

Bobcats still prowling Las Cruces neighborhoods (3:22 p.m.)

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LAS CRUCES - A thirsty bobcat stopped by a home off of East Lohman Avenue on Tuesday evening.

Carmen Call, who lives on Canyon Point Road, said she was watching television between 7:30 and 8 p.m., when she looked outside and saw a large cat stretched out on her garden wall.

"I've seen roadrunners and quails and rabbits, but this is the first time I've seen one of those," Call said.

She grabbed her iPhone and watched as the bobcat jumped down from the wall and walked across the grass to a water-filled birdbath about 2 feet off the ground. The bobcat, on its hind legs, lapped water for a minute or so, and when finished, jumped onto Call's backyard wall and then into the surrounding desert.

"I did get a little afraid," Call said, but she did manage to capture a couple of photos with her iPhone.

"I don't have animals or a little kids. I would be concerned if I did," she said.

Richard McDonald, district wildlife officer for the Las Cruces Game & Fish office, said it's not unusual for bobcats to visit homes on the outskirts of town.

"There's been a slight increase due to the drought conditions," he said.

This is the third such case of a big cat in town the Sun-News has reported this year.

In late May, a bobcat visited the residence of New Mexico State University President Barbara Couture. She lives on the eastern edge of campus, which is in the foothills of the Organ Mountains.

Also, a mountain lion - much less likely to come into town than a bobcat, according to McDonald - was spotted in the backyard of a home on the 1800 block of Salinas Drive in early July.

Dan Williams, spokesman for New Mexico Game & Fish, said bobcats and mountain lions, both of which are native to the Organ Mountains, rarely pose a threat to humans.

"Don't leave food sources out in your yard, bring your pets in at dusk and if you see one, let them go on their merry way," Williams advised.

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What to do if you come in contact with large wildlife animals

- Stay calm. Pick up any small children and tell them to remain calm.
- Talk calmly and firmly to the animal.
- Back away slowly. Never turn your back to the animal.
- Never turn and run, it can trigger the instinct of the animal to attack.
- Look as large as you possibly can. Raise your arms or open your jacket if you're wearing one.
- If the animal continues to approach you, throw rocks or sticks and yell in a firm tone.
- If the animal attacks, try to remain upright and fight it off with anything you have rocks, sticks, backpack, etc.