Wildlife in the Washington Metropolitan Region: Public Demand for Information and Assistance

A White Paper prepared by the Animal Services Subcommittee of the Human Services and Public Safety Policy Committee of Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments

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Introduction

In urban and suburban communities, the activities of wild animals sometimes create conflicts with people, and human activities sometimes harm wild animals. As people and wild animals compete for space, conflicts often escalate.

Further, most urbanites and suburbanites are not well informed about the natural behavior of wild animals around them, leading them to seek basic information when a conflict or concerns arises and sometimes to demand inappropriate actions be taken. Animal care and control professionals informally report that this demand is significant but little data have been collected and little formal attention paid to its impact on public agencies and private organizations.

> ***To examine the wildlife-related demand within the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments (MWCOG) jurisdictions and suggest potential actions to address that demand, MWCOG prepared this White Paper.***

The Survey

A key element in developing this White Paper was a survey of entities in MWCOG jurisdictions to whom the public turns for information and assistance with wildlife. The survey asked about the quantity and nature of public demand and how these entities responded to that demand. Animal care and control (ACO) and sheltering agencies and organizations, state and local health departments, police, state wildlife agencies, US Department of Agriculture's Wildlife Services state offices, wildlife rehabilitators, nuisance wildlife control operators (NWCO), and national animal welfare organizations with local offices were identified as potential respondents. Between March and September 2004, surveys were distributed to 202 potential respondents; 65 were returned. Approximately one-third of the actual respondents were rehabilitators, slightly fewer than a quarter were NWCO, and slightly more than 15 percent were ACO and sheltering agencies and organizations.

Survey Findings

- ***All respondents together reported receiving nearly 141,000 calls a year about wildlife.*** ACO and sheltering agencies and organizations reported the largest volume of calls. Rehabilitators reported the second largest volume.

- ***The public most frequently called about an animal seen in a yard, and nearly as frequently about an injured or orphaned animal.***

- The public directed different concerns to different categories of respondents with the exception that ***the public turned to ACO and sheltering agencies and organizations for all concerns***.

- ***The public most frequently called about common animals.*** Songbirds, raccoons, and squirrels were the subject of the most calls.

- ***The nature of responses to typical concerns tended to mirror each category of respondents' mission and typical activities*** with one major exception. Rehabilitators, whose primary mission is care of animals to return them to the wild, overwhelmingly responded by educating callers. ACO and sheltering respondents most frequently dispatched to the site. Government agencies other than ACO primarily referred callers to others. NWCO frequently trapped animals.

- ***All categories of respondents reported that they referred some calls to others.*** This was particularly noted for calls about an animal living in an attic, basement, under a building, or similar situations and calls about migratory birds whose handling and care require a federal permit.

- ***Public education to prevent human-wildlife conflict was not widely reported.*** Slightly fewer than half the respondents proactively offered information to prevent conflicts.

- Slightly more than half of the respondents reported that they euthanized animals themselves; others reported the animals were euthanized by a veterinarian, a shelter, or a rehabilitator. ***Just over half reported that they had to euthanize healthy animals due to a lack of other options.***

- ***Nearly all respondents reported that they share information that the animal will be killed with members of public***. The few respondents who did not share this information were NWCO.

Discussion of Findings

The findings of our survey confirm the experience of ACO and sheltering professionals as they struggle to respond to demand for wildlife-related assistance.

> ***There is large public demand in MWCOG jurisdictions for information and assistance with wildlife questions and concerns. This demand is falling unevenly on a patchwork of public and private entities with varying missions and resources, most with limited resources.***

In particular, ACO and sheltering agencies reported the largest volume of demand for all types of wildlife concerns but are generally tasked and funded to deal with wildlife only in specific limited circumstances. Rehabilitators are also bearing much of the demand, including much that falls outside their primary mission, and significant volume of demand is falling on other government agencies and on police. The common practice of referring calls likely drives up the total volume as each wildlife question or conflict may generate multiple calls.

By primarily turning to public agencies for information and assistance, clearly people are demonstrating their view that wildlife concerns are public responsibilities.

Common situations concerning common animals unsurprisingly generate most demand. For the two most frequently reported concerns, an animal seen in a yard and suspected injured or orphaned young animals, the most appropriate response is often to provide basic information. Therefore, ***there is significant potential to decrease overall demand by increasing the general public's knowledge on these topics.***

Typical responses reported for wildlife concerns were generally appropriate for the nature of each concern. The one exception was that trapping was not an uncommon response to an animal seen in a yard; primarily by NWCO. The use of trapping in this typically unthreatening situation suggests that animals are being inappropriately removed.

Wildlife conflicts, as all conflicts, involve two parties; in these cases people and wild animals. Conflicts can be approached by dealing only with the animals or they can also be approached by people changing their expectations, behavior, or environment. In our findings, most categories of respondents tended to respond by focusing only on the animal. Only rehabilitators reported a strong tendency to respond by focusing on people by educating callers. ***Less than half the respondents undertook proactive public education to enable people to prevent conflicts.***

Our findings leave a great deal of uncertainty about why many wild animals involved in conflicts or subject of concerns were killed. One clear result is that many of our respondents kill healthy wild animals because they believe they lack other options. A large minority do not euthanize animals themselves. This increases demand on others; primarily on veterinarians and secondarily on shelters.

Recommendations

The White Paper puts forward several recommendations to better address the public demand for wildlife-related information and assistance. The recommendations for potential actions were ranked in priority order based on relative importance, urgency, and practicality. The highest ranked recommendations are discussed first.

- **Professional Education**

1. MWCOG jurisdictions ***review existing professional training*** on wildlife-related responsibilities and activities to identify existing regional training resources and gaps.

2. The Animal Services Committee ***identify best practices*** regionally and/or nationally that may be appropriate to emulate.

3. MWCOG jurisdictions ***formally include training*** on their wildlife-related responsibilities and activities in existing professional education where such training is not currently required and/or offered.

4. The Animal Services Committee ***explore the potential for partnering*** with rehabilitator organizations to offer and/or encourage increase availability of training for rehabilitators on resolving wildlife conflicts.

5. MWCOG jurisdictions ***work with state and District regulators towards requiring professional education for NWCO who operate in the MWCOG region*** so these businesses are operating in a manner that does not create additional demand on public agencies or other private entities.

- **Targeted Public Education**

1. ***A public/private partnership*** potentially including MWCOG jurisdictions, sheltering organizations, wildlife rehabilitators, animal welfare and wildlife organizations, wildlife related businesses, and any other like-minded public and private entities be formed to undertake a targeted public education program.

2. MWCOG Animal Services Committee ***review existing public education efforts*** by member agencies and others for models to adopt or adapt regionally.

