Where the Urban Wild Things Are

City of Davis Earth Day Series
Veteran’s Memorial Center
April 18, 2017
Outline

• Habitat Types around Davis
• Species Composition
• Conflicts and Conflict Resolution
• Planning
• Q&A
Habitat Types

• Urban Habitat (10 sq miles of urban, 400 ac parks)
  – Tree grove and strips
  – Turf
  – Shrub
  – Structures

• Remnant or Restored Native Habitat (1,000 ac)
  – Riparian
  – Fresh emergent wetlands
  – Oak savannah
  – Perennial grassland

• Agriculture (2,000 ac ag/ habitat easements)
Urban Habitat

Drainage Corridors
Streetscapes

Greenbelts
Created/Remnant Habitat

El Macero

Wildhorse

Agricultural Buffers
Stormwater Detention Ponds
Woodbridge Natural Area
Agriculture

Howatt Ranch
Other Elements that Support Local Wildlife

- Dense and mature urban forest canopy
- Extensive greenbelt system
- Stable environmental conditions
- Plenty of food resources
  - Compost, garbage, pet foods, fruit and nut trees
  - Irrigation water
Species Composition

• **Common**
  • Mammals, birds, reptiles and amphibians

• **Protected**
  • BUOW
  • SWHA
  • Other birds-of-prey
  • Migratory birds

• **Locally rare but not protected**
  • Sacramento Valley red fox
  • Yellow-billed magpie
  • Western gray squirrel
Common Urban Wildlife
Uncommon or protected
Urban Wildlife v. Human Conflict

• Wildlife as the problem
  – Public health and safety threats
  – Aesthetic impacts
  – Property damage
  – Resource competition
  – “Space invasion”

• Humans as the problem
  – Habitat removal/ creation
  – Disturbance
  – Feeding/ poisoning
  – Lack of tolerance
Wildlife v. Wildlife Conflict

- Non-native/ invasive species
  - Resource competition
  - Habitat modification
  - Displacement
  - Predation
- Eastern fox squirrel
- European starling
- Canada goose
- Bullfrog
Public Safety Issues

- Disease vector
  - Rabies, salmonella, plague, etc.
- Traffic/ Bike/ Ped hazards
  - Collision avoidance
- Attacks
  - Bites to humans
Aesthetic Impacts

- Feces
- Nests on structures
- Noise
Property Damage

- Nesting/ roosting in attics, crawl spaces, vehicles
- Gnawing
  - Walls
  - Irrigation lines
- Digging/ “grubbing” in landscaping
- Public utilities
Resource Competition

• Eating fruits and veggies
• Pet food and pets
Space Invasion?

• The mere presence of wildlife can alarm some residents
Habitat Creation and Removal

- Lush backyards become habitat
- Habitats become lush backyards
Disturbance

- Noise
- Dogs, cats and pedestrians
- Tree maintenance
Supplemental Feeding

• Loving wildlife to death...
  – Feeder diseases and consistency
  – Habituation
• Unintentional
  – Pets and pet foods
  – Feeders
  – Trash
  – Fruits and veggies
Lack of Tolerance

- The mere presence of wildlife can alarm some residents
Quiz

In 2016, the City received 54 wildlife complaints. Name the 5 species that received the most complaints.

1. Wild turkey (20)
2. Raccoon (12)
3. Skunk (6)
4. Fox squirrel (5)
5. Opossum (3)

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<td>Opossum</td>
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Conflict Resolution

• City’s general policy is to promote non-lethal means of conflict resolution with wildlife.
  – Education and outreach
  – Hazing
  – Population monitoring and management

• Lethal removal may be necessary if the individual is a public health and safety threat.
Education and Outreach

- Phone advice, property visits, community events, school presentations, etc.
- Species behavior and life history
- Understanding
- Appreciation
- Conflict resolution strategies
- Coexistence
- Deterrents
Managing Conflict at Home

• What works?
  – Persistance
  – Exclusion
  – Removing food, cover and/or water
  – Motion activated sprinklers
  – Some taste and smell products

• What doesn’t?
  – Some taste and smell products
  – Predator decoys*
  – Using one method at a time.
Hazing

• To scare an animal away and/or make conditions less suitable for them.
  – Direct and repeated engagement with problem animal until it leaves the area or retreats to a suitable distance.
Population Management

- Management planning
- Monitor
- Treat
  - Canada geese
    - Nest removal
    - Egg oiling
  - Wild turkey
    - Nest removal
    - Trap and relocation
Wildlife Planning

• Project review
  – Avoidance and mitigation
    • Timing, design, monitoring

• Policy
  – Disking Ordinance
  – Leash law
  – Management plans

• Habitat creation/restoration

• Research
Example of Management Planning
Coyote Coexistence Plan

• Result of community interest in preventing the lethal removal of urban coyotes and a desire to support top predators within the urban/suburban habitat.
Goal

• To promote coexistence with urban coyotes.
  – Using current scientific research and best known management practices;
  – community education and outreach;
  – tiered response to coyote behavior/aggression;
  – coyote behavioral modification
Coexistence Plan

• Guiding principles
  1. Urban wildlife are important members of an ecological system, and reminders of global conservation issues.
  2. The Davis community appreciates wildlife and supports the creation of open space and wildlife habitat in and around the city. Coexistence is the foundation of the city’s general wildlife management program.
  3. Human safety is a priority in managing wildlife/human conflicts.
Guiding Principles Cont...

4. Preventive practices such as, reduction and removal of wildlife attractants, habitat manipulation (e.g. removal of potential coyote denning areas), and responding appropriately when interacting with wildlife are key to minimizing potential human conflicts.

5. The city Wildlife Resource Specialist’s management techniques and decisions are based on a thorough understanding of the biology and ecology of urban wildlife species.

6. Education and outreach are essential in supporting human and wildlife coexistence.
7. Emphasis of the management plan is placed on preventative measures and non-lethal controls.

8. Lethal controls may be necessary, but should be considered only when public safety is clearly at risk and/ or all other options have failed.
Management Strategy

• Community outreach and education
  – Removing food and other attractants
  – Keeping pets on a leash
  – Be a scary human!

• Complaint Investigation and response
  – Investigate and record coyote observations
  – Hazing teams

• Attack Response

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**BE COYOTE AWARE**

Coyotes are common throughout North America, including in urban areas. You may see and hear them more during mating season (Dec-Feb) and when juveniles are dispersing from family groups (Sept-Nov). These facts and safety tips will help increase comfort and decrease conflicts when living or recreating near America’s native “Song Dog”.

**Facts**

- Coyotes are members of the dog family; they are curious, adaptable, and learn quickly.
- Coyotes often mate for life, are devoted parents, and are highly communicative (barks, yips, howls).
- Coyotes weigh 18-35 pounds in the West and 30-60 pounds in the East.
- Coyotes may be more protective of dens/territories during pup rearing (April-Aug).
- Coyotes eat large numbers of rodents and rabbits, as well as fruit, vegetation, insects and carrion. They help keep ecosystems vital, healthy and clean.
- Coyotes are naturally wary of people but can habituate to our presence and the reliable food sources that we provide.

**Safety**

- DON’T FEED COYOTES. Their life and your safety depend on coyotes remaining wild and naturally wary of people.
- Remove attractants; pick up trash, secure garbage, and feed pets inside. Don’t leave food or pets outside at night.
- Walk dogs on leashes, especially during pup rearing season (April-Aug). Pick up your small dog if you see a coyote and don’t let pets roam.
- If approached, don’t run. Wave arms, make noise and walk toward the coyote until he retreats. Be “Big, Bad and Loud!”
- Avoid areas where coyotes may be denning or feeding/hiding pups.
- Appreciate coyotes from a distance. Share this information with family and friends.

HELP KEEP COYOTES WILD AND WARY! DO NOT FEED WILDLIFE.

Report coyotes to the Davis Police Department, 530-747-5400

Davis

PROJECTCOYOTES.ORG
Challenges and Limitations

- Education and outreach may not be effective in changing human behavior
- Management practices may not be effective in changing coyote behavior
- Trap and relocation is illegal and ecologically irresponsible
- This plan will not supersede federal, state or county regulations and policies
- This plan will not limit an individuals legal rights to protect private property.
Questions?

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Photo Credit: Jo Ellen Ryan