

Natural Resource Volunteer Program

Basic Course Workbook Series

Student Materials



*N*etworking *R*esources *V*aluing *P*eople

Wildlife Watch

Learning Domain # 10

California Department of Fish and Game
Law Enforcement Division
1416 Ninth St 13th Floor
Sacramento, CA 95814

“WILDLIFE WATCH”

UNDERSTANDING URBAN WILDLIFE

LEAD PERSON’S GUIDE

Replacing Conflict with Education

And Applying it as a Team !!



**NATURAL RESOURCE VOLUNTEER PROGRAM
DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND WILDLIFE
Southern Enforcement District
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Preface

The Department of Fish and Wildlife (DFW) is committed to community based education programs that provide effective wildlife information and extensive communication to the public. “Wildlife Watch” is a plan to increase the public’s knowledge of urban/suburban wildlife. The program is based on education, teamwork and accountability.

One of the DFW’s main efforts has been directed towards providing education to the public to prevent the occurrence of wildlife nuisance incidents. Just as Neighborhood Watch crime prevention programs are a proven and effective means to substantially reduce residential burglaries, “Wildlife Watch” educates the public to better understand urban/suburban wildlife and reduce human-wildlife conflict.

Wildlife is attracted to urban/suburban areas by the easy accessibility of food, water and shelter. Reducing or eliminating the availability of these elements will encourage the wildlife to leave. Many people who are fearful of and suffer damage caused by wildlife often do not have the ability to deal with the problem and become frustrated. Their actions, although well intentioned, may cause unnecessary harm to wildlife and the environment.

As this guide will tell you, a well informed neighbor who applies a few basic rules to urban wildlife is one of the most effective wildlife-conflict prevention specialists around. This statement goes along with the basic theme of “*Replacing Conflict with Education and Applying it as a Team*”, people helping people do something about conflicts with urban wildlife. “Wildlife Watch, Understanding Urban Wildlife, Lead Person’s Guide” is full of useful tips on how to start and sustain an efficient Wildlife Watch program.

My special thanks is extended to members of the Natural Resource Volunteer Program within the California Department of Fish and Wildlife, Southern Enforcement District. Without your dedication and commitment, this project would have not been possible. This guide is only a beginning, however. After reading it, pass it on to others to read. This truly is the future for understanding how to approach wildlife conflict especially in urban settings.

Lt. Kent W. Smirl
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Natural Resource Volunteer Program Coordinator

Wildlife Watch Background

The concept of “Wildlife Watch” evolved out of a need to educate the public in the field about living with urban wildlife. It also educates law enforcement and animal control agencies about DFW policy regarding public safety and nuisance wildlife. Wildlife Watch is a proactive approach utilizing trained DFW volunteers to assist communities having problems with nuisance wildlife that could become a public safety concern. In 2002 DFW started its first Senior Volunteer Program which developed into the Natural Resource Volunteer Program (NRVP) which is what it is called today. NRVP which stands for **N**etworking **R**esources **V**aluing **P**eople is a concept whose vision was instrumental in starting Wildlife Watch. Wildlife Watch utilizes the department’s “Keep Me Wild” campaign by taking it one step further.... to the field in proactive interaction with the public through accountability education.

Wildlife Watch utilizes the same principles of Neighborhood Watch empowering citizens to work together as a team with government agencies and private organizations to provide conservation and enforcement education in public service. In traditional law enforcement, “Neighborhood Watch” is a program using citizens to assist law enforcement playing an integral part in reducing residential and commercial crime. In fish and wildlife law enforcement, Wildlife Watch educates citizens how to live harmoniously with wildlife. A common theme between both is the use of effective communication and accountability to change human behavior.

Wildlife Watch Defined

Wildlife Watch is the "The collective response of government agencies, private organizations and communities working together to promote a better understanding of human wildlife interactions. Wildlife Watch empowers people to remove fear and frustration and replace it with confident coexistence through effective education, communication and accountability".

Wildlife Watch helps to identify the human wildlife interaction problem and how to address it from a team approach. It emphasizes better communication and the development of a plan that utilizes each others strength synergistically.

Getting Started

When an agency or someone calls DFW requesting assistance for a human wildlife interaction problem, a recommendation is made for the agency to host a Wildlife Watch meeting in their venue. The DFW Natural Resource Volunteer Program serves as a conservation coach to mentor the hosting agency through collaborative meetings putting together a strategy to address the problem. Attending agencies include DFW, local law enforcement, animal control agencies, public works, parks and recreation department as well as private organizations. During the meeting we (DFW) discuss our policy for

wildlife incident response regarding public safety and nuisance wildlife. Participating agencies are also asked to talk about and explain their wildlife response policy. The goal is to create mutual understanding to build agency trust.

Agencies rely on DFW expertise and often look for guidance in handling wildlife calls. Our attitude is to let them know how much we appreciate their participation in this process. We need their help and we tell them. The role of local law enforcement and animal control agencies cannot be overemphasized because of the role they play in initial response and public safety.

Department of Fish and Wildlife Natural Resource Volunteer Program (NRVP) Role

Acting as conservation coach, the role of the NRVP is to provide volunteer assistance to other agencies, communities or private organizations in solving wildlife problems. Assistance may include:

- Conducting site visits to identify wildlife attractants
- Assisting in setting up Wildlife Watch teams in affected areas, educating citizens in how to effectively report and a wildlife incident separating emotion from fact
- Providing guidance to obtain educational resources

The Future

As government agencies cutback on personnel due to fiscal restraints, the need to use volunteers becomes more self evident. Many people unknowingly feed wildlife and create problems for their community. Even though the answer is relatively simple...cut off their food supply and they will leave. Not everyone agrees on how to do it and it can sometimes become more complicated than it needs to be. Opening up communications lines between differing perceptions can go a long way towards helping people and wildlife to live harmoniously. The need to understand the differing human perception of wildlife behavior is as important as their life history. Wildlife Watch is a proactive way to help bridge this gap and serve our citizens as well as our wildlife resources. We believe the concept of Wildlife Watch teaches agencies to work together more effectively and citizens how to respect wildlife which will benefit future generations.

