



City of Richmond

Report to Committee

To PROC - Jan. 29 2013

To: Parks, Recreation and Cultural Services
Committee

From: Mike Redpath
Senior Manager, Parks

Re: Urban Wildlife Management Framework

Date: January 16, 2013

File: 11-7200-01/2012-Vol
01

Staff Recommendation

That:

1. The Urban Wildlife Management Framework as described in the report, Urban Wildlife Management Framework, dated January 16, 2013 from the Senior Manager, Parks be received for information.
2. The report, Urban Wildlife Management Framework, dated January 16, 2013 from the Senior Manager, Parks be forward to the Richmond Board of Education for information.

Mike Redpath
Senior Manager, Parks
(604-247-4942)

REPORT CONCURRENCE			
ROUTED TO:	CONCURRENCE	CONCURRENCE OF GENERAL MANAGER	
Sustainability Environmental Services	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
REVIEWED BY SMT SUBCOMMITTEE	INITIALS: 	REVIEWED BY CAO	INITIALS:

Staff Report

Origin

Interactions between Richmond residents, our urban environment and wildlife are frequent and, at times, challenging. A framework for considering and addressing these challenges is necessary in order for the City to respond appropriately. The purpose of this report is to present an urban wildlife management framework and to provide examples of species-specific proactive management efforts to be implemented between 2013 and 2015.

This report builds on the snow geese management plan presented to Council in 2010 and refines the City's approach to urban wildlife management as a whole. It was requested as a result of a discussion during the October 2012 Manager's report regarding snow geese.

Analysis

Urban wildlife management is a decision-making process to guide implementation of practices which purposefully influence interactions among people, wildlife and habitats. In British Columbia, all levels of government have a role in urban wildlife management.

In 2012, EBB Environmental Consulting, Inc. (EBB) worked with the City to provide information on managing urban wildlife in general and as well species specific information for Richmond. The information provided by EBB formed the basis for the development of the management framework.

Enabling Legislation:

Furbearing animals, including coyote, beaver, striped skunk and raccoon, are protected under the BC Wildlife Act and are regulated by open hunting seasons. Striped skunks and raccoons are classified as Schedule B Species, meaning that they may be trapped only within a designated open hunting season or when protecting property.

Migratory birds, including Canada Geese, Snow Geese, waterfowl, woodpeckers and seagulls are protected by the federal Migratory Birds Convention Act and Section 34 of the BC Wildlife Act. Management of these species that involves hazing or removal requires federal or provincial authorizations to be in place.

The effects of interactions among people, wildlife and habitats are often felt most strongly by the municipal government in the form of questions by local residents, impacts on private and public property and concerns for the well-being of residents and wildlife. Therefore, the local government has a role in setting local management guidelines and strategies within the applicable regulations and in conjunction with all stakeholders.

Urban Wildlife Management Framework for Richmond:

Since late 2007, Richmond has experienced a significant increase in the number of snow geese in the City and in particular, snow geese using parks and school fields as feeding grounds.

Working in conjunction with Canadian Wildlife Services and other impacted stakeholders such as YVR and the City of Delta, many efforts have been made to manage interactions among snow geese, people and their habitat. In 2010, staff proposed ongoing snow geese management practises which included hazing, the planting of cover crops to provide additional feeding grounds and educational initiatives. These efforts have provided the City experience and exposure to several management techniques. In 2011, there were 113 calls logged from residents requesting assistance regarding snow geese. In 2012, this number dropped to 76 although the overall population of snow geese in the area increased during that time.

Snow geese are not the only urban wildlife issue for the City. Interactions with other species can also create issues and concerns for residents. The framework below details a strategic and collaborative approach to addressing urban wildlife management concerns in the City. The framework is based on following key pillars:

- Education
- Habitat Preservation, Modification & Creation
- Scaled Intervention
- Monitoring & Research

Figure 1: Urban Wildlife Management Framework

	Description	Sample Methodologies
Education	Public communication and consultation to allow residents to better understand the ecology of urban wildlife while also listening to and responding to the concerns of residents where interactions occur.	Nature Park Programs, School Programs, Signage, Press Releases, public meetings, consultation and collaboration with stakeholder agencies.
Habitat Preservation, Modification and / or Creation	Preserving and protecting natural habitats which occur in areas where conflicts with residents are minimized; Altering landscapes to dissuade urban wildlife in environments where the impacts on residents are negative; creating suitable habitats where impacts to residents are likely to be lower than existing habitats.	Removing attractants, planting small shrubs and trees in manicured grass areas; implementing old-field management plans; participating in the Delta Farm and Wildlife Trust cover crop program.
Scaled Intervention	In conjunction with all stakeholders, and within regulatory frameworks, consider deterring wildlife through physical interventions. Each intervention is approached in a scalable manner and least invasive methods are implemented before more invasive methods.	Deterrents such as hazing, noise, lights; egg adding; relocation of species, removal of species.
Monitoring and Research	Ongoing monitoring of urban wildlife management issues and research developments.	Tracking of resident calls and concerns; collaboration with other levels of government on research and strategy development.

2013 – 2015 Species -Specific Urban Wildlife Management Methodology:

Snow Geese, Canada Geese and Raccoons are the most frequent sources of urban wildlife concerns by Richmond residents as reported to the City. The following table shows the planned management strategies for each of these three key species for the next three years.

Species	Education	Habitat	Scaled Intervention (subject to continued permission from Canadian Wildlife Services)	Monitoring and Research
Snow Geese	Nature Park Programs in Schools and Urban Wildlife display. Response to resident calls and concerns.	Support for winter crop overseeding at farms in south Richmond and Delta; modification of habitat on River Road where there the snow geese create a nuisance for residents and a hazard to YVR.	Hazing using dogs and lasers and scare tactics such as scare kites in areas where the geese impact the use of public spaces or where they pose a threat to public safety.	Collaboration with Lower Mainland Snow Goose steering Committee to develop a regional management plan; tracking of resident calls and concerns; working with YVR on alternative management techniques such as the use of raptors.
Canada Geese	Nature Park Programs and urban wildlife display; collaboration with Canadian Wildlife Services	Modification of specific habitats to reduce attractiveness to Canada geese in areas where there is a threat to airport safety.	Hazing using dogs and lasers and scare tactics such as scare kites in areas where the geese impact the use of public spaces or where they pose a threat to public safety.	Collaboration with YVR and other stakeholders on developing new management techniques.
Raccoons	Development of Raccoon 'fact sheet' for residents to assist them in reducing raccoon attractants and 'raccoon-proofing' their property; Nature Park urban wildlife display.	n/a	n/a	Increase tracking of raccoon concerns from residents to develop a better understanding of their impact.

Key to this urban wildlife management methodology is the monitoring and research component. It is expected that after a three-year implementation period, this framework will be readjusted based on the information collected in accordance with this pillar.

\$20,000 in the Parks annual operating budget currently supports the implementation of urban wildlife management. As well, there is approximately \$60,000 remaining from additional level

funding received in 2010 for snow goose management which will further support these activities through 2015. This additional level funding was originally intended for a comprehensive research study. However, staff found that working with others such as Canadian Wildlife Services and YVR to do most of the research was more cost-effective and the funds were not fully required.

Financial Impact

None.

Conclusion

The urban wildlife management framework will allow staff to respond to residents' questions and concerns while ensuring the City is working within the appropriate regulatory environment and respecting our city's unique ecology.



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