

This is KPTZ 91.9 FM in Port Townsend Washington. I'm Ann Katzenbach with local news and commentary for today, February 9, 2023.

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White-tailed deer are everywhere in the United States. Those of us who live with them from day to day in our yards, on our sidewalks, roads and parks, are all too familiar with their habits, most of which are destructive or dangerous. But they are cute and they are living creatures and they are tolerated. The city hopes to figure out a way to make them go away, but no date has been set and no strategy devised as yet.

Now, according to the *New York Times*, there is a serious concern about these creatures. A study published in the Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences (PNAS) provides strong evidence of extensive COVID-19 infection of white-tailed deer, resulting from multiple spillovers from humans, followed by efficient deer-to-deer transmission. This finding has important implications for the ecology and long-term persistence and evolution of the virus, including the potential for spillover back to humans. Scientists are not sure how people are passing the virus to deer, but they have speculated that it might happen when people feed deer or deer encounter human trash or waste, both reasons for us to keep clear of our resident deer and use trash containers.

The fear is that these old corona viruses, now almost extinct in the human population, will mutate in the deer population and be passed back to humans. It also raises the possibility that the virus might evolve in ways that pose a greater risk to all wild animals. It could become an animal health problem. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommend that deer hunters wear masks when handling game, and wash their hands thoroughly afterwards.

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In other wildlife news, a female coyote wandered into Jefferson Healthcare Medical Center on Tuesday morning and broke through a window trying to escape. According to the *Leader*, she then tried to hide in a corner of the outdoor courtyard where she was spotted by Amy Yaley, the hospital's marketing and communications director. Deputies were called in, the coyote was captured with a net and sedated and taken to Center Valley Rescue. According to Erik Allen, the Animal Control Deputy, told me the coyote had a cut on her snout and a scrape on her head. When she is deemed fit, this wiley coyote will be released back into the wild. Allen said he believes this is the first time that a coyote has wandered into a populated building.

Personally, I have a fond memory of a Tucson Arizona news story featuring a coyote pup who was found taking a nap in the first level of the grocery store's beer cooler on a very hot summer day.

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The Olympic Coast National Marine Sanctuary is one of the nation's most treasured ocean areas, and home to a rich abundance of marine mammals, seabirds, fish, and thriving invertebrate communities, stretching from Neah Bay to the mouth of the Copalis River. It's a bit of a drive from Port Townsend, and few people are even aware of its existence because it's woven through tribal lands and it's just shoreline and ocean. But it provides oceanic and coastal environment important to the survival of several species of fish, birds, and marine mammals. It is also a source of economic, recreational, and cultural significance for the surrounding communities.

NOAH, the government agency that directs the nation's marine sanctuaries, is updating its management plan that was laid out in 2011. The ensuing years have changed many aspects of the marine environment and there are new priorities. There will be a series of public meetings this month to get input from agencies and the public. The closest public meeting to Port Townsend is in Port Angeles on February 24 at Peninsula College

from 5-8pm. Learn more at the two sites listed on our news transcript at KPTZ.org local news. Check them out. We do share a Olympic Peninsula as this amazing sanctuary.

(<https://sanctuaries.noaa.gov/science/condition/ocnms/>)

(<https://olympiccoast.noaa.gov/management/mpr/>)

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Friends of the Library is planning a Valentine event at the Port Townsend Library with an open house on Monday, February 12. “Fall in love with your library” will offer live music, Valentine crafts, and light refreshment from 3-5pm. What’s not to love about a library?

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And that's it for today's news. KPTZ, 91.9 FM brings you local news at noon and 5pm Monday through Friday and at noon on Saturday. You can reach us at [news@kptz.org](mailto:news@kptz.org).