Want to know about the best urban wildlife education and conflict-prevention program ever planned?

Agencies and Neighbors working as a:

***T*ogether *E*ducation *A*chieves *M*ore**

In fact, neighbors working together in cooperation with the Department of Fish and Wildlife's Natural Resource Volunteer Program can make one of the best wildlife conflict-prevention teams around.

We call it...

“Wildlife Watch”

What is it?

Wildlife Watch is a wildlife education program which enlists the active participation of citizens in cooperation with the California Department of Fish and Wildlife's Natural Resource Volunteer Program.

It involves:

- Neighbors, getting to know each other and working together in a program of mutual assistance**
- Citizens, being trained to recognize and know the difference between wildlife sightings, wildlife threats which constitutes an imminent threat to public safety, a wildlife attack, and natural versus unnatural wildlife behavior**
- Implementation of basic wildlife conflict-prevention techniques**

You may hear it called Neighborhood Watch, Pet Alert, Citizen or Block Watch. The names differ, but the idea is the same:

Neighbors looking out for each other and the wildlife with whom they co-exist.

Who can participate?

- City people
- Country people
- Suburban residents
- Apartment dwellers
- Mobile home residents
- Home owners associations
- Retirement communities
- Senior citizens
- Men
- Women
- Families
- Couples
- Singles
- Businesses

Why Wildlife Watch?

- Observing wild animals is one of the many benefits of living in or near wildlife habitat. However, the experience can turn unpleasant or even dangerous when well-meaning people knowingly or unknowingly provide food, shelter, or water for wildlife.
- There are not enough wildlife officials, animal control, or law enforcement officers available so citizen involvement is essential to educate the community.
- You and your neighbors are the ones who really know what is going on with regards to wildlife conflicts in your community.
- By cooperating with the DFW, local law enforcement, animal control, and each other, people can reduce the number of wildlife conflicts in their communities. Human-wildlife conflicts cause emotional trauma, human injury, loss of pets, and property damage.

Organizational Plan for Starting a Wildlife Watch Program

Equipped with the right information and tools, most neighborhoods can solve their own problems and learn to live with wildlife. The following is an example to help residents share information and collectively use the information to achieve their goal of reducing or eliminating wildlife conflicts in their neighborhood.

- 1. Lead person facilitates meeting with DFW NRVP Conservation Coach.**
- 2. Neighbors decide name for their Wildlife Watch Team (WWT) and provide contact information to Conservation Coach. A file is started to monitor objectives and results.**
- 3. WWT appoints a Receiving Committee to receive and track incoming calls. It is the communication hub of the team. Receiving committee assigns team leaders to:**
 - a. Act as a communication center to receive incoming calls and log wildlife incidents from residents.**
 - b. Map wildlife incident locations (wall map or computer generated map is most track incidents and can identify problem areas). Computer generated maps work well for distribution at monthly WWT meetings.**
- 4. WWT appoints Response Committee. Response Committee assigns team leaders to:**
 - a. Conduct residential surveys using conflict-prevention checklist guidelines. Encourage each other to follow guidelines. Identify those residents that are not in compliance with the guidelines. If known feeding of wildlife exists notify DFW Natural Resource Volunteer Representative.**

- b. Inform residents about the difference between wildlife sightings, threats, attacks and natural versus unnatural behavior. Also inform them who or where to report the wildlife incident to i.e. Receiving Committee of Wildlife Watch Team or DFW.

DEFINITIONS

Type Green (sightings)

A report (confirmed or unconfirmed) of an observation that is perceived to be a public safety wildlife problem. The mere presence of public safety wildlife does not in itself constitute a threat. **Report to WWT Receiving Committee. Information will be forwarded to DFG Senior Volunteer program at end of month.

Type Yellow (threat)

A report where the presence of public safety is confirmed by a field investigation, and the responding person (DFG personnel or law enforcement officer) perceives the animal to be an imminent threat to public health or safety. Imminent threat means there is a likelihood of human injury based on the totality of the circumstances. **Report to DFG dispatch center / local law enforcement and DFG Senior Volunteer base operations.

Type Red (attack)

An attack on a human resulting in physical contact, injury or death. **Report to DFG dispatch center and local law enforcement operations.

Natural behavior – Wildlife that shows fear of people. Wildlife that runs away from you in your presence.

Example –While walking down an ally behind your house, you observe a coyote scavenging garbage from your neighbors dumpster. When the coyote sees you, it runs away down the ally.

Unnatural behavior –(Wildlife that shows no fear of people). In the above example, the coyote would continue to feed as if you weren't present. Making a loud noise doesn't disturb the coyote either.

****NOTE: If coyotes begin frequenting your neighborhood, let them know they're not welcome. Make loud noises, throw rocks, etc. It is essential that coyotes retain their natural fear of humans.**

5. WWT appoints Report Committee to:

- a. Write a monthly newsletter to keep residents, neighbors and WWT members informed.**
- b. Compile monthly report of Wildlife Incidents Mail or e-mail report to: Natural Resource Volunteer Program (Southern Enforcement District) California Department of Fish and Wildlife
Lt. Kent Smirl 4665 Lampson Ave Ste C, Los Alamitos, CA 90720**

6. WWT appoints Resource Committee.

- a. Resource Committee obtains educational materials, i.e. wildlife brochures and informational leaflets. (Review the DFG web site at www.dfg.ca.gov.)**

7. WWT appoints Recognition Committee

- a. Recognition committee organizes efforts to recognize and reward those individuals within neighborhood and WWT whose efforts are contributing to the success of the team.**
- b. Plan fun events that center around wildlife education awareness and recognition of participants.**

Remember that a:

*T*_{rust} *E*_{ducate} *A*_{dvocate} *M*_{odel}

***Approach will work more
...Efficiently!***

Trust – your wildlife professionals to provide biologically sound, effective, and accountable solutions to wildlife problems. The DFG strives to educate the public about the importance of using responsible strategies for living with wildlife.

Educate – yourself and neighbors about the importance of following the wildlife conflict-prevention guidelines.

