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Feral Dog Packs: A Rising Epidemic for this Nation

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On July 23, 2012 @ 5:26 pm

Category: Featured, Health and Safety, Preparedness, Preparedness Mindset

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After Hurricane Ike decimated New Orleans and parts of east Texas, many found themselves dealing with a completely different crisis – feral dog packs. Because many evacuees could not take their pets along with them, they were either released or the dogs ran away. As nature would have it, there is power in numbers and in this case, it was a dangerous group to reckon with. Waiting for animal control to step in and take control, many pedestrians and those waiting at bus stops feared that they would be the next victim.

Wild or feral dogs are not only an issue in post-disaster situations, they are already a large concern in urban areas. No doubt many of

you have read countless news headlines of dog attacks that have taken place throughout the country.

Rural areas are also experiencing an increase in dog attacks – especially those who own livestock. Rather than taking the dog to an adoption center, owners will take their dogs out in the country and release them to “give them a chance” at living. This is the worst thing to do for them and if the dog “packs up”, it also endangers the families in the surrounding area.

Feral Dog Packs Will Pose a Problem in Long-Term Disasters

For those preparing for long-term disasters, feral dogs will be a concern that you may not have considered. When household food supplies are depleted and families can no longer care for their pets, there will be an increase in released pets and this could quickly become a feral dog epidemic. These packs can also intermingle with coyotes and be quite dangerous not only to livestock, but to anyone who crosses their path. Of course, it helps to have a dog of your own to protect the home, but one dog can easily become out numbered defending its home or owner.

Another problematic issue during a long-term crisis is when game dwindles, these animals will have less food to eat and begin searching for other sources. Hungry and desperate, the once beloved Fido has the capacity to become crazed and will no longer be afraid of man or fire. Chances are, if you don't normally spend time in the woods, and with these critters, your scent, as well the smell of fear, makes you an easy target.

How Does One Prepare For This Potential Threat?

1. **Be aware of the prototypical feral dog characteristics.** If dogs manage to live long enough to breed in the wild, successive generations lose their purebred

characteristics and take on the looks of the prototype feral dog: medium-length hair, medium build, pointed ears, curled tail with a white tail.

2. **Understand the attack behavior, and be ready for it.** What does a cat or a bear do under attack? It stalks its prey, narrows its eyes putting full focus on the challenge, ears back, and as large as he can appear, even like dogs that flare their fur. He growls in the deepest part of his vocal cords bearing his teeth. What does prey do, wide eyes, cower, tuck their tail, scream, head down.
3. **Stay inside during their feeding times.** Wild animals typically feed at sunrise and at sunset. A good rule of thumb is to be inside during these times, or if you must venture outside, carry a weapon and walk with another person who is also carrying a weapon. There will be times when you are left with no other option but to defend yourself. Having a rifle or cross bow handy can lay out some of these feral animals and hopefully frighten the rest away. A cattle prod or knife/spear will all do a lot of damage. However, the cattle prod and knife are close attack fighting weapons, and your chances at injury become greater.
4. **Beware of feral packs in your area.** If you hear of dog packs roaming a certain area, take caution.
5. **Keep these wild animals away from you and your property.** Wild dogs, and other animals for that matter carry ticks, fleas and other parasites. As we have seen throughout history, these parasitic creatures can cause diseases, [epidemics and pandemics](#) ^[1]. We all know that the Bubonic plague was caused from infected fleas on rats. Therefore, keep your distance and protect your property.

It is difficult to fully prepare for all aspects of an emergency. We want our animals safe during emergencies and in times of crisis. The only way to fully prepare is to understand what threats exist. Feral dogs will be an issue during poor economic situations and during natural disasters. Prepare accordingly for this issue and understand the mannerisms of a feral dog, attack behavior and feeding habits.

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