3. ***Delivery be proactive*** including such things as public services announcements on radio and TV, targeted advertising such as radio and TV traffic sponsorships, print advertisements, press releases and other media outreach, compelling visual signage, posters, and flyers in places and at events that will achieve greatest exposure to segments of the public least likely to be reached by existing static messaging.

- **Improving Data Collection and Reporting**

1. MWCOG jurisdictions ***collect and report information*** on their wildlife-related activities.

2. MWCOG jurisdictions ***add wildlife data collection and reporting to regional data collection and reporting effort*** for companion animals.

3. The Animal Services Committee approach wildlife rehabilitators and NWCO in the MWCOG region and solicit their ***participation in regional data collection and reporting***.

- **Regional Wildlife Hotline**

1. Animal Services Committee investigate options for providing hotline services and develop a plan to implement a ***MWCOG regional wildlife hotline***.

2. MWCOG assist member jurisdictions to ***identify and work with potential hotline operators*** who could be contracted to provide hotline services on behalf of jurisdictions.

- **Identifying and Fielding Existing Resources**

    1. The Animal Services Committee ***inventory existing animal-related resources*** in the MWCOG region and make this inventory widely available.

    2. The Animal Services Committee ***research potential innovative uses of existing resources*** in MWCOG jurisdictions, including non-animal related agencies, private organizations, businesses, and other.

- **Public Agencies' Policies**

    1. MWCOG jurisdictions' public agencies ***review existing policies*** relating to handling demands for wildlife information and assistance for each jurisdiction.

    2. The Animal Services Committee ***identify best practices*** that may be appropriate to emulate and develop model policies for handling demand for wildlife information and assistance.

    3. The Animal Care and Control Committee recommend ***adoption of best practices*** by MWCOG jurisdictions.

- **Comprehensive Community Animal Services**

    1. Animal Services Committee investigate options for including wildlife-related services specific to preventing and resolving wildlife conflicts and concerns about injured, sick, or orphaned wild animals ***as part of local government animal care and control activities***.

    2. Animal Services Committee investigate options for local governments to offer wildlife-related services specific to preventing and resolving wildlife conflicts and concerns about injured, sick, or orphaned wild animals ***through agencies other than existing animal care and control agencies or through contractors.***

2.0 Introduction

Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments, Animal Services Committee

Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments (MWCOG) is a regional organization of Washington, D.C., area local governments. MWCOG is composed of 19 local governments including and surrounding our nation's capital plus area members of the Maryland and Virginia legislatures, the U.S. Senate, and the U.S. House of Representatives. An independent, nonprofit association, MWCOG is dedicated to enhancing the quality of life and competitive advantages of the Washington metropolitan region by providing a forum for consensus building and policymaking; implementing intergovernmental policies, plans, and programs; and supporting the region as an expert information resource.

MWCOG's Human Services and Public Safety Policy Committee is served by the Animal Services Committee. This technical committee's primary purpose is to advise the Human Services and Public Safety Policy Committee on animal care and control matters, including animal care and control services, wildlife, disaster planning, public service information, humane education, and dangerous animals.

Wildlife in Urban and Suburban Communities and the Urban Public

As long as there have been people, we have lived near and with animals. When we gathered into settled communities, animals came along with us; taking advantage of the opportunities we provided. One theory suggests cats may have originally domesticated themselves, not the other way around, when they found the best rodent hunting around our stored agricultural surpluses. While house cats eventually accepted our invitation to move indoors, perhaps originally extended because we wanted them to control the rodents in the house as well as in the barn, other wild species also found life comfortable and profitable enough around people to continue to live wild lives right outside, and sometimes inside, our homes.

Attention to these wild animals has increased over the last half century. The first of a number of national conferences for North American wildlife professionals focused on urban wildlife issues was held in the late 1960s. Print and broadcast media increasingly carry stories about wild animals in cities and suburbs. Thousands of media reports about wildlife in US cities are returned by internet searches for any given month. Online bookseller Amazon offers more than a thousand titles bearing in some degree on wild animals in urban areas.

If wild animals have always lived near people to some degree, what has changed to bring their presence in urban and suburban communities into sharp focus in recent decades? Certainly there have been changes in the abundance and distribution of some wild species. Perhaps the most significant changes, however, have been in us. The US Census Bureau classifies over 80 percent of Americans as urban residents. Urban Americans have different attitudes towards and expectations about wild animals than our rural ancestors. We are more likely to value wildlife that we do not consume; are less likely to participate in traditional consumptive activities such as hunting, fishing, or trapping; are not usually prepared for living close to wild animals; and are conditioned to expect government services for many routine and urgent needs from garbage pick-up to emergency medical assistance.

The urban public wants different information and assistance than traditional constituents of government agencies. Traditional constituents mainly sought greater consumptive opportunities and assistance with agricultural damage from wildlife. The urban public seeks information on and assistance with attracting wildlife and creating backyard habitat; potential effects of wildlife on human and companion animal health; non-agricultural conflicts; and injured or orphaned wild animals.

Common Species

Everyone is familiar with some of the most common urban and suburban species, or synathropes. Some species have been well known city-dwellers for a long time; pigeons and many other birds, squirrels, and rats. Some have been living near us for a long time without being widely noticed and many people are still surprised to see them; foxes, raccoons, opossums, ducks, and many snakes. Some have only recently become common in urban and suburban areas; Canada geese, beavers, and coyotes.

Many common urban and suburban species share one important characteristic that makes them successful in these places. They are opportunistic generalists; that is, they are species that are not too fussy about what they eat and where they live (generalists) and they are good at taking advantage of whatever their environment offers (opportunists). In these ways, these species are very much like us. These flexible adaptable species readily find what they need in urban and suburban environments; often taking advantage of the alterations we have made to the environment and our tendency to leave tasty things (trash, gardens, pet and bird food) lying around and snug den sites (attics, crawlspaces, areas under porches and desk) open.

In contrast, other types of animals are very rare in cities and suburbs. Large animals who require large ranges are obvious examples. Species who need very specialized habitats are unlikely to continue in areas where human development makes drastic and frequent changes to the environment. Likewise, species who are sensitive to habitat fragmentation, such as many reptiles and amphibians, are unlikely to be able to cope with the patchwork of urban and suburban environments.

It is common to hear that the wild animals living close to our homes are there because we have taken away their habitat leaving them nowhere else to go. This might be called the "they were here first" theory. Development has certainly consumed a vast amount of formerly agricultural and undeveloped land where wild species made their homes. However, many of the wild species that are most common synathropes are actually more numerous in cities and suburbs than they were in the habitat that existed before development. The ways we alter the land actually increases habitat opportunity for some species. Species that prefer the same types of landscapes we do thrive as we create more of those types of landscapes. For example, white-tailed deer prefer edges of wooded areas where they can use both treed and open areas for specific purposes. Our typical development creates a great deal more of these edges. Similarly, Canada geese consider mowed well-tended grass the ideal free buffet and open water the ideal safe refuse from danger. Therefore, a typical public park with an artificial pond surrounded by open grass is ideal Canada goose habitat.