Advocate –Pass it on! Tell others about the Wildlife Watch Program. If the program worked for your neighborhood, let others know about it.

Model –Set an example for others to follow. Success brings pride and self-satisfaction with Team Achievement.

How do I start a Wildlife Watch program in my area ?

First get organized.

Contact the DFG Natural Resource Volunteer Program Fish and Game office Los Alamitos and ask for a NRVP representative. . .

- Wildlife Watch is hosted by the Department of Wildlife and Game Southern Enforcement District.
Check initially with the DFW before starting a wildlife education program that involves wildlife conflict-prevention.**
- Explain that you would like to start a Wildlife Watch group and ask for any assistance DFW can offer.**
- Ask about wildlife that could possibly live in your area.
Have any wildlife-human or pet conflicts been reported?**
- Ask to have a DFW NRVP representative at your first meeting.**

Talk to your neighbors . . .

- Canvass your neighborhood for interest.**
- Discuss wildlife problems in your area using the information you received from the DFW's NRVP representative.**
- Briefly explain the value of Wildlife Watch programs.**
- Ask about convenient times to schedule your initial Wildlife Watch meeting.**

Be sure to mention that:

- Wildlife Watch does not require frequent meetings.**
- It does not ask that anyone take any personal risks to educate others about wildlife which in turn will reduce or prevent wildlife conflict.**
- Wildlife Watch leaves the responsibility to law enforcement and wildlife officials to investigate and determined if the incident is a public safety threat.**

Arrange a date, time, and place for the first meeting . . .

- Select a time that is convenient for most neighbors and your DFW Natural Resource Volunteer representative.**
- Plan the meeting date far enough in advance to give everyone adequate notice.**
- Develop and distribute a flyer announcing the meeting.**

- Hold the meeting in the home of a neighbor to foster an informal and comfortable atmosphere.
- Do not be disappointed if everyone cannot attend. One hundred percent neighborhood participation is desired but it is not a requirement for the program to work.

The first meeting agenda. . .

- Distribute name tags
 - Opening remarks
 - Everyone introduce themselves
 - Explain briefly the purpose of the meeting
-

Comments from your DFW Natural Resource Volunteer representative . . .

- Your DFW Natural Resource Volunteer will cover many of the following topics:
 - A brief introduction regarding his/her position, background in DFW's Natural Resource Volunteer Program and his or her role in wildlife education
 - An explanation of the Wildlife Watch program
 - The specific wildlife problems in your area

- Effective wildlife conflict-prevention techniques for home and neighborhood safety**
- Removal of attractants lighting, pet security, and landscape maintenance**
- How to report wildlife conflict incidents to the DFW and Lead Person, logging information, what to look for, wildlife description and activity, time of occurrence and location**
- Wildlife attractant assessment of your property**

Select a Lead Person . . .

The role of the Lead Person is to:

- Be the spokesperson for the group**
- Serve as liaison between the DFW's Natural Resource Volunteer Program and your Wildlife Watch group**
- Organize and arrange Wildlife Watch meetings with neighbors (sharing the responsibility of hosting the meetings)**
- Maintain a master list of all members**
- Designate work assignments such as:**
 - Neighborhood wildlife attractant surveys**
 - New recruitments, Vacation home watch**
 - Neighborhood patrol, Fund raising activities**
 - Secretarial duties, Developing and maintaining area maps**
 - Outreach material distribution**

In order to share the workload and responsibilities, the Lead Person position should be rotated on a regularly scheduled basis.

Develop and distribute area maps . . .

A map of your area should be developed to help members give adequate information when reporting wildlife incidents in the neighborhood. Items on the map should include;

- Clearly identified street(s), cross-street(s), and known travel routes of wildlife to and from nearest habitat or food source.
- The name, address and phone number of each home.
- Emergency numbers for DFW, Wildlife Services, Animal Control, Sheriff, Fire Department, and Ambulance.

It is important that this map be kept updated reflecting all changes in residents, phone numbers, pets, and harvest of fruits and vegetables.

Gather and share information . . .

Knowing your neighbors' pets or animal's basic habits during feeding, sheltering, and exercise, as well as the landscape of your neighbor's property will help you understand what could attract wildlife to their property.

Basic information you might exchange with neighbors:

- Home and work phone numbers
- Number, ages and identity of family members, and pets or animals residing at location
- Pets spayed or neutered, Work hours, Type of fencing
- Pet doors on the house or garage
- Property outside lighting
- School hours of children
- Person who cares for the pets or animals during vacations.
- Name, address, and phone number of pet's veterinarian.

- Storage areas for all types of pet food and harvested fruits and vegetables; includes bird feeders, outside fish ponds, rabbit hutches, reptiles, gophers, aquariums, i.e. for rats and mice.
- Type of house foundation, roofing, attic, crawl space or raised porch.
- Any other helpful information.

Do not let anyone tell you that Wildlife Watch is an excuse to be nose-y. Since the DFW Natural Resource Volunteer Program was first implemented in Orange County in 2003, the number of reported coyote incidents to the DFW has declined considerably. This decline is most notably attributed to the Natural Resource Volunteers canvassing neighborhoods with educational materials where coyote conflicts have been reported. Education is the reason.

You are on your way . . .

Neighbors that follow this motto have proven success:

“People don’t care how much you know until they know how much you care.”

Be sure that everyone understands and observes the following general guidelines.

- **Be observant. Report wandering pets to owners in a kind manner.**
- **Have a plan of action for missing, unleashed, or stray animals.**
- **Keep a trusted neighbor informed if your property will be unoccupied for an extended period. It is important to leave them a way of reaching you if an emergency should arise.**
- **Look after your neighbor’s property when they’re away,**

and ask them to look after yours. This includes trash pick ups, deliveries, fence and gate monitoring, pet sitting, fruit or vegetable harvesting, and monitoring irrigation or sprinklers as a potential water source. This is in addition to collecting mail, newspapers, and other deliveries which would indicate at a glance that no one is home.

