

COUNCIL MEMBERS' MOTION

6. Don't Feed the Wildlife

Submitted by: Councillor Fry

WHEREAS

1. The City of Vancouver enjoys proximity to a spectacular natural environment with an abundance of natural wildlife species that coexist within our urban ecosystem, including: bald eagles, bats, beavers, coyotes, harbour seals, otters, raccoons, skunks, squirrels, and a variety of birds;
2. Wild animals in the urban ecosystem often engage in opportunistic feeding, the taking of food without marked preferences as it becomes available. Humans, as the source of opportunistic feeding, often indulge this behaviour in an effort to admire or interact with wild animals;
3. Wild animals can suffer when they get used to eating human food instead of their natural diet. When people feed wildlife, the animals become habituated and can lose their healthy fear of people, this increases their chances of being injured or killed. Feeding wildlife can also directly or indirectly cause aggression in animals, attract vermin and other pests, and transmit diseases;
4. Within the City of Vancouver the feeding of wildlife is variously regulated and prohibited on land, at sea, and in parks by:
 - a BC Wildlife Act¹ Section 33.1(1)(a)(b) stating: A person must not intentionally feed or attempt to feed dangerous wildlife, or provide, leave or place an attractant in, on or about any land or premises with the intent of attracting dangerous wildlife. Where "dangerous wildlife" is defined as bear, cougar, coyote or wolf.
 - b Canada Fisheries Act Marine Mammal Regulations² stating: No person shall disturb a marine mammal, including approaching the marine mammal, or attempt to feed it;
 - c Parks Control by-law³ indirectly prohibits feeding wildlife in parks through section 14(l) stating: No person shall deposit food or grain on any area in a park except in litter cans provided by the Board for the purpose of receiving garbage and litter;
5. The City of Vancouver has no municipal by-law directly prohibiting the feeding of wild animals, although Street and Traffic By-law No. 2849⁴ does restrict littering on streets and has been partially relied on for the enforcement of feeding wild animals in the city;
6. Victoria, BC, through its Animal Control By-law⁵ explicitly prohibits the feeding of deers, raccoons, squirrels or rabbits anywhere in the City, and

additionally pigeons, crows and gulls within a prohibited downtown core area;

7. In Vancouver, public education and enforcement around feeding of wildlife in the urban ecosystem is inconsistent and ineffective:
 - a Vancouver residents feeding wild visitors to their yards or outdoor spaces have resulted in injuries to people and pets, for example from 2017 at 1st and Arbutus a woman and her dogs attacked by food-habituated and aggressive raccoons: "Vancouver woman attacked by raccoons says they're being fed by a neighbour"⁶ (2017, Global BC);
 - b Indiscriminate bird feeding in public spaces (including but not limited to parks and schoolyards) has been observed to lead to an increase in rats and other opportunistic feeders;
 - c In recent months, a number of aggressive coyote interactions in Stanley Park have resulted in bites, trail closures, and a number of coyotes being euthanized. According to the Park Board, "Aggressive behaviour is often the result of animals being fed by people." As of February 22, 2021, there have been 15 attacks by coyotes in Stanley Park, though to date no deaths or serious injuries;
8. In response to a Freedom of Information request from the Fur-Bearers organization there have been no tickets (fines and warnings) issued by Vancouver By-law Officers, regarding wildlife feeding in Stanley Park, between January 1, 2018 to January 19, 2021. Similarly, the Board of Parks and Recreation confirms there are no responsive records for the same time period. There have been no fines from BC's Conservation Office for feeding coyotes;
9. The BC SPCA encourages municipalities to adopt bylaws that prohibit intentional wildlife feeding and encourage the management of wildlife attractants as unintentional feeding sources.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED

- A. THAT Council directs staff to report back on Council's authority to prepare a by-law to prohibit intentional wildlife feeding, and encourage the management of wildlife attractants as unintentional feeding sources, pursuant to Vancouver's authority to create by-laws for preventing, abating, and prohibiting nuisance or other authority;

FURTHER THAT, if authorized by the *Vancouver Charter* or other authority, staff prepare for consideration a by-law that includes terms such as:

- a. No person shall knowingly or willingly feed any wildlife, or in any manner provide them or allow access to food or any other edible substance;
 - b. No person shall store any attractant or waste in such a manner that it is accessible to wildlife;
 - c. No person shall attract wildlife onto a property such that these wildlife create a nuisance for other properties;
 - d. Exemptions for hummingbird feeding by way of liquid feeders, and songbird feeding by way of wildlife-proof feeders (specifically designed to prevent access by squirrels and rats).
- B. THAT subject to Council's approval of Recommendation A, staff consider and prepare amendments to the Ticket Offences By-law No. 9360 to create a ticket offence for intentional wildlife feeding.
- C. THAT subject to Council's approval of Recommendation A, and the enactment of any proposed by-laws, staff prepare appropriate signage when and where necessary to promote the new by-law with updated, clear and easy to comprehend signage in areas where feeding is common.
- D. THAT upon enactment of any new by-laws contemplated by Recommendations A and B, City staff share this information with the Vancouver Board of Parks and Recreation, CMHC Granville Island Administration, and Vancouver School Board District 39 for their consideration.

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1. https://www.bclaws.gov.bc.ca/civix/document/id/complete/statreg/96488_01#section33.1
 2. <https://gazette.gc.ca/rp-pr/p2/2018/2018-07-11/html/sor-dors126-eng.html>
 3. <https://parkboardmeetings.vancouver.ca/files/BYLAW-ParksBylawsConsolidated-20170515.pdf>
 4. <https://bylaws.vancouver.ca/2849c.pdf>
 5. <https://www.victoria.ca/assets/City~Hall/Bylaws/bylaw-11-044.pdf>
 6. <https://globalnews.ca/news/3843464/vancouver-raccoon-attack/>

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