Common Concerns

For many people, the presence of wild animals around them is a great benefit. People laugh at squirrels' antics, entice songbirds up close with birdfeeders, show their children the fascinating variety of life on earth, and find the world a better place for the knowledge that wildness continues to exist, and even thrive, just outside their doors. However, these same people will find instances when these same animals cause them concern, raise questions, or create conflict between our species and theirs.

People's concerns about individual wild animals around them mainly fall into these categories:

- concern for an animal who may be sick, injured, orphaned, or in need of rescue from a dangerous situation or who may pose a disease risk to people or their companion animals;
- questions about potential for harm from an unfamiliar animal; and
- conflicts with animals living in or under buildings, getting into trash, damaging landscaping or gardens, and similar situations.

People often use the term "nuisance" for any wild animal they don't specifically want to have around their homes, including animals in any of the situations in the second and third of these categories. Therefore, the healthy fox merely crossing a yard and the odorous skunk denning under a family's deck may equally be termed "nuisance". Unfortunately, this broad-brush term tends to confuse conflicts that need action with unfamiliarity that calls for information.

Public Demand for Information and Assistance

When a concern, question, or conflict comes up, members of the public demand information about and direct assistance in dealing with wildlife. Often people have little basic information before hand. Once a concern arises, many people perceive a very great urgent need for information and, typically, direct assistance.

Who the Public Turns to for Help and What These Sources Offer

The lack of one readily identified source for information and assistance leads the public to turn to a variety of private businesses, organizations, individuals, and state, local, and federal government agencies for help. People approach private businesses, organizations, individuals, and public agencies that they associate with wildlife or more generally with animal concerns. There are numerous stories from zoo keepers, urban park rangers, and university professors of people who believe that since they know about wild animals they would be the people to help with a wild animal in a home, yard, or neighborhood. While these sources rarely have expertise or resources to serve this demand, they are caught in the wide net thrown by public demand for this information and assistance.

Private Businesses, Organizations, and Individuals—When people open their yellow pages or search the internet they find businesses, often still called wildlife trappers but more and more using the name nuisance wildlife control operators (NWCOs) or simply wildlife control operators (WCOs), listed under "pest control" who trap and usually remove wild animals for a

fee. The fate of removed animals varies but is frequently either death or removal to a location where she will not know where to find food, water, and shelter. Removed animals may leave dependent young to die from lack of care or, if found alive, create additional demand for help. Some NWCOs provide additional services such as exclusion to prevent reoccurrences of wildlife problems and education so tolerance and prevention will avoid future problems.

Wildlife rehabilitators, mostly volunteers, are licensed by state wildlife agencies (for mammals and reptiles) and by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (for migratory birds) to care for sick, injured, and orphaned wild animals in order to return these animals to wild lives. The public turns to a rehabilitator or are referred to one when they believe an animal needs help. Seeing them as helpful and knowledgeable about wild animals, the public also frequently turns to them with other types of wildlife concerns. Some rehabilitators encourage the public to ask for help with other concerns to reduce the number of animals brought to rehabilitators for care. They try to prevent well-intentioned people from removing a young animal from the wild who does not need help or trapping or moving a nuisance animal whose young, if found alive, are taken to rehabilitation.

Non-profit organizations dedicated to animal welfare and wildlife conservation, including headquarters of national organizations located within WMCOG jurisdictions, also are contacted by members of the public. These organizations' expertise, resources, and missions' vary as do their ability to help individuals with specific concerns.

Public Agencies—Every state has an agency responsible for wildlife whose primary mission is to manage populations of "game" species—those hunted, trapped, or fished. This emphasis is hardly surprising since the majority of their funding (70 percent in Maryland, for example) comes from hunting, trapping, and fishing license fees and from federal excise tax on sport hunting equipment and ammunition (Pittman-Robertson Fund money). Funding for non-consumptive activities is limited.

Two state wildlife agencies have authority in WMCOG jurisdictions; the Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries (VDGIF) and Maryland Department of Natural Resources Wildlife and Heritage Service (MDWHS). Neither primarily handles individual's request for help with wildlife conflicts. Maryland WHS directs these calls to the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), Animal Plant Health Inspection Service, Wildlife Services state office. Maryland WHS also lists licensed wildlife rehabilitators and NWCOs on their website. VDGIF webpages directs visitors to licensed wildlife rehabilitators and to the USDA Wildlife Services website.

The District of Columbia Department of the Environment (DDOE), Fisheries and Wildlife Division is responsible for wildlife regulations and conservation. The Division licenses recreational anglers but does not permit hunting or commercial fishing. Currently, the District does not have any regulations governing wildlife rehabilitation or NWCO. There are currently no licensed wildlife rehabilitators in the District of Columbia. NWCO conduct business in the District without oversight by this agency. The Department of Health, Environmental Health Administration, Bureau of Community Hygiene, Animal Disease Prevention Division oversees domestic animals and provides animal control services through its contractor, the Washington Humane Society. The Society picks up sick, injured, and orphaned wild animals and wild animals posing a danger to the community. Wild animals requiring rehabilitation are generally transported to rehabilitators in Maryland and Virginia.

USDA Wildlife Services provides on-site services for a fee to businesses, municipalities and homeowner associations, airports and airfields, and agricultural producers. Their mission is to protect agriculture, property, human health and safety, and natural resources from damage caused by wildlife. Wildlife Services typically does not provide on-site assistance to individual homeowners but gives advice by phone.

The public sometimes contacts the police with wild animal concerns. In jurisdictions where animal control officers do not carry firearms police are called on to field euthanize injured large animals, mainly deer struck by vehicles. They may also be called on to kill an animal suspected of being rabid. Since the public sees the police as the agency to call for any urgent situation, people sometimes contact police about other wildlife concerns especially when people fear an animal.

Some members of the public will mainly be concerned about the potential for wild animals to transmit diseases. In consequence, they will contact local or state public health agencies. These agencies cannot offer help with other wildlife concerns.

Naturalists at nature centers run by local parks may try to help an occasional caller, if the question is within their expertise. State university agricultural extension services offer direct individual assistance and have expertise on some urban wildlife questions, especially those related to gardening.