- Combine “Wildlife Watch” with a Neighborhood Watch program if possible.
- Above all, be concerned. It is the most effective way to reduce or prevent urban wildlife conflict and keep you and your pets safe.
- And remember, your job is to *report* unwanted wildlife interaction with humans and pets. The responsibility for apprehending wildlife and for public safety belongs to the DFW, Wildlife Services, Animal Control, and law enforcement.

Program Activities

The key to keeping a Wildlife Watch group active is maintaining people’s interest over time. The goal is to create “small town” environments, even in large cities, where people care about their neighbors, pets, and their neighborhoods.

Active neighborhood groups can make changes through their local officials, such as modifying landscape to reduce wildlife habitat attractants and food and water sources. At the same time neighbors can hold block parties, potluck dinners, and wildlife awareness or landscape cleanup campaigns.

A Wildlife Watch program can be fun. Remember people will most likely become involved and remain interested if the program is fun as well as meaningful. Use your imagination. Some specific wildlife conflict-prevention information is provided for you on the following page

WILDLIFE ATTRACTANTS

Reducing or Eliminating the Availability of the

“Big Three”

✓ **FOOD**

✓ **WATER**

✓ **SHELTER**

COYOTE CONFLICT-PREVENTION CHECKLIST

Food

NOTE: Food should never be intentionally left out for wild animals.

- ✓ Garbage can lids should be secured at all times or garbage stored indoors.
- ✓ Food scraps can be frozen and placed out just before the trash is picked up.
- ✓ Condiment jars and food stuff containers can be rinsed with water prior to discarding them. Recycling helps.
- ✓ Pets should be fed during daylight hours and all pet food removed before darkness. Pet food should be stored indoors.
- ✓ All windfall fruit/vegetables should be picked up daily. When possible cover at night or enclose garden and fruit trees by a coyote proof fence to prevent access.
- ✓ Keep small pets, such as cats, rabbits, and small dogs indoors. Don't allow them to run free at any time. Large dogs should be brought inside after dark. Large dogs can be enclosed in a coyote proof enclosure.

COYOTE CONFLICT-PREVENTION CHECKLIST

NOTE – Coyotes have been known to lure domestic pets off properties using various strategies i.e. female coyote in heat. Domestic dogs regardless of their size often don't recognize coyotes as a predator until they are ambushed by more than one coyote. By then it is too late!

- ✓ **During the time of year when adult coyotes are caring for their young (May – September), they can be very aggressive when their young are threatened. Domestic dogs are especially vulnerable to attack during this time.**
- ✓ **Stray, feral, and roaming cats are an easy target for coyotes. If domestic cats cannot be contained indoors, and predation is viewed as a problem, posts can be installed in open space areas which provide an escape for cats. These posts should be at least 7 feet tall, made of material that the cat can climb, and have enough space on top for the cat to sit.**
- ✓ **Pet adoption leagues and human societies will provide information for trapping and safely removing and finding homes for stray cats.**
- ✓ **Rabbit hutches should have a solid bottom. A hutch standing above ground, with only a wire bottom, makes your rabbit an easy mark.**

COYOTE CONFLICT-PREVENTION CHECKLIST

- ✓ When building aviaries and chicken coops, dig a one-foot trench around its perimeter. Extend the chicken wire fence well into the trench and bury it.
- ✓ Aviaries and bird enclosures will attract rodents when feed and shelter are not properly maintained. The rodents i.e. rats and mice, eating the bird feed will then attract coyotes.
- ✓ Yards which have pocket gophers or moles attract cats which in turn attract coyotes.
- ✓ Bird feeders not properly located and maintained can attract cats which in turn attract coyotes.

Water

- ✓ Pet water bowls should be emptied and not left out after dark.
- ✓ Sprinkler systems and irrigation should be monitored for surface water collection. Remove receptacles in your yard that could inadvertently hold water. Coyotes utilize urban water runoff as a water source.

COYOTE CONFLICT-PREVENTION CHECKLIST

Water

- ✓ Coyotes will often drink water from swimming pools or fish ponds. Cover them at night when possible. Fish, amphibians, and reptiles which live in an aquatic environment, i.e. turtles, are all prey items for a hungry coyote.

✓

Shelter

- ✓ Brush and vegetation should be cleared from backyard and adjacent areas to eliminate habitat for prey which could attract coyotes. Landscaping should be pruned on a regular basis.
- ✓ Areas where rodents may concentrate, such as wood and brush piles or seed storage areas should be cleared and kept clean.
- ✓ Remove hiding cover that may be used by coyotes when stalking domestic pets.

COYOTE BIOLOGY

In California, coyotes breed mainly during January, February, and March. The gestation period is about 60-63 days. Young are born March through May, with litter sizes averaging 5-6 pups. Coyotes produce one litter per year. The young are weaned at 5 to 6 weeks and leave the parents at 6 to 9 months. Most adults breed first in their second year.

Non breeding, yearling coyotes often stay with the adult parents and help care for the pups. Coyote dens are found in steep banks, rock crevices, sinkholes, and underbrush. Coyote dens are often holes that have been used by badgers, skunks, foxes, or other animals with entrances enlarged to about one foot in diameter. Dens vary from 4 or 5 feet deep to 50 feet deep.

The diet of the coyote consists mainly of mice, rats, ground squirrels, gophers, rabbits, and carrion. They also eat insects, reptiles, amphibians, fruits, birds and their eggs, and deer fawns. In urban and suburban areas, garbage, domestic cats and dogs, other pets, hobby animals, and pet food can be important food items.

Coyotes are most active at night and during early morning and late evening hours. In areas where they are not disturbed by human activities, and during the cooler times of the year, they may be active throughout the day. Urban coyotes are becoming very tolerant of human activities. Young coyotes tend to more active during daylight hours than adults. Home range size varies depending on food and water availability.

The most common diseases of coyotes are distemper and canine hepatitis. Rabies and tularemia also occur and may be transmitted to humans and other animals. Coyotes often carry parasites, including mites, ticks, fleas, worms, and flukes. Mites which cause sarcoptic mange are an ectoparasite of coyotes. Heartworm is an endoparasite in California's coyote population. This parasite can be transmitted to domestic dogs by mosquitoes.

