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Swindon Advertiser

Lydiard Park swan savaged to death by dog

LYDIARD Park's only swan was torn to pieces by a greyhound while its owner held the dog's muzzle in her hand.

The bird was so badly savaged that it had to be put down by a vet.

It tried desperately to take flight to escape the dog but it couldn't get into the park's lake because it was fenced off.

The greyhound trapped the swan against the fence while its owner casually strolled over to call it off according to witnesses.

The dog, which wasn't on a lead, mauled the bird with its owner holding its muzzle and lead in her hand some distance away.

The Cotswolds Swan & Wild Bird Rescue service was called out to try and save the wounded bird.

The group's manager, Paul Richardson, believes such attacks should be reported to the police. But a spokesman for Wiltshire Police has confirmed that they have received no report of the incident.

Mr Richardson said: "By right when they are on a public footpath, the dog should be on a lead.

"When a dog does this damage, the owner should be paying the expenses.

"I recommend it should be reported to the police."

He said it was a pity that the bird died as it was a healthy, mature cobb and it was the only swan in the park.

"It (the dog) took a chunk out and ripped out its insides. Because the main air sack was punctured, it was in such a bad way that it couldn't be saved," he said.

"It was dead in seconds. It is such a shame as it was a nice mature male."

Swindon Council, which runs the park, confirmed that the attack took place and said it was investigating the incident. But a council spokeswoman said it was too early to say if a prosecution would take place.

"The owner of the dog had a lead and muzzle, neither of which were in use at the time of the attack," said a spokeswoman from the council.

Penhill councillor David Glaholm, who put forward a motion at last month's full council meeting calling for dogs to be kept on leashes in all public places, said it was "obvious that the dog was out of control."

He said: "I will seek advice on whether the owner should be prosecuted.

"Where children and dogs are in the same area, the animals should be on leads," he said.

Deborah and Thomas Selby, who saw the attack when they were walking their own dog, are enraged because the greyhound's owner did not show any urgency to restrain the animal.

Mr Selby said: "I'm annoyed about it. If she'd run down and restrained the dog the swan would be alive now."

Mr Selby said: "I think she should be prosecuted. The swan wasn't a little child, but it could have been.

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