Animal Care and Control Agencies and Animal Shelters—Very frequently, the public looks to the public entities they associate with animals; local animal care and control agencies and local animal shelters, for help with all questions and concerns about any type of animal. (Local shelters are included here with public agencies although shelters can be part of a public agency, contractors for a public agency, or entirely independent private organizations. Members of the public are rarely aware of this distinction, or care about it if they are aware.) Animal care and control and animal sheltering professionals commonly report that their agencies and organizations are called upon to deal with public demands for help with wildlife. However, little data have been collected about either the volume or nature of wildlife-related services animal care and control agencies and shelters provide.

In spring 1997, The Humane Society of the United States (HSUS) surveyed humane agencies and animal shelters throughout the US about their involvement with and handling of wildlife in their shelters. At the time of that survey, animal shelters reported many of the same experiences and problems we continue to hear about today.

Nearly all (93 percent) dealt with wildlife in some capacity. About 60 percent of these handled volume in excess of 500 contacts and/or animals a year; some well in excess. Nearly three-quarters handled more than 100 contacts and/or animals a year. Most (87 percent) reported that they took in some wild animals. Nearly all of the responding shelters that dealt with wildlife provided telephone assistance or advice. Most shelters referred callers to others, with a high percentage referring to wildlife rehabilitators. Nearly all (94 percent) reported that they euthanized wild animals under at least some circumstances. A full summary of the survey's findings is included in Appendix A.

In 1996, researchers at Ohio State University's College of Veterinary Medicine surveyed animal care and control agencies in Ohio. Of 222 agencies contacted, 180 responded that collectively they took in 10,187 animals other than dogs and cats, including wildlife and less common and exotic pets. These species accounted for 3 percent of the responding agencies' intake.

The National Animal Control Association (NACA) conducts annual surveys of member organizations. The 2004 survey included responses from 27 member animal care and control and sheltering agencies and organizations. These ranged from very small entities to large county-wide animal control agencies. Data were collected on "other intakes," which included wildlife as well as less common and exotic pets, the disposition of these intakes, and two other services offered related to wildlife; removal and trap rental. NACA survey respondents handle a significant number of animals other than dogs and cats. While we cannot know from these data what proportion of other species handled were wild species; wild species could have been a major component of the numbers reported. Table 2.1 summarizes these data from the NACA 2004 survey.

Table 2.1 Summary of Data on Other Species Handled from National Animal Control Association 2004 Survey

Number of Other Intakes, Not Dogs or Cats (18 responses)	
Median	125
Range	0 to 2,865
Other Species Intake as Percentage of Total Intake (18 responses)	
Median	2.1
Range	0 to 16.5
Other Species Euthanized as Percentage of Other Intake (13 responses)	
Median	31.3
Range	0 to 83.3
Wildlife Removal Services (26 responses)	
Number Offering Wildlife Removal Services	19
Percentage Offering Wildlife Removal Services	73.1
Wildlife Trap Rental (26 responses)	
Number Offering Wildlife Trap Rental	12
Percentage Offering Wildlife Trap Rental	46.2

While local animal care and control agencies, animal shelters, public health agencies, and police try to field the demands for wildlife related services that come their way, few are specifically trained, tasked, or funded to do so. As long ago as the first national conference dealing with urban wildlife in 1967 the point was made that state and federal agencies are responsible for wildlife in our country, regardless of whether the wildlife lives in rural or urban areas. However, from that time to this state and federal agencies have provided little assistance to individuals with urban wildlife concerns.

Examples of Volume and Nature of Public Demand from Other Communities

Public demand for help with wildlife concerns is, of course, not limited to WMCOG communities. Later sections of this White Paper will summarize and discuss such demand

within WMCOG as we found it reported in our survey. In many other communities, humane organizations, rehabilitators, and public agencies are also attempting to deal with this demand. Table 2.2 summaries information about some hotlines services filling public demand for information with wildlife. Most are outside WMCOG jurisdictions. Nearly all are run by private non-profit organizations; primarily rehabilitators.

The volume of calls reported by these hotlines varies from several hundred a year in semi-rural northwestern Indiana to 30,000 in Toronto. The volume of calls per 1,000 (human) population varied considerably as well, from fewer than 1 call per year for every 1,000 population to nearly 15 calls per year; averaging a little more than 5 per 1,000 a year among all the examples. Some of the example hotlines reported the nature of the calls they received, which were fairly consistent: sick, injured, or orphaned wild animals and nuisance wildlife were most common.

3.0 Survey Procedure

As part of its mission to advise the MWCOG Human Services and Public Safety Policy Committee, the Animal Services Committee's subcommittee on wildlife prepared this white paper on how public demand for information and assistance with wildlife questions and concerns impacts public services, especially animal care and control and animal sheltering services. A key element of this effort was a survey of entities in MWCOG jurisdictions who are impacted by this demand that asked about the quantity and nature of that demand and how they respond to the demand.

Identifying Potential Respondents

A list of potential respondents was developed from several sources of public and private entities who receive wildlife-related calls from the public.

WMCOG provided a list of animal care and control (ACO) and sheltering agencies and organizations, public and private. A list of state and local health departments was compiled as was a list of state and local police. Maryland Department of Natural Resources and Natural Resources Police, Virginia Department of Inland Game & Fisheries, and the US Department of Agriculture's Wildlife Services were also placed on the survey distribution list.

Lists of permitted rehabilitators were obtained from the Maryland and Virginia state permit issuing offices. (No rehabilitators were permitted in the District of Columbia.) Since the state lists are not updated frequently they were compared to membership lists of two voluntary associations of rehabilitators (International Wildlife Rehabilitators Council (IWRC) and National Wildlife Rehabilitators Association (NWRA)) for most current information on member rehabilitators.

The Maryland state office that regulates NWCO provided a list within Maryland WMCOG jurisdictions. The Virginia state agency was not able to furnish a similar list for NWCO in that state, therefore, NWCO in Virginia were not included.

The public within WMCOG jurisdictions also contacts national animal welfare organizations about wildlife problems because a number of these organizations have local headquarters or offices. Organizations of this type were also identified and included on the survey distribution list.