COYOTE DESCRIPTION

Coyotes (*Canis latrans*) are found throughout most of California. Coyotes are very adaptable and inhabit most areas of the state with the exception of the centers of the major metropolitan areas. They are medium sized animals belonging to the dog family. Most adults weigh between 22-25 pounds on the average, with males being the larger of the sex. With large erect ears, slender muzzle, and bushy tail, they resemble a small collie dog. In the hotter, drier regions of California, coyotes are tan-brown in color with streaks of gray. In the more mountainous or humid areas the color is darker with less brown. In the winter the coats become quite dense, especially in the colder areas. The voice of the coyote is quite distinctive, consisting of various howls, high-pitched yaps, and occasional dog like barks. Coyotes are proficient predators, possessing the speed, strength, and endurance necessary to tackle prey as large as adult deer. Coyotes are not threatened or endangered in California. They are classified as non-game mammals by the DFG and can be taken at any time using approved methods.

COYOTE CONTROL

Where coyotes continue to be a problem after education techniques and non-lethal methods have proven unsuccessful or when human health and safety is jeopardized, it is sometimes necessary to kill one or more of the animals. Coyotes can be shot where legal and appropriate.

Cage traps are not effective in capturing adult coyotes and are not used by the Department of Fish and Wildlife (DFW). Additionally, due to disease

control and population genetics in wildlife management practices, *the DFW does not relocate coyotes.*

Coyotes can become accustomed to surviving in an urban or suburban environment. They unnaturally become dependent on man's resources for survival when they have been displaced due to the loss of their natural habitat. Other reasons include over population in their natural range, i.e. carrying capacity has been exceeded, or man has influenced the coyote's wild instincts due to the availability of urban food, water, and shelter.

Coyotes will return to their natural range and habitat when their food, water, and shelter in the urban environment has been substantially reduced or eliminated and they can no longer exist there.

****Sources -Managing Urban/Suburban Coyote Problems;**

United States Department of Agriculture, Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, Wildlife Services P.O. Box 255348 Sacramento, CA 95865-534.

-Living with California Coyotes; California Department of Fish and Game, 1416 Ninth Street, Sacramento, California 95814.

OPERATION . . . B-E-A-R

B_{eing} ***E***_{nvironmentally} ***A***_{ware} ***R***_{esponsibly}

A Fed Bear is a Dead Bear!

In the spring, bears emerge from their dens with one thing in mind, eating. They travel for miles in search of food, guided by a keen sense of smell. A full garbage can or a messy campsite might seem like the “motherlode” to a hungry bear, and that’s when most bear/human conflicts begin.

The California black bear, in addition to being a strong swimmer, sprinter, and climber, is very intelligent. One easy meal from a house, car, or campsite is all it takes for some bears to learn that people and food go together. Once a bear makes this association, it’s not a pleasant story for people or bears.

***The best way to avoid
conflict with bears
is to prevent it.***

One hungry bear is capable of causing thousands of dollars worth of property damage in a single incident. By law, a homeowner who has taken steps to eliminate bear attractants but still suffers property damage can obtain a permit from the DFW to kill the bear causing the problem.

Bears that are accustomed to people can become bold and even aggressive. There are dozens of documented cases of people being mauled, and even killed, by black bears. Although rare, when a bear behaves aggressively towards people, the DFW may need to euthanize the animal in the interest of public safety.

What About Relocation?

Over the years, wildlife agencies around the country have tried to solve bear/human conflicts by capturing and moving “problem bears” to other locations. Almost without exception, the relocated bear suffers one of three fates:

- 1) It returns to the place where it was captured and resumes its problem behavior.
- 2) It remains in its new location, continuing its problem behavior.
- 3) It dies in its new location as a result of conflicts with other bears.

What About “Bear Education”?

A researcher in Alaska tried an experiment to determine if bears that routinely raided local garbage cans could “unlearn” their behavior. He randomly placed pellets, laced with a chemical, in the garbage cans. When eaten, the pellets would cause the bears to vomit violently. These intelligent animals quickly learned that the garbage was fine, as long as they avoided the pellets.

Shooting bears with rubber bullets or pepper spray may temporarily scare them away, but it hasn’t been successful in changing a bear’s behavior if the bear has learned that food is available. At best, it is a short-term, temporary solution in areas that already have problem bears. As long as there is food available, the bears return after the rubber bullets and the pepper spray are put away. These tactics are legal for use only by law enforcement personnel and employees of some public agencies.

Prevention Is The Key

People who live in, or visit, bear habitat, have a responsibility to the wildlife whose habitat they are sharing. Feeding bears, whether intentional or not, can amount to a death sentence for the animal. More and more communities and camp grounds are adopting a zero-tolerance policy toward people who feed bears and other wildlife. In some places, people are being cited for failing to properly store food and garbage.

BEAR CONFLICT-PREVENTION CHECKLIST

Bears are attracted to anything smelly or edible, especially garbage. Bears are also attracted to bee hives, orchards, and gardens. Occasionally, livestock are killed and eaten.

Follow these guidelines to help keep your home “bear proof”:

- ✓ Deodorize garbage cans with bleach or ammonia.
- ✓ Double-bag garbage to help eliminate odors.
- ✓ Install bear-proof garbage and compost containers.
- ✓ Request a bear-proof garbage bin for your neighborhood, apartment complex, restaurant, or store.
- ✓ Rinse out condiment jars and food containers; prepare plastics, glass and paper goods for recycling when appropriate.
- ✓ Use garbage disposal when practical.
- ✓ Freeze meat bones, food scraps, or other smelly items until trash pick-up day.
- ✓ Be sure to keep barbecue grills clean.
- ✓ Pick up fallen tree fruit. Harvest garden vegetables routinely.
- ✓ Put away pet food and bird feeders at night.
- ✓ Close windows at night on accessible ground floors and decks.
- ✓ Don't leave food in or near a window sill or on a counter near an open window.
- ✓ Securely block access to potential hibernation sites, such as crawl spaces under decks or buildings.

