly complete (80%) solar eclipse. Many of our residents were out of town with family and friends at a location somewhere between Texas and Maine, witnessing the eclipse in totality. I remember our last one seven years ago in Somerset, with multiple images of the eclipse all over the sidewalk below a tree – still perplexed how that happened.



Photo Credit: Bruce Tully, Warwick

Resident **Sarah Morse's** (Dorset) community listserv continues to report amazing wild animals that continue to live happily in our Town, despite a recent

raccoon that apparently was sick and sleeping near a Town sidewalk. Seeing a coyote is certainly a rare event, as this animal is nocturnal and evasive. My belief is that the presence of coyotes is a sign of a healthy habitat for many creatures, all along the entire food chain.

Nature that Invades our Private Spaces

There are also a fair number of posts on the community listserv about creatures that are invading our private spaces. Even the most focused environmentalists don't want mice running around the kitchen, ant armies marching along the counters, or carpenter bees boring holes into the siding of our homes. I must say we have a lot of carpenter bees around our home. I love the way they come near you for a few seconds and then dart off.

Presenters at our recent Compost and Bee Education Town Forum of April 11 (see <https://youtu.be/65J152JNWfM>) discussed how healthy bee communities typically leave their hive and create large and noisy swarms that land on porch chairs or other odd places, where they then launch to other locations, seeking to find a new potential home. These bees are engorged with food in preparation for this "scouting adventure" and are completely harmless. But Montgomery County Beekeeper Maureen Jais-Mick explained in the Forum that if you find a swarm, please contact montgomerycountybeekeepers.com, choose "report swarm," and a beekeeper will come promptly to remove the swarm and find a proper home for the bees.

In general, I am greatly appreciative of our community listserv, created and managed by rockstar environmentalist Sarah Morse, because it allows our neighbors to discuss all sorts of issues, including woodpeckers, homes that have too many night lights which is not good for the bird and animal population (if you need garden lights, at least consider turning them off when you are sleeping, i.e., 11:00 p.m. – 8:00 a.m.), and stormwater issues, to name a few.

The main thing is that we are sharing stories and discussing solutions to each others' issues — this is how a healthy town thrives!

Please let us know if you have any questions or sustainable ideas for the Town at tos.environmentcommittee@gmail.com.