Table 2.2
Examples of Hotlines Filling Public Demand for Information and Assistance with Wildlife

Organization	Nature of Organization	Area Served	Population of Area Served	Volume of Calls (annual)	Volume (annual) per 1,000 population
Non-Profit Organizations					
DFW Wildlife Coalition	Non-profit wildlife rehabilitation center with affiliated NWCO business	Dallas and Fort Worth, Texas, metropolitan area	5,221,801 (Census 2000)	>3,000 (2005)	0.6
Toronto Wildlife Centre	Non-profit wildlife rehabilitation center	Metro Toronto, Canada	4,682,897 (2001 Statistic Canada census)	≈30,000 (2004 estimate)	6.4
The Humane Society of the United States	Non-profit, national animal welfare organization	Connecticut	3,503,604 (2004 Census Bureau)	5,721 (2004)	1.6
Urban Wildlife Rescue	Non-profit wildlife rehabilitation center with affiliated NWCO business	Denver and Aurora, Colorado metropolitan area	2,179,240 (2000 Census)	≈5,000 (2004)	2.3
Northern Virginia Wildlife Rescue League	Non-profit network of home-based wildlife rehabilitators	Northern Virginia	1,916,001 (2004 Census Bureau estimate)	≈9500 (2004)	5.0
Wisconsin Humane Society Wildlife Rehabilitation Center	Non-profit wildlife rehabilitation center with affiliated NWCO business	Milwaukee, Wisconsin metropolitan area	1,709,926 (2004 Census Bureau)	12,406 (2005) 11,416 (2004)	10.6
The Ohio Wildlife Center	Non-profit wildlife rehabilitation center with affiliated NWCO business	Columbus, Ohio and surrounding communities	1,675,680 (2005 Ohio Department of Development)	≈25,000 (2005 estimate)	14.9
Wildlife Rescue Center of the Hamptons	Non-profit wildlife rehabilitation center	Suffolk County, New York on Long Island	1,475,488 (2004 Census Bureau estimate)	≈10,000 (no year specified)	6.8

Organization	Nature of Organization	Area Served	Population of Area Served	Volume of Calls (annual)	Volume (annual) per 1,000 population
Non-Profit Organizations (continued)					
Wildlife Response, Inc.	Non-profit network of home-based wildlife rehabilitators	Southeastern Virginia	1,226,186 (2004 Census Bureau estimate)	>13,000 (August 2004 to August 2005)	10.6
WildCare	Non-profit wildlife rehabilitation center	Marin County and City of San Francisco, California	997,727 (2004 Census Bureau estimate)	≈12,000 (no year specified)	12
Wildlife Orphanage, Inc.	Non-profit wildlife rehabilitation center with affiliated NWCO business	Northwestern Indiana	705,254 (2000 Census)	760 (2002)	1.1
Government Agencies					
USDA Wildlife Services, Virginia State office	Federal government agency	Virginia	7,459,827 (2004 Census Bureau estimate)	1,284 (2004)	0.2
USDA Wildlife Services, Maryland State office	Federal government agency	Maryland	5,558,058 (2004 Census Bureau estimate)	2,643 (2004)	0.5

This is necessarily only a partial listing of all the many public and private organizations that offer information, advice, and assistance to the public on wildlife concerns. In particular, a very large number of wildlife rehabilitation center and individual rehabilitators field calls primarily about injured and/or orphaned wildlife; many of these label their numbers as "Wildlife Hotlines".

How and When Survey was Distributed

All the entities identified as potential respondents were contacted by phone to explain this effort and request their participation. Follow-up calls were made to potential respondents not reached initially. Surveys were mailed, faxed, or e-mailed (as respondents preferred) to potential respondents who agreed to participate beginning in March 2004 and continuing through September 2004. Survey recipients who had not returned a survey within a month were called up to two times to encourage response. Table 3.1 summarizes survey distribution and response by category of potential respondent.

Table 3.1
Surveys Distributed and Returned by Category

Category	Number Distributed	Number Returned	Response Rate (%)
Rehabilitators	70	23	32.9
NWCO	86	15	17.4
ACO/Shelters	19	10	52.6
Police	7	6	85.7
Other Government Agencies	15	6	40.0
Other Organizations	5	5	100.0
All Categories	202	65	32.2

Survey Questionnaire

The survey asked 43 questions. Ten questions identified and described each respondent. Two questions were asked only of police about issues specific to field euthanizing deer. The remaining questions asked respondents to report the volume and nature of pubic demand for information and assistance with wildlife and how each responded to the demand. The entire survey questionnaire is provided in Appendix B.

4.0 Characteristics of Respondents

How Many and Who Responded

Respondents were grouped into six categories: Animal Care and Control and/or Sheltering Organizations (ACO/Shelters), Rehabilitators, Nuisance Wildlife Control Operators (NWCO), Police, Other Government Agencies, and Other Organizations. The ACO/Shelters category includes all public and private entities providing animal care and control services including animal sheltering services. Some respondents in this category provide both care and control services and sheltering; others provide only one of these. The Rehabilitators category includes private individuals and organizations that provide direct care of injured and/or orphaned wild animals in order to release them back into their natural habitat to live as wild animals. The NWCO category includes primarily businesses that offer services to the public for a fee

including trapping or otherwise removing wild animals from buildings and property, animal-proofing buildings, and similar services to deal with nuisance wildlife. A few respondents in the NWCO category do not run this kind of businesses but are registered with the Maryland Department of Natural Resources as "Wildlife Cooperators," (the state's nearest equivalent category to NWCO at the time this survey was conducted) and offer advice about nuisance wildlife and, in some cases, provide some hands-on assistance usually with very limited species or situations. The Police category includes law enforcement agencies. The Other Government Agencies category includes public agencies other than police and animal control agencies. Most of the respondents in this category are state and local public health agencies. The Other Organizations category includes national animal welfare organizations and organizations focused on a single species or species group.

Response rates varied greatly by category. In particular, the NWCO response rate was low because a large number of NWCOs were sent surveys, their low response rate significantly diminished the overall response rate.

Geographic Areas Respondents Serve

Nearly all respondents (63) reported what geographic area or areas they serve. Seven respondents, including the national organizations, reported they serve the entire metropolitan area. Many respondents indicated they serve areas outside MWCOG jurisdictions as well as areas within MWCOG; NWCOs and Rehabilitators frequently serving such areas. A few served all of either Maryland or Virginia. All MWCOG jurisdictions were represented in the areas served by survey respondents.

Respondents' Funding Sources

Different funding sources are generally associated with different levels and stability of funding. Further, public funding identifies what activities are accepted as public responsibilities. Sources of funding for respondents' activities were categorized as public funding (tax-supported government budgets); private funding (donations, gifts-in-kind, respondents' own funds); or profits (business income from their wildlife activities). Sources of funding reported by respondents in each category are presented in Table 4.1. Each respondent could report funding from more than one source.

Not surprisingly, NWCOs generally received funding from profits; ACO/Shelters, Police, and Other Government Agencies from public funding; and Rehabilitators and Other Organizations from private funding. Mixed funding sources were most commonly among ACO/Shelters (40 percent of this category) and were rare outside this category.

Respondents' Annual Budgets

One measure of the size of respondents' overall activities and the resources available to accomplish their missions is annual budget. Fewer than half of respondents reported annual budgets amounts. Summary information about these responses is shown in Table 4.2.

