

Tucson Citizen

Critters' attacks on pets increasing

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An emergency room veterinarian sees an increase in wild animal attacks on pets, something she attributes to southern Arizona's drought bringing wild animals into the fringes of urban Tucson.

Meegan Stapleton, DVM, with the Veterinary Specialty Center of Tucson, 4909 N. La Cañada Drive, said the center usually gets three to five pets a week that have been attacked by wild animals.

Stapleton said she now is seeing a case each day.

Last weekend, the center got a 55-pound mixed-breed pit bull that had been attacked in its fenced yard by a javelina and a 60-pound Doberman pinscher that was attacked by coyotes while being walked off its leash in a rural area, Stapleton said. Both animals are recovering.

She said dry weather has brought hungry, thirsty wild animals in from the desert. Mick Sherwood, a meteorologist with the National Weather Service, agreed Tucson has been dry, but he believes booming development, at least on the far Northwest Side, where he lives, is displacing wild animals and forcing them into more developed areas. Sherwood said that since Oct. 1, the beginning of the Weather Service's "water year," there has been only 0.73 inch of rain here. Normal rainfall is 5.62 inches.