When Visiting Bear Habitat

- ✓ **Keep a close watch on children and teach them what to do if they encounter a bear.**
- ✓ **While hiking, make noise to avoid a surprise encounter with a bear.**
- ✓ **Never keep food in your tent.**
- ✓ **Store food and toiletries in bear-proof containers or in an airtight container in the trunk of your vehicle.**
- ✓ **Keep a clean camp by cleaning up and storing food and garbage immediately after meals.**
- ✓ **Use bear-proof garbage cans whenever possible or store garbage in a secure location with your food.**

If You Encounter a Bear. . .

- ✓ **Never approach a bear. Give it plenty of room to pass. Most black bears try to avoid confrontation when given a chance.**
- ✓ **Do not run from a bear. Running away from a black bear may stimulate it's instinct to chase. You cannot outrun a bear.**
- ✓ **Stand and face the animal. Make eye contact without staring.**
- ✓ **If you have small children with you, pick them up so that they do not run or panic.**
- ✓ **Give the bear room so that it can avoid you.**
- ✓ **Do not pick up bear cubs! If you do, you run the risk of being attacked by a protective mother bear.**

- ✓ Contact the DFG if you think the cub is abandoned. Orphaned cubs can be captured, rehabilitated, and released, but only by organizations with specific authorization.

If a Black Bear Approaches . . .

- ✓ Make yourself appear larger, stand up, raise your arms, and open your jacket.
- ✓ Yell at the bear, bang pots and pans or whatever objects you may have with you, and create a general commotion.

If a Black Bear Attacks . . .

Black bear behavior is quite variable. Research indicates that bear attacks have been avoided or injuries reduced when the victims fought back using any means available.

Throwing rock rocks and striking the bear with branches or camping equipment have been shown to be effective.

Reporting a Problem

If a bear behaves aggressively or attacks people, contact the ***DFG's Surcom 24 hour Dispatch*** at:

The dispatcher will contact the nearest DFW office or Fish and Game Warden in your area. The DFW will assess the threat to public safety and take appropriate action.

Bear Facts

California has a large population of black bears (*ursus americanus*), estimated at 16,000 to 24,000 animals. Black bears range in color from black to cinnamon, often with a white blaze on the chest. Males are much larger than females. On average, a black bear is about 3 ½ feet tall (standing on all

four feet) and weighs about 200 pounds, but some males can weigh over 500 pounds. Black bears are strong swimmers and tree climbers. Although they have a clumsy walk, they are surprisingly fast sprinters, reaching speeds of up to 30 miles per hour.

In the wild, black bears occupy forests and wooded mountains. They are omnivorous, meaning they eat both meat and vegetation. They eat whatever is available, depending on the season. A typical diet consists of berries, plants, nuts, roots, fruit, honey, honeycombs, bees, insects and larvae. Bears also catch and eat fish and small mammals, and will eat carrion (dead animals).

Female bears mate beginning at four years of age, and produce cubs every other year. The cubs remain with their mother for 18-20 months, learning to forage and hunt. As winter approaches, bears will forage up to 20 hours a day, storing enough fat to sustain them through hibernation. They seek out a suitable den, such as a hollow tree (sometimes 40 to 60 feet above the ground) and line it with leaves or pine needles. Female with yearling cubs will hibernate with their cubs. Bears remain in their dens, without eating, until spring. They will often return to the same den to hibernate year after year. Large trees are very important to bears.

****Source -Living with California Black Bears, California Department of Fish and Game
1416 Ninth Street Sacramento, California 95814.**

WILDLIFE INCIDENT REPORT FORM

Reporting Party

Date _____ Time _____

Name _____

Address _____

County _____ Description of Area _____

Species Reported _____ **Coyote** ___ **Bear** ___ **Mountain Lion**

Nature of Report - sighting, perceived threat by reporting party,
pet attacked/taken, human contact, unusual behavior, other circumstances.

Narrative

Investigative Actions Taken phone _____ onsite visit _____
report confirmed _____ report not confirmed _____

Summary Action educational items provided, mailed _____ given to person _____

Notifications ___ Wildlife Watch Team ___ DFG Natural Resource Volunteer
___ DFW Los Alamitos Mon. – Fri. 8:00am – 5:00pm
___ DFW San Diego Mon. – Fri. 8.00am – 5:00pm
___ DFW Surcom Dispatch 24 hr

Reported by _____ **Date** _____

CA DFG Public Safety Wildlife Guidelines 2072

Consistent with Section 1801 of the Fish and Game Code, these Public Safety Wildlife Guidelines provide procedures to address public safety wildlife problems. Mountain lions, black bears, deer, coyotes, and large exotic carnivores which have threatened or attacked humans are wildlife classified as public safety problems.

Department employees may deploy less-than-lethal ammunition or devices to assist in alleviating a wildlife incident as determined by the employee. If a Department law enforcement officer deploys such methods it is the officer's responsibility to ensure any firearm used is unloaded with the less-than-lethal ammunition, checked and reloaded with the proper ammunition for that firearm. When there are multiple officers on an incident, at least one other officer if readily available, should assist the primary officer in ensuring firearms are checked and loaded with the proper ammunition.

Specifically related to Public Safety Mountain Lions, the following is the Department's legal interpretation of FGC Sections 4800 and 4801:

Section 4800(c) provides that a person taking or injuring a mountain lion (activity otherwise prohibited) is not guilty of a violation of law "if the individual was acting in self defense or in defense of others." Therefore, a peace officer may kill or injure a mountain lion when the officer is confronted with a situation in which in the officer's judgment the lion poses an emergency threat to public safety. The language in 4800(c) would be rendered meaningless if it were interpreted to mean that local officers could kill lions in defense of members of the public, even in emergencies, only after consulting with and securing authorization from the Department.

Section 4801 provides that the Department may take lions that constitute an "imminent" threat to public safety or that we may authorize local agencies with public safety responsibilities to do so. This provision applies to situations in which the lion has been judged to be a threat to the safety of the public but there is no immediate emergency which requires urgent action to protect the public. When there is time to seek assistance or authorization from the Department in order to take a lion which poses a threat to public safety, the local agency should do so. When, however, officers are confronted with emergent circumstances requiring immediate action to protect either themselves or members of the public, the officers have innate power and authorization under section 4800(c) to kill or injure mountain lions.

