



Village of Elm Grove Wildlife Management Program

BACKGROUND

The Village of Elm Grove is a residential community characterized by large lots, mature tree stock, well managed landscapes and natural water sources. These features help define not only the “look” and value of the Village but also make it an attractive area for wildlife. In fact, the presence of many wildlife species actually adds to the “look”, ambience and value of the Village.

Numerous species of wildlife native to Wisconsin acclimate very well to a suburban habitat like Elm Grove, which provides bountiful food and water supplies with minimal predation. However, these same conditions can lead to increased human/wildlife interactions and property damage issues as wildlife populations grow and additional species establish residence.

Some urban wildlife species are particularly valued by some Village residents, just as those same species are seen as particularly troublesome or dangerous by other Village residents. The White Tail Deer is a good example of such an animal. Other species like Coyote have not yet caused much debate in the Village even though they are bountiful. Coyotes have become well established due to absence of any natural predator and bountiful food supplies. Since some of that Coyote food supply is Canada Geese and feral cats their predation has been mostly positive in the last 5 to 10 years. Yet, calls for aggressive control may be needed in the future.

The issue of urban wildlife management is broad and complicated. Calls for action tend to rise and fall with the natural rise and fall of various specie populations and many activities involving wildlife management are controlled and regulated by federal and state law and agencies.

Therefore, the Village Board approved the establishment of an ad hoc committee to address wildlife management issues. Structurally, the ad hoc committee operated through the existing Village Board Public Safety Committee. The ad hoc committee was charged with researching issues of wildlife management in the Village of Elm Grove. The committee was responsible for identifying the species present in the Village and specific health, safety or economic issues attendant to those species.

WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT PROGRAM

This program is designed to provide Village residents and the Village government recommendations and resources on how to support responsible and ongoing wildlife management. In addition, the program will provide guidance on how the Village Board might establish a threshold of when to consider active management of specific species and describes the approved methods for such wildlife management and control by Village government. This document will separate the species that can be managed individually by residents and those species that will be controlled Village wide by Village officials and staff.

VILLAGE WIDE WILDLIFE CONTROL TO BE CONDUCTED BY VILLAGE STAFF AND OFFICIALS

DEER CONTROL

BACKGROUND/FINDINGS

Residents have been and are intent on monitoring the Whitetail deer population within the Village of Elm Grove. Deer presence in Elm Grove has contributed to complaints of nuisance, health, safety concerns and plant species eradication. The increasing population of deer in the neighboring City of Brookfield raises concern in the Village of increased deer-traffic collisions and further destruction of property in the future. Due to the abundance of complaints expressed to the Village by residents, Elm Grove seeks to annually monitor the deer population in the Village.

The Village has been observing deer populations in the area. To address resident concerns of nuisance, safety, and plant species eradication, the Village partnered with the City of Brookfield to maintain deer counts from 1999 to the present. The DNR assists this partnership in counting deer by helicopter in December or January of each year. Twenty-seven deer were counted within the Village borders in 1999, while 12 deer were counted in 2000. Poor weather conditions in 2001 and 2002 made it impossible for accurate deer counts to be collected. Twenty-six deer were counted within the Village's borders in 2003, 26 deer were counted in 2004, 17 were counted in 2005, and 30 were counted in 2006.

The City of Brookfield, which surrounds Elm Grove on three borders, has a history of heavy deer population. In the 36 square mile township that includes the City of Brookfield, the Town of Brookfield, and Elm Grove there were 500 deer counted in 2002, 370 were counted in 2003, 547 were counted in 2004, 298 were counted in 2005, and 368 were counted in 2006. Due to the Elm Grove's close proximity to Brookfield and its high-density deer population, the Village will continue to yearly monitor the deer populations, weather permitting, to locate the herd, identify population trends, and identify herd growth over time.

