

# Raccoons attack and kill another Richmond pet

BY ALAN CAMPBELL, POSTMEDIA NEWS JULY 18, 2011



Nicole Thibeault warns neighbours in west Richmond's Springmont area of yet another cat killing by raccoons.

**Photograph by:** Chung Chow, Richmond News

METRO VANCOUVER -- The owner of a dead cat is posting warning notices in her Richmond neighbourhood after raccoons dragged away her family pet of 17 years.

Nicole Thibeault tried to cast aside the grief of losing Kokanee, her family's Siamese cat, to publish the posters in her mom's West Richmond neighbourhood on Monday.

A little more than 24 hours earlier, her mom, Wendy, was woken Sunday about 5:30 a.m. to the sound of Kokanee screaming outside the Springthorne Crescent home.

When she went out to investigate, she was confronted by the image of her "best friend" being attacked under their car by two raccoons.

"She sprayed the raccoons with water from the hose, but they just took the cat and ran off," said Nicole.

"Now we can't even find his body. He was our family pet for 17 years.

"We're all devastated. He's been with us through everything. My mom has lost her best friend."

Nicole felt compelled to warn people after reading in the *Richmond News* last week about a similar attack in Richmond, when a pack of raccoons were spotted in an apparent feeding frenzy on a cat they had killed.

She's worried that other family pets or even small children are at risk.

“I’d really like to tell people around Richmond that there are raccoons out there capable of doing this, and they should really look after their pets at night,” she said.

“Our other cat is now on a leash and I’m also worried about small children so I’m putting up posters to warn people to be very careful.

“I don’t know if it’s possible that they will attack people, but who knows.”

Yolanda Brooks, spokeswoman for the Wildlife Rescue Association of BC, said instances of raccoons actually hunting down cats are very rare.

“Most of the experience that we have is that raccoons and cats co-exist without too much trouble,” said Brooks.

“If the cat has wandered into or near the raccoons’ den, then there might be a problem.

“But if there are raccoons eating cats, that would be pretty rare.”

Cats are much more in danger from coyotes than raccoons, said Brooks. “In terms of them actually hunting cats, that’s not something we’ve heard of too much.”

Brooks did, however, acknowledge that raccoons do eat meat as well as other food scraps.

“They’ll basically eat what’s available, but that’s usually garbage,” she added.

“We usually tell people to think about keeping your cats in as much as possible at night for their protection and for that of the birds that cats hunt.”

People are usually only at risk from raccoons if they stumble across their nest when there are babies to protect or if they’re startled, said Brooks.

“What I would say is for people not to feed raccoons. They will keep coming back and then they’ll expect other people to feed them also.”