

POLICY and RECOMMENDED BEST PRACTICES for INTERACTING WITH WILDLIFE

Wildlife can provide significant ecological benefits in suburban environments. Wildlife populations help to keep other animal and plant populations in check; preserve the genetic integrity of species; and occupy ecological niches, thereby decreasing the success of invasive species. Moreover, the presence of wildlife enhances human quality of life, contributing to a sense of place, a connection to the natural world, and an understanding of ecological systems. Animal life also has intrinsic value.

Recognizing these values, the City of Lake Oswego seeks to preserve healthy wildlife populations within the City. Parks and natural areas are set aside in part to provide wildlife habitat, and the City employs best practices to minimize harm to animals in its operations. The City also encourages residents to recognize and enjoy the presence of wildlife, and take reasonable steps to avoid human-wildlife conflict.

Human safety is always the City's first priority. The preservation of wildlife, domestic animals, and property are all important second priorities. The City takes concerns about wildlife seriously, and seeks to reach situation-specific solutions that are in keeping with this policy statement and the practices outlined below.

A. Best Practices

The City of Lake Oswego educates and encourages citizens to observe these practices, which can reduce human-wildlife conflict:

1. **Do not feed wildlife.** Wild food is more nutritious, and feeding wild animals can lead to disruption in natural predator/prey interactions, disease, dependence, and nuisance behavior.
2. **Feed domestic animals indoors,** and do not allow wildlife to consume food meant for pets.
3. **Keep trash and compost in secure containers.** Trash attracts vermin and other animals that can quickly become pests.
4. **Keep cats indoors,** unless they are directly observed by people. Predation by cats significantly decreases urban songbird populations. Keeping cats indoors also protects cats from cars, diseases, and predatory animals.
5. **Enjoy wildlife from a distance.** Do not approach wild animals or encourage them to become habituated to human presence; this can lead to conflicts in which people and animals come to harm. When coyotes or other animals that do not belong near people are spotted, the best response is to shout and clap hands to warn them away.

In addition to these recommended practices, the City refers citizens to the Portland Audubon Society for information on best practices in dealing with specific wildlife species.

B. Sick and Injured Animals

The City refers concerns regarding injured wild birds and native mammals to the Audubon Society Wildlife Care Center in Portland. The City of Lake Oswego refers all other calls regarding dead, sick, or injured animals to Clackamas County Animal Control.

C. Dangerous Wildlife

If any animal poses an immediate threat to human safety, emergency services should be alerted. When the pattern of conduct of a wild animal appears to pose an undue threat to human safety, the City will request that the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW) evaluate and respond to the situation, or make recommendations to the City on steps to reduce the apparent conflict. The City will generally not ask ODFW to respond to situations where native wildlife is observed in the City exhibiting normal behavior, and does not appear to pose an undue threat.

D. Trapping and Exterminating Wildlife

The City does not permit wildlife to be trapped or exterminated on public property, except when a specific individual unduly threatens human safety or public property. The City also does not permit trapped animals to be released onto City-owned property. Trapping animals is not an effective tool for long-term management. State law generally prohibits the transport of fur-bearing animals from one location to another. Trapped animals are often euthanized.

The City recognizes private property owners' rights to trap and exterminate animals on their own property, as long as such activities conform to local, state, and federal law. The City encourages residents considering this step to consult appropriate authorities before taking any action that might violate state or federal wildlife laws.