The goal population for deer within Village borders is 25 deer per square mile of habitat. This population goal was established by referencing the Milwaukee Metro Unit (77M) whose deer population had been similarly established (Southeastern Wisconsin Urban Deer Taskforce Final Report 1994). Population goals range from 10 – 35 deer per square mile of habitat throughout the state depending on habitat, climate and human condition. Monitoring of the deer population annually confirms the Village is achieving the determined goal population.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Elm Grove's deer habitat includes the area of .79 square miles or 504 acres. Therefore, if the deer population increases to more than 25 deer per square mile of habitat, or 20 deer, then the deer should be actively managed. In order to determine the quantity of deer in the Village, an aerial deer count survey should be continued in conjunction with the City of Brookfield each winter. Village Staff should then review the aerial survey findings to determine if active deer management is needed. Individual neighborhoods may continue trapping deer with or without active deer management by the Village.

To actively manage deer, the Village should obtain a permit from the DNR. Once the Village has the permit, a sharp shooter can be hired to control deer in safe locations such as the Department of Public Works Yard or along with railroad corridor on Village property. Final locations will be recommended to the Public Safety Committee for approval from the Police Chief. Area residents of these shooting areas must be notified in advance of when the deer management will occur along with the Police Department.

CANADIAN GEESE CONTROL

BACKGROUND/FINDINGS

Residents have been and are intent on reducing the population of Canadian geese within the Village of Elm Grove. Since 2000, the Village had applied for the Urban Wildlife Abatement and Control Grant Resolution and has received grant money for many of the past years. The Village has pursued goose health testing and relocation activities in Village Park. The Village of Elm Grove seeks to maintain a consistent level of abatement procedures to enforce actions previously performed as recommended by the USDA.

Though there is no crop loss in the non-agricultural Village of Elm Grove, Canada geese generate a significant amount of fecal waste in Village Park causing a concern for disease transmission. This poses a public health hazard when children and adults are in direct contact with goose fecal matter that extends to the sports fields, playground and the community swimming pool. Additionally, with a growing permanent population, increasingly aggressive bird behavior interferes with human activity resulting in greater public concern over goose nuisance and human safety in the park.

The number of geese in the park has been fairly consistent through the years. However, the number of geese was low in the summer of 2005 compared to previous years. Since it was a dry summer, the pond level was much lower than other summers. In the fall of 2005, the number of geese increased. In 2006, the Village began construction in the Village Park as part of a Flood Management Plan. As a result, the geese were less of a nuisance near the recreation facilities. However, the pond was expanded and the amount of geese increased once the construction vehicles were away from the pond.

The goal population of geese in Village Park is: 35 adults and 15 juveniles. The goal population was determined by comparing annual goose counts with resident response in a survey and individual complaints.

Throughout the past years, the Village has performed several non-lethal abatement techniques on geese.

Goose repellent spray: Applied grape extract product to discourage geese from occupying Village Park.

Frightening geese: Installed black flags to deter Village Park as suitable habitat. Also, plastic swans were placed in the pond. One swan was stolen and the geese gathered around the remaining swan.

Loud noises: The Police Department fires shotgun blanks that temporarily relocate the geese. They quickly return to the park when the shooting ceases.

Tall grasses at water's edge: To deter geese from nesting at the edge of the pond, the bordering grass is not mowed.

Dogs on the loose: On a controlled basis, free running dogs have roamed the park to frighten away geese.

Egg depredation: With a Federal Fish and Wildlife permit, the Village sought out nests in the park and shook the eggs and/or covered the eggs with vegetable oil to prevent birth.

Bird relocation: Also with a Federal Fish and Wildlife permit, juvenile birds are relocated and adult birds are euthanized.

RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended to continue egg depredation, bird relocation, loud noises, and leaving tall grasses at the water's edge in the future to control the goose population. If the goal population of 35 adults and 15 juveniles increases while utilizing these management techniques the Village should possibly consider hiring a company that sets dogs loose to frighten the geese away. Furthermore, Village residents should not feed the geese in the park or on their own property. The Village should continue to work with both the WDNR and the USDA in regards to enforcement of regulations regarding feeding on public and private property.

COYOTE

Although coyote do not pose major wildlife concerns presently, they are being included in the wildlife management program as a species to monitor.

Coyotes now exist in virtually every type of habitat in North America and feed on rabbits, rodents, insects, livestock, poultry, fruits, vegetative matter, and small pets. They are most active at night and early morning, except when there is minimal human interference they may be active during the day. Coyotes bed in sheltered areas, but do not generally use dens except when raising young.