Table 4.1
Funding Sources Reported by Category

	Number Reporting Funding Source			
Category	Public	Profits	Private	Total Number Responding
Rehabilitators	1	2	17	19
NWCO	0	11	3	14
ACO/Shelters	10	0	4	10
Police	6	0	1	6
Other Government Agencies	5	1	0	5
Other Organizations	0	1	4	5
Total Number	22	15	29	59
Percentage of Total Responding	37	25	49	100

Table 4.2
Summary Information on Reported Annual Budgets

All Reported Budget Amounts (27 responses)	
Range	$6,000 to $300 million
Mean	$17 million
Median	$171,000

Budget Amounts Reported from Respondents Solely or Mainly Offering Wildlife Services (11 responses)	
Range	$6,000 to $200,000
Mean	$52,000
Median	$40,000

Overall, those solely or mainly dealing with wildlife reported smaller budgets than the respondents as a whole. Only two (of eight) ACO/Shelters respondents fell below the median, however all but one of the Rehabilitators who answered this question were below the median.

5.0 Findings

Public Demand for Information and Assistance

The survey asked for information to characterize both the volume of demand from the public for information and assistance with wildlife and the species and issues about which the public demanded this information and assistance.

Volume of Calls Received

Table 5.1 summarizes the total number of calls and the median number of calls respondents reported receiving from the public seeking information and assistance with wildlife questions. The 60 respondents who answered this question reported receiving nearly 141,000 calls a year altogether. While the nature of this survey does not allow us to extrapolate the total volume of calls made in the WMCOG jurisdictions to all agencies, organizations, and individuals who receive wildlife inquiries, the reported volume of calls is only part of the total volume which is likely much larger than the number our respondents reported.

ACO/Shelters reported the largest volume of calls per respondent; Rehabilitators reported the second highest volume. NWCOs reported the least volume of calls per respondent. When respondents were asked about two common types of wildlife concerns, nuisance wildlife and orphan wildlife, different categories of respondents reported very different volumes of calls concerning each type. Most calls about orphan wildlife were reported by Rehabilitators and ACO/Shelters; hardly any orphan calls were reported by other categories. Per respondent, ACO/Shelters reported receiving the most calls about nuisance wildlife. Other Government Agencies received more calls, both in total and per respondent, and Police more calls per respondent about nuisance wildlife than NWCOs, whose business is dealing with nuisance wildlife.

The volume of all wildlife calls, nuisance wildlife calls, and orphan wildlife calls fell most heavily on ACO/Shelters who report the largest volume of all three types of calls per respondent. Rehabilitators report the second heaviest demand, per respondent, for all wildlife calls and for orphan wildlife calls. Clearly, these two categories of respondents are carrying much of the burden of the public's demand for information and assistance with wildlife. Other Government Agencies and Police also report significant volume of demand. For the types of concerns this survey covered, public agencies and private rehabilitators carry the overwhelming bulk of the load in dealing with public demand for information and assistance with wildlife.

Types of Calls Received

Respondents were asked to rank how frequently they received calls about five typical concerns (Animal in Yard; Animal in Chimney, Basement, Attic, Etc.; Injured Animal; Animal Behaving Strangely; and Babies that Seem to be Without Mother). A rank of 5 indicated most frequent and 1 indicated least frequent. Table 5.2 presents the average rankings.

Animal in Yard received the highest average ranking from all respondents, closely followed by Injured Animal indicating these were frequent concerns. Animal Behaving Strangely received the lowest average ranking indicating this was the least frequent concern.

Based on the respondents' rankings, the public directs different concerns to different categories of respondents with the exception that the public turns to ACO/Shelters for all concerns. Police especially receive calls about injured animals, likely due to their role in field euthanizing wild animals struck by vehicles. The public turns to Rehabilitators with concerns about the welfare of wild animals. NWCOs receive calls mainly about the presences of animals in and around homes. The Other Government Agencies category, which includes health authorities, highly ranked the types of calls most likely to be related to their responsibilities for zoonoses (Animal in Yard and Animal Behaving Strangely) suggesting the public is turning to this category with concerns about disease risks.

Table 5.1 Volume of Calls Received from the Public for Information and Assistance with Wildlife

All Wildlife Calls		Nuisance Wildlife Calls		Orphan Wildlife Calls	
ACO/Shelters (10)		ACO/Shelters (7)		ACO/Shelters (6)	
Total annual number of calls	45,443	Total annual number of calls	9,141	Total annual number of calls	4,832
Median annual number of calls	965	Median annual number of calls	450	Median annual number of calls	275
Rehabilitators (21)		Rehabilitators (13)		Rehabilitators (16)	
Total annual number of calls	77,776	Total annual number of calls	1,102	Total annual number of calls	13,294
Median annual number of calls	540	Median	17	Median annual number of calls	200
Other Government Agencies (6)		Other Government Agencies (5)		Other Government Agencies	
Total annual number of calls	12,117	Total annual number of calls	9,574	Total annual number of calls	*
Median annual number of calls	300	Median annual number of calls	60	Median annual number of calls	*
Police (6)		Police (5)		Police (5)	
Total annual number of calls	1,385	Total annual number of calls	937	Total annual number of calls	70
Median annual number of calls	131.5	Median annual number of calls	75	Median annual number of calls	20
NWCO (14)		NWCO (13)		NWCO (10)	
Total annual number of calls	3,184	Total annual number of calls	2,627	Total annual number of calls	152
Median annual number of calls	70	Median annual number of calls	30	Median annual number of calls	7.5
All Respondents (60)		All Respondents (45)		All Respondents (42)	
Total annual number of calls	140,935	Total annual number of calls	23,396	Total annual number of calls	18,608
Median annual number of calls	275	Median annual number of calls	35	Median annual number of calls	60

Number in parentheses following category name indicates number of respondents in that category who answered the question.
Asterisk (*) indicates too few respondents in the category to disaggregate. "Other" category is not included in this table because it had too few respondents to all questions to disaggregate.

Table 5.2

Average Frequency Ranking of Typical Wildlife-Related Calls
5 Being Most Frequent and 1 Being Least Frequent

Average Ranking of Typical Calls					
Respondent Category	Animal in Yard	Injured Animal	Animal in Chimney, Basement, Attic, Etc.	Babies that Seem to be Without Mother	Animal Behaving Strangely
Rehabilitators (21)	3.0	4.0	2.7	4.0	2.0
NWCO (14)	3.6	1.3	3.4	1.4	1.2
ACO/Shelters (9)	3.6	2.9	3.1	3.1	2.6
Police (4)	3.5	4.5	2.3	1.5	2.5
Other Government Agencies (6)	4.3	3.2	2.5	1.8	3.5
Other Organizations (4)	2.8	3.3	2.8	3.7	1.8
All Categories (58)	3.4	3.3	2.9	2.9	2.1

Number in parentheses following category name indicates number of respondents in that category who answered the question.

