



From the Desk of
Senator
Markus Hansen

Support Senate Bill 474: Prevents habituation of wildlife that result in human, wildlife conflicts.

What the bill does: Adds raccoons to the list of potentially habituated wildlife, allows officer to notify person and issue citation to remove food if they are knowingly enticing wildlife.

The Problem: Deliberate feeding of raccoons is a significant problem in Oregon. Portland Audubon Society receives approximately 15,000 wildlife related phone calls each year at our wildlife resource office. Many of these phone calls involve conflicts between humans and wildlife specifically precipitated by the intentional feeding of wildlife. We receive well over 100 complaints each year regarding habituation of raccoons.

Harmful to Humans and Wildlife

Intentionally luring wildlife with food creates unsustainable populations, spreads disease that result in die offs in their population. Without their instinctual fear of humans, these emboldened animals can inflict significant property damage, cause serious disease outbreaks and lead to direct attacks on humans.

Raccoons are prone to periodic outbreaks of the Canine Distemper Virus, Parvo and other diseases. Canine Distemper is contagious to dogs as well as various other wildlife populations. At least 4 times over the past 18 years the Portland Metro Region has been hit with a significant outbreak of raccoon distemper. These outbreaks are exacerbated by feeding stations that cause raccoons to congregating in large numbers.

Problems with raccoons have become so acute that in 2006 ODFW adopted new administrative rules limiting relocation of problem raccoons due to the large number of animals being relocated (>800 in Portland in 2003) and their high potential to serve as a disease vector to vulnerable wildlife populations. Problem raccoons are now typically euthanized rather than relocated.

Adding raccoons to the list of potentially habituated wildlife is a critical tool to address feeding of potentially habituated wildlife species. In the vast majority of situations, education alone is sufficient to deter inappropriate feeding of wildlife. The ability to inform the public that habituating wildlife is unlawful is helping to dissuade the few who are creating a problem.

Support: Audubon Society of Portland and our 13,000 members in the Portland Region support of Senate Bill 474.

5 – 0 Do pass recommendation Committee on Environment and Natural Resources.

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