Control Methods:

- Noise-making devices and flashing lights may be used to provide temporary protection in relatively small areas. Combinations of frightening devices used at irregular intervals should provide better protection than use of a single device, because animals may have more difficulty in adapting to these disturbances.

INDIVIDUAL WILDLIFE CONTROL TO BE CONDUCTED BY RESIDENTS ON THEIR OWN PROPERTY

The following information has been provided by the "Internet Center for Wildlife Damage Management" For more information, please go to the Village website at www.elmgrovetwi.org for wildlife control links

FOX

Foxes are primarily nocturnal and prefer areas with cover. They have been pushed into urban areas to seek shelter from coyotes. Foxes feed on poultry, small livestock, free-ranging pets, gamebirds, and they eat eggs and fruits.

Control Methods:

- Foxes readily adapt to noise-making devices such as propane exploders, timed taped recordings, amplifier, or radios, but such devices may temporarily reduce activity in the area.
- Flashing lights may also provide temporary protection in relatively small areas.
- Combinations of frightening devices used at irregular intervals should provide better protection than use of a single device, because animals may have more difficulty in adapting to these disturbances.

CATS

House Cats are not considered wildlife, but because they can cause damage to bird species and other wildlife they are included. Feral cats prefer areas in and around human habitation and feed on rodents, rabbits, shrews, moles, birds, insects, reptiles, fish, vegetation, and leftover pet food. Feral cats are offspring of domesticated cats, but who have never been handled by or associated with humans; feral cats are rarely protected under state law. It is possible to turn feral kitties into companion pets if they are removed from their mother no later than six weeks of age and socialized.

Control Methods:

- Cats can be kept away from your property by repairing windows, doors, and plugging holes in your house.
- Repellents can be obtained from pet stores or garden supply stores that are irritating to cats. Repellants must be applied frequently outside and there is little evidence of the chemicals' effectiveness.
- Dogs that show aggression to cats.
- Do not feed your pets outside.
- Register your house cat and place a collar on your cat.
- Do not let you house cat outside unsupervised.

RACCOONS

Raccoons prefer areas with trees and bodies of permanent water, are nocturnal, and they den in hollow trees, brush piles, rock crevices, etc. Raccoons eat both plant and animal foods including birds and eggs. They can cause considerable damage to garden crops. In addition, they may cause damage to buildings trying to gain entrance through attics and chimneys as well as when they raid garbage cans for food. Raccoons have been identified as the major wildlife host of rabies in the United States.

Control Methods:

- Store garbage in metal or tough plastic containers with tight-fitting lids.
- Prevent raccoon access to chimneys by securely fastening a commercial cap of sheet metal and heavy screen over the top of the chimney.
- Limit access to rooftops by removing overhanging branches.
- Remove any obvious sources of food or shelter.
- Pin rolls of new sod with long wire pins if feasible or place new sod in late spring/early summer as raccoons dig new sod up in mid to late summer looking for worms.

WHITE-FOOTED MICE

The white-footed mouse is widely distributed and prefers wooded or brushy areas. They are primarily seed eaters, but will frequently feed on nuts, acorns, insects, and some green vegetation. The mice are mostly nocturnal. The principal problem caused by white-footed mice is their tendency to enter homes and can cause damage to furniture, clothing, or other material suitable for nesting.

Control methods:

- Fix any openings in your house larger than ¼ inch.
- Use folded hardware cloth (wire mesh) of ¼ inch or smaller to protect newly seeded garden plots. Bury the edges of the wire several inches beneath the soil.
- Store food and seed in rodent proof containers.
- Moth balls or flakes may effectively repel mice from closed areas where a sufficient concentration of the chemical can be attained in the air.
- Bait or ordinary mouse traps are effective in catching mice.

GRAY SQUIRRELS

Squirrels may occasionally damage trees by chewing bark from branches and trunks. They sometimes travel powerlines and short out transformers, gnaw on wires, enter buildings, and build nests in attics. Squirrels may also damage lawns by burying or searching for and digging up nuts.

Control methods:

- Cut tree branches at least ten feet away from roof line
- Wrap tree trunks with 12" or greater aluminum, from a home or garden store, at least six feet off ground.
- Screen attic vents from outside with the 1/4 inch hardware cloth to prevent entry.
- Cap all chimney flues with professionally manufactured stainless steel caps.