



# PLEASE DON'T FEED PARK WILDLIFE

## Why "Handouts" Hurt

Visitors who offer food to animals and birds may have good intentions, but their "handouts" are more likely to cause harm than to help.

**Longstanding park regulations strictly prohibit the feeding of wildlife.**

Here's why:

**Visitors risk injury if they don't keep a respectful distance.** Animals startle easily, and they sometimes react by biting or scratching when people get too close. Also, wildlife carry diseases that can be transferred to humans, such as rabies.

**Wild animals lose their natural fear of humans when they are fed.** Such animals tend to become a nuisance to park visitors; those that grow too aggressive may have to be destroyed.

**When people provide food, wildlife populations increase to levels the natural environment cannot sustain.**

This unstable situation is often followed by animal starvation or by outbreaks of disease.



**Wild animals, birds, and fish have specialized natural diets, and they can become malnourished or die if given the wrong foods.** Because young animals need the proper nutrients to grow, they are particularly vulnerable.

**Feeding wild animals creates problems that affect the larger ecosystem.** Species that tolerate people gain a competitive edge over species that don't, disrupting the natural balance. Serious ecological problems also result from feeding non-native, semi-wild animals such as feral cats, which prey on wildlife.

You can best help our wild animals by **not feeding them** and by keeping your stored food and trash out of their reach. Thank you for your support!



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