Species Callers are Concerned About

Respondents were asked to cite up to five wild animal species or groups of species about which the public most frequently demanded information and assistance. Figure 5.1 illustrates the percentage of all categories of respondents citing each species or group. Not surprisingly, the species and groups cited by the greatest number of respondents are those common in the Washington metropolitan area. Birds other than waterfowl (such as songbirds, crows, and raptors), raccoons, and squirrels were cited most frequently. There were some differences between categories of respondents, as detailed in Table 5.3.

Respondents also reported species of new concern. One-third of the 48 who responded to this question reported they had not received calls about any new species. For those citing new species, by far the most common was coyotes which was cited by 12 respondents. No other new species was cited by more than a handful of respondents.

Respondents were asked to estimate what percentage of their overall call volume concerned three species or groups of species believed to be of high local concern or to be emerging concerns: Canada geese, deer, and exotic species. The 52 respondents who answered this question for Canada geese reported that an average of 12 percent of their calls concerned geese. Rehabilitators reported the highest average; 15 percent of their calls concerned geese. The 55 respondents who answered this question for deer reported that an average of 9 percent of their calls concerned deer. Police reported the highest average; 45 percent of their calls concerned deer. Eighty percent of the 41 respondents who cited the nature of callers' deer concerns received calls about deer hit by a vehicle, 51 percent received calls about orphaned fawns, and 41 percent received calls about deer as nuisance (each respondent could cite multiple concerns).

Figure 5.1 Percentage of All Respondents Citing Species or Group as Callers' Top Concern

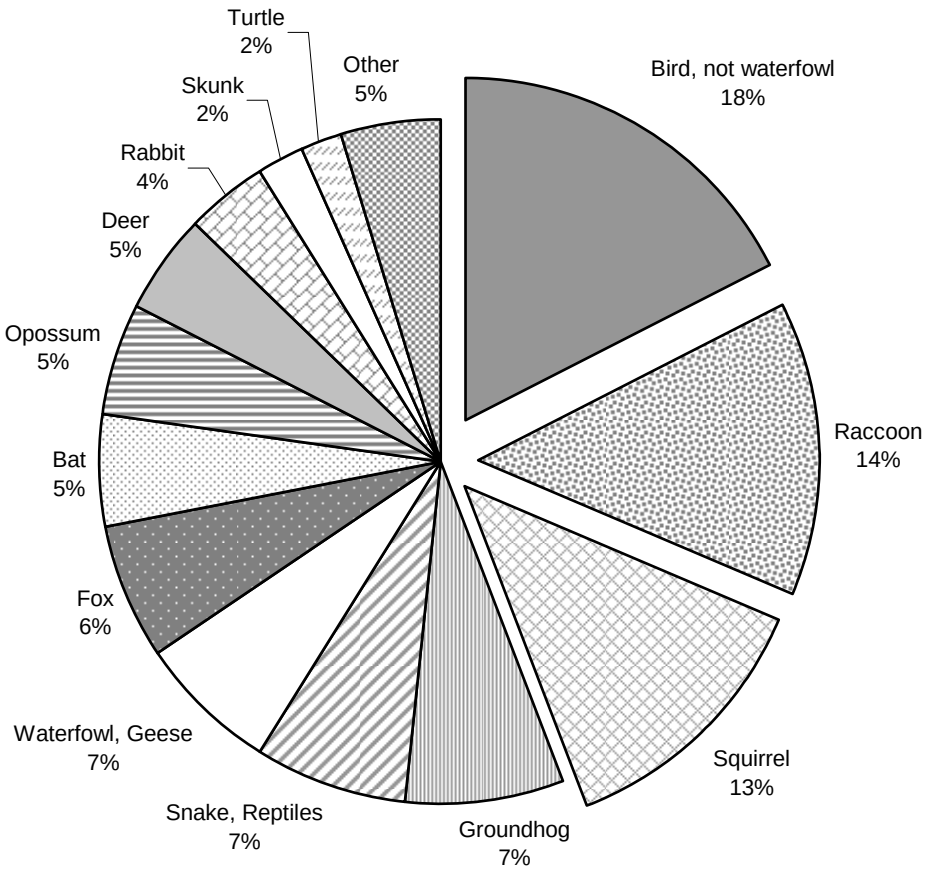


Table 5-3 Wildlife Species or Species Groups Callers Most Commonly Concerned About by Category of Respondents

Rehabilitators (21)	NWCO (15)	ACO/Shelters (9)	Other Government Agencies (6)	Police (5)
Birds, other than Waterfowl	Squirrels	Raccoon	Raccoon	Raccoon
Squirrel	Groundhog	Opossum	Birds, other than Waterfowl	Deer
Waterfowl (geese, ducks)	Raccoon	Birds, other than Waterfowl	Fox	Fox
			Bat	Squirrel

Number in parentheses following category name indicates number of respondents in that category who answered the question. "Other" category is not included in this table because it had too few respondents to all questions to disaggregate.

The 43 respondents who answered this question for exotic species reported that an average of 6 percent of their calls concerned exotic species. Rehabilitators reported the highest average; 13 percent of their calls concerned exotic species. Seventy-three percent of the 37 respondents who cited the nature of callers' concerns received calls about rehoming owned exotic pets and 57 percent received calls about abandoned exotic animals found (each respondent could cite multiple concerns).

Responding to Demand

When respondents receive a call from the public about wildlife, there are many ways they can respond. Sending someone to the site or taking time to educate the caller over the phone require considerable time and resources. Making a referral or offering no information or assistance require little effort. It should be noted, that in some cases the best response for a specific inquirer and animal may not be the one requiring the most time and resources.

Typical Responses

Respondents were asked to describe how they responded to the five typical concerns they ranked for frequency (Animal in Yard; Animal in Chimney, Basement, Attic, Etc.; Injured Animal; Animal Behaving Strangely; and Babies that Seem to be Without Mother). Based on the open-ended responses given by 33 respondents, common categories were developed and responses tabulated (Table 5.4). Typical responses reported by each category of respondents tended to mirror each category's mission and typical activities.

Table 5.4 Number of Respondents Reporting Each Response to Public Inquiries about Specific Types of Concerns

	Educate Caller	Respond if Sick	Advise to Leave Alone	Trap	Refer Calls	Dispatch to Site	Take to Facility for Care	Do not Respond and Other Responses
Animal in Yard	14	3	5	5	3	0	0	3
Injured Animal	0	2	0	1	5	6	14	5
Animal in Building	10	0	0	7	10	4	0	6
Babies that Seem to be Without Mother	10	0	6	0	4	0	5	8
Animal Behaving Strangely	8	0	1	3	8	7	0	6

Respondents could indicate multiple responses.

Rehabilitators overwhelmingly respond by educating callers. They report educating more frequently, by a very great margin, than any other category of respondent and more frequently than they do anything else, including taking animals into care. The strong emphasis on educating callers is evident for all concerns except for Injured Animal for which they most frequently reported that the animal was taken to a facility for care.

Two ACO/Shelters reported that they educate callers for one concern (Animal in Yard). Besides Rehabilitators and ACO/Shelters, no respondents reported that they educated callers as typical responses. ACO/Shelters most frequently respond by dispatching to the site. Other Government Agencies primarily refer callers to others; some referred all animal calls to the ACO in their jurisdictions.

NWCO frequently respond by trapping; most often for Animal in Yard and Animal in Building. About half the responses NWCO reported were actions other than trapping. Referring calls was the second most commonly cited response from NWCO and two NWCO reported they took orphaned young wildlife to a facility for care.

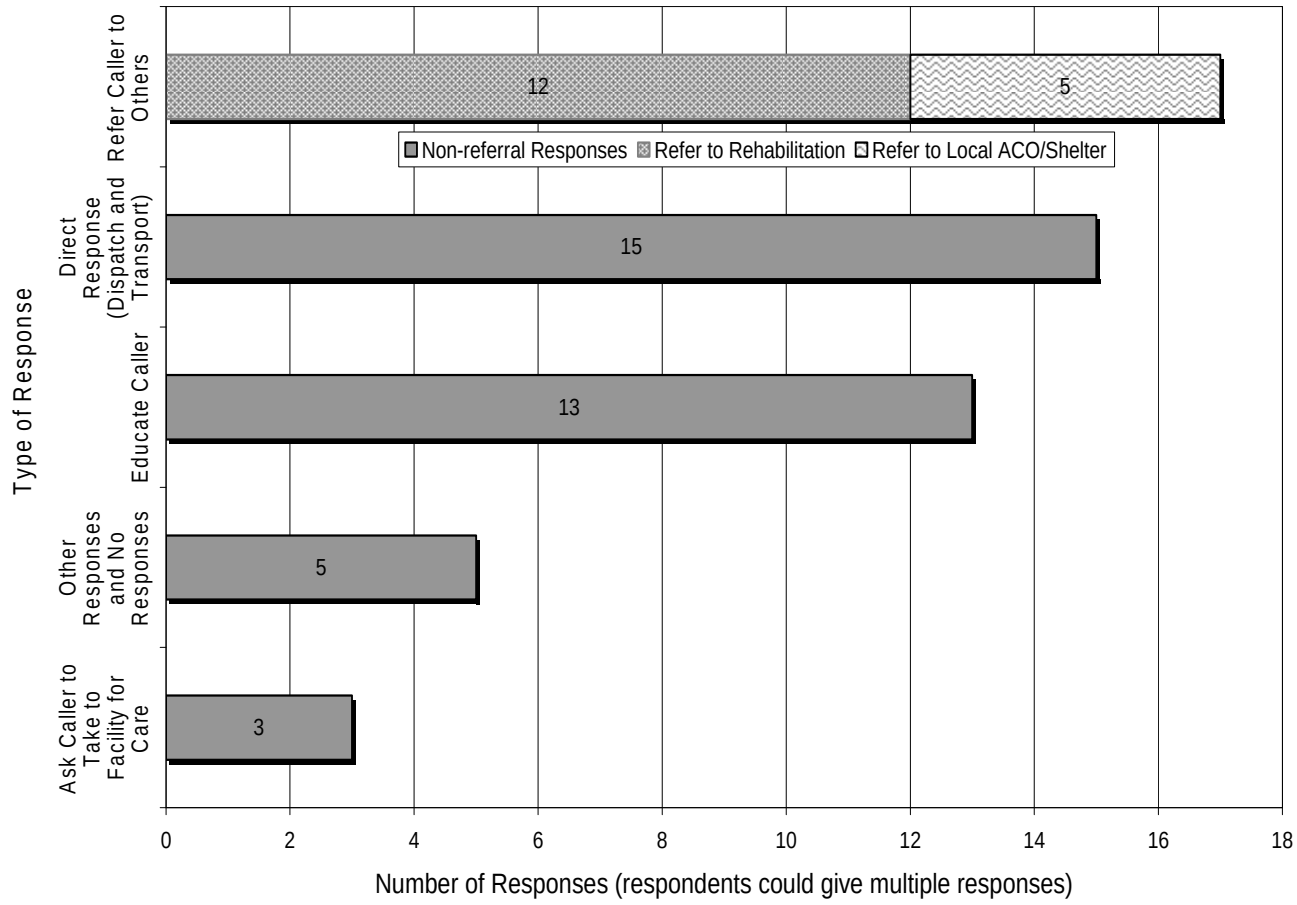
For one of these concerns, Babies that Seem to be Without Mother, respondents were asked for more detailed information about how they typically respond (Figure 5.2). More than a third reported that they referred callers to others, most frequently to rehabilitation. On referrals to rehabilitators, respondents were further asked if they gave callers a specific referral with a phone number. Nearly three-quarters of those answering this question reported that they supplied specific rehabilitation referrals with a phone number. Slightly more than a quarter reported that they educate the caller; the majority of these being rehabilitators. Slightly less than a third reported that they respond directly, either dispatching to the site or transporting the orphans to care.

Responding to Migratory Birds and Rabies Vector Species—Our respondents are dealing with many inquiries about birds; a quarter of respondents cited birds as the most common callers' concern. However, only a little more than one-third of respondents (23 of 65 who answered this question) report they hold the necessary federal Migratory Bird Permit from the US Fish and Wildlife Service to directly aid or euthanize nearly all species of birds. A significant proportion of rehabilitators (14 of 23 responding) and half the ACO/Shelters (5 of 10 responding) hold Migratory Bird Permits.

Respondents without Migratory Bird Permits can legally give advice, make referrals, handle unprotected species, and provide services that do not harm or require handling the birds (for example installing one-way doors to allow birds to exit a building without returning). Respondents who do not hold Migratory Bird Permits reported that they refer calls that require direct aid or handling of protected species. These respondents most frequently referred to rehabilitators. Local animal control and state wildlife agencies were also referred to.

Similar to migratory birds, species of mammals known to be the most common carriers (and victims) of the rabies virus (raccoons, bats, skunks, and canines) are labeled rabies vector species (RVS) and are subject to more legal restrictions than other species. These include restrictions on rehabilitation of RVS. Respondