



**COMMUNICATION SERVICES**

The Witness, 30 March 2015, Page 04

MARCH 30, 2015

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Animal health technician Ginette Mitchell (left) checks on German shepherds Bella and Magnum with owners Joanne and Kayleigh (6) Smithers after their encounter with a jackal on Friday night. **PHOTO: IAN CARBUTT**

## ‘Rabid’ jackal terrorising residents of Howick

**AMIL UMRAW**

HOWICK residents have been urged to steer clear of what seems to be a rabid jackal that attacked a resident and a dog last week.

The jackal has been the talk of Howick, as the straying animal has left people questioning the safety of their pets as well as themselves.

One Howick homeowner, who asked not to be named, had to be taken to hospital on Friday after the jackal entered her home and bit her arm when she tried to chase it out.

The resident said she was sitting on the veranda with her family when “it ran around the corner of the house and went straight into the kitchen.”

The panicked resident rushed into her home to save one of her dogs before she was bitten.

“I opened the front door so it could run out in the opposite direction from where we all were and I asked my sister-in-law to close the veranda door,” she said.

According to her, the jackal was running around the house, through all the rooms, before returning to the kitchen.

“I tried to chase it through the front door and it jumped up and bit me on the forearm.”

The “anxious” resident had to be taken to the Howick Hospital for tetanus and rabies injections.

Another Howick resident, Joanne Smithers, said her family was asleep just before midnight on Friday when she heard her dogs whimpering outside.

Smithers’s four German shepherds were spotted from the window hurtling into her veranda with the jackal close on

their tails.

According to her, the jackal attacked one of her dogs before scurrying through the bars of the electric fence that surrounds the home.

“We initially thought we were being burgled, but when we saw the animal, we first thought it was a Cape Fox, but it was extremely wild. The dogs are still shaken up,” Smithers said.

“I think other residents should know that the jackal is able to slip through electric fences.”

According to FreeMe’s Roz Marais, jackals are timid animals and it is very unusual for them to enter suburbs, let alone homes.

“For it to be aggressive and attack dogs is also unusual. There are lots of jackals on farms surrounding Howick, but they usually keep away from towns.”

She said there has been a drive to inoculate all dogs for rabies since a rabid jackal was found near Nottingham Road three weeks ago. However, it is unclear whether the jackal terrorising Howick residents is infected with rabies.

“We can only determine whether it is rabid once it is caught, but the problem is that any mammal that comes into contact with it, if it has rabies, could get infected,” Marais said.

Marais urged all residents to keep clear of the jackal and call the police, a vet, the SPCA or FreeMe instead.

“Residents should also report if their animals are behaving strangely and not come into contact with them if they are. Once it’s in the jackal population, [rabies] can spread fast to other animals,” Marais added.

FreeMe can be contacted on 033 330 3036.