Pursuant to FGC Section 4800(c), an individual that takes or injures a mountain lion while acting in self-defense or in defense of others is not guilty of a violation of Section 4800.

Public safety wildlife incidents are classified into three types:

- **A. Type Green (sighting)**
A report (confirmed or unconfirmed) of an observation that is perceived by the public to be a public safety wildlife problem. The mere presence of the wildlife species does not in itself constitute a threat.
- **B. Type Yellow (threat)**
A report where the presence of the public safety wildlife is confirmed by a field investigation and the responding person (law enforcement officer or Department employee) perceives the animal to be an imminent threat to public health or safety. Imminent threat means there is a likelihood of human injury based on the totality of the circumstances.
- **C. Type Red (attack)**
An attack by a public safety wildlife species on a human resulting in physical contact, injury, or death.

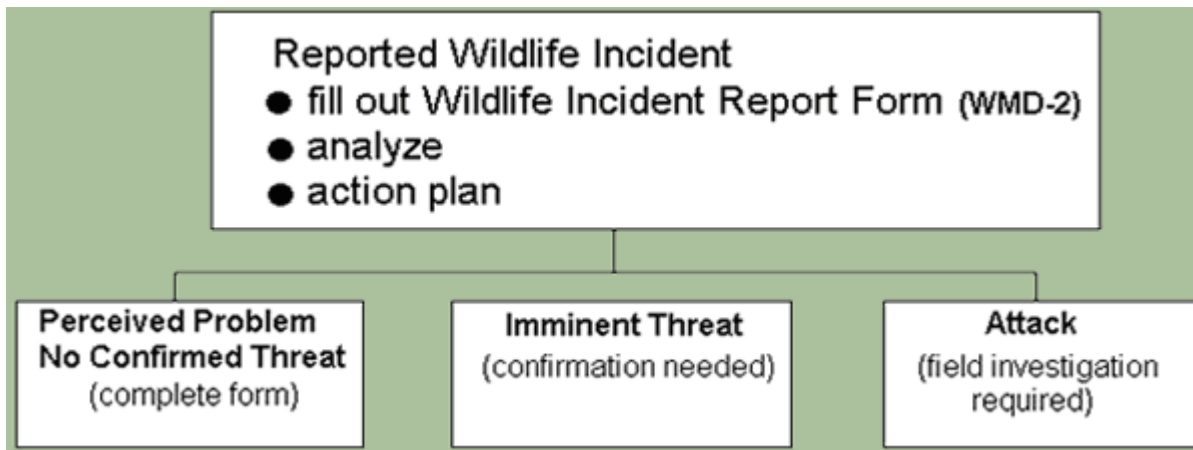
These guidelines are not intended to address orphaned, injured, or sick wildlife which have not threatened public safety. To achieve the intent of these guidelines, the following procedures shall be used.

I. Wildlife Incident Report Form

Fill out a Wildlife Incident Report Form (WMD-2) for all reports of public safety wildlife incidents. The nature of the report will determine the response or investigative action to the public safety problem. For those reports which require a follow-up field investigation, the Wildlife Incident Report Form will be completed by the field investigator. All completed Wildlife Incident Report Forms shall be forwarded through the regional offices to the Chief, Wildlife Branch (WB) and the Chief of Enforcement.

II. Response to Public Safety Wildlife Problems

The steps in responding to a public safety wildlife incident are diagramed below:



Any reported imminent threats or attacks on humans by wildlife will require a follow-up field investigation.

If a public safety wildlife species is outside its natural habitat or in an area where it could become a public safety problem, and if approved by the Deputy Director for the Wildlife and Fisheries Division (WFD), it may be captured using restraint techniques approved by the Wildlife Investigations Laboratory (WIL). The disposition of the captured wildlife may be coordinated with WIL. Public safety wildlife species confirmed by Department field staff to pose an imminent threat to public safety shall not be relocated for release. The Department of Fish and Game will utilize reasonable means to take a public safety animal. However, when reasonable means to take the animal have been attempted, and the imminent threat no longer exists, the Department shall reassess the public safety status of the animal.

A. Type Green (sighting)

If the investigator determines that no imminent threat to public safety exists, the incident is considered a Type Green. The appropriate action may include providing wildlife behavior information and mailing public educational materials to the reporting party.

B. Type Yellow (threat)

Once the field investigator finds evidence of the public safety wildlife and perceives the animal to be an imminent threat to public health or safety, the incident is considered a Type Yellow. In the event of threat to public safety, any Department employee responding to a reported public safety incident may take whatever action is deemed necessary within the scope of the employee's authority to protect public safety. When evidence shows that a wild animal is an imminent threat to public safety, that wild animal shall be humanely euthanized (shot, killed, dispatched, destroyed, etc.).

For Type Yellow incidents the following steps should be taken:

1. Initiate the Incident Command System. The Incident Commander (IC) consults with the regional manager, assistant chief or designee to decide on the notification process on a case-by-case basis. Full notification includes: the field investigator's supervisor, the appropriate regional manager and assistant chief, the Deputy Director, WFD, Chief, of Enforcement, Chief, WB, WIL, Wildlife Forensics Lab (WFL), the designated regional information officer, and the local law enforcement agency.
2. Notify the appropriate Dispatch Center. Dispatch shall notify the above-mentioned personnel.
3. Secure the scene as appropriate. Take all practical steps to preserve potential evidence. The IC holds initial responsibility and authority over the scene, locating the animal, its resultant carcass, and any other physical evidence from the attack. The IC will ensure proper transfer and disposition of all physical evidence.
4. In most situations, it is important to locate the offending animal as soon as practical. WIL may be of assistance. The services of USDA, Wildlife Services (WS) can be arranged by the regional manager, assistant chief or designee contacting the local WS District Supervisor. If possible, avoid shooting the animal in the head to preserve evidence.
5. If an animal is killed, the IC will decide on the notification process and notify Sacramento Dispatch if appropriate. Use clean protective gloves while handling the carcass. Place the carcass inside a protective durable body bag (avoid dragging the carcass, if possible).

C. Type Red (attack)

In the event of an attack, the responding Department employee may take any action necessary that is within the scope of the employee's authority to protect public safety. When evidence shows that a wild animal has made an unprovoked attack on a human, that wild animal shall be humanely euthanized (shot, killed, dispatched, destroyed, etc.). For Type Red incidents the following steps should be taken:

1. Ensure proper medical aid for the victim. Identify the victim (obtain the following, but not limited to: name, address, phone number).
2. Notify the appropriate Dispatch Center. Dispatch shall notify the field investigator's supervisor, the appropriate regional manager and assistant chief, the Deputy Director, WFD, Chief of Enforcement, Chief, WB, WIL, WFL, the designated regional information officer, and the local law enforcement agency.
3. Initiate the Incident Command System. If a human death has occurred, an Enforcement Branch supervisor or specialist will respond to the Incident Command Post and assume the IC responsibilities. The IC holds initial responsibility and authority over the scene, locating the animal, its resultant carcass, and any other physical evidence from the attack. The IC will ensure proper transfer and disposition of all physical evidence.
4. Secure the area as needed. Treat the area as a crime scene. In order to expedite the capture of the offending animal and preserve as much on-scene evidence as possible, the area of the incident must be secured immediately by the initial responding officer. The area should be excluded from public access by use of flagging tape or similar tape (e.g., "Do Not Enter") utilized at crime scenes by local law enforcement agencies. One entry and exit port should be established. Only essential authorized personnel should be permitted in the excluded area. A second area outside the area of the incident should be established as the command post.
5. In cases involving a human death, WFL personnel will direct the gathering of evidence. Secure items such as clothing, tents, sleeping bags, objects used for defense during the attack, objects chewed on by the animal, or any other materials which may possess the attacking animal's saliva, hair, or blood.
6. If the victim is alive, advise the attending medical personnel about the Carnivore Attack-Victim Sampling Kit for collecting possible animal saliva stains or hair that might still be on the victim. If the victim is dead, advise the medical examiner of this evidence need. This sampling kit may be obtained from the WFL.
7. It is essential to locate the offending animal as soon as practical. WIL may be of assistance. The services of WS can be arranged by the regional manager, assistant chief or designee contacting the local WS District Supervisor. If possible, avoid shooting the animal in the head to preserve evidence.
8. If an animal is killed, the IC will notify the appropriate Dispatch Center. Treat the carcass as evidence. Use clean protective gloves and (if possible) a face mask while handling the carcass. Be guided by the need to protect the animal's external body from: loss of bloodstains or other such physical evidence originating from the victim; contamination by the animal's own blood; and contamination by the human handler's hair, sweat, saliva, skin cells, etc. Tape paper bags over the head and paws, then tape plastic bags over the paper bags. Plug wounds with tight gauze to minimize contamination of the animal with its own blood. Place the carcass inside a protective durable body bag (avoid dragging the carcass, if possible).
9. WFL will receive from the IC and/or directly obtain all pertinent physical evidence concerning the primary questions of authenticity of the attack and identity of the offending animal. WFL has first access and authority over the carcass after the IC. WFL will immediately contact and coordinate with the county health department the acquisition of appropriate samples for rabies testing. Once WFL has secured the necessary forensic samples, they will then release authority over the carcass to WIL for disease studies.
10. An independent diagnostic laboratory approved by WIL will conduct necropsy and disease studies on the carcass. The WIL will retain primary authority over this aspect of the carcass.

D. Responsibilities of WIL

WIL investigates wildlife disease problems statewide and provides information on the occurrence of both enzootic and epizootic disease in wildlife populations. Specimens involved

in suspected disease problems are submitted to WIL for necropsy and disease studies. Most animals killed for public safety reasons will be necropsied to assess the status of health and whether the presence of disease may have caused the aggressive and/or unusual behavior.

Type Yellow public safety animals killed may be necropsied by WIL or an independent diagnostic laboratory approved by WIL. Contact WIL immediately after a public safety animal is killed to determine where it will be necropsied. Arrangements are to be made directly with WIL prior to submission of the carcass to any laboratory.

Type Red public safety animals killed will be necropsied by an independent diagnostic laboratory approved by WIL. Contact WIL prior to submission of the carcass to any laboratory to allow the Department veterinarian to discuss the disease testing requirements with the attending pathologist. A disease testing protocol has been developed for use with Type Red public safety wildlife.

E. Responsibilities of WFL

WFL has the statewide responsibility to receive, collect, examine and analyze physical evidence, issue reports on evidence findings, and testify in court as to those results. WFL's primary function in public safety incidents is to verify or refute the authenticity of the purported attack and to corroborate or refute the involvement of the suspected offending animal.

Type Yellow public safety animals killed may be examined by WFL personnel. The examination of the carcass will be coordinated with WIL.

All **Type Red** public safety animals killed must be examined by WFL personnel or a qualified person approved by WFL supervisor using specific procedures established by WFL.

If a human death occurs, coordination of the autopsy between the proper officials and WFL is important so that WFL personnel can be present during the autopsy for appropriate sampling and examination. In the event of human injury, it is important for WFL to gather any relevant physical evidence that may corroborate the authenticity of a wildlife attack, prior to the treatment of injuries, if practical. If not practical, directions for sampling may be given over the telephone to the emergency room doctor by WFL.

F. Media Contact

Public safety wildlife incidents attract significant media attention. Issues regarding site access, information dissemination, the public's safety, carcass viewing and requests to survey the scene can be handled by a designated employee. Each region and the Chief of Enforcement shall designate an employee with necessary ICS training to respond as a regional information officer to public safety wildlife incidents.

Type Yellow public safety wildlife incidents may require the notification of a designated employee previously approved by the regional manager, assistant chief or designee to assist the IC in responding to the media and disseminating information. The IC has the authority to decide if the designated employee should be dispatched to the site.

All **Type Red** public safety wildlife incidents require that a designated employee, previously approved by the regional manager, assistant chief or designee, shall be called to the scene to assist the IC in responding to the media and disseminating information, is called to the scene.

The Department will develop and provide training for designated employees to serve as information officers for public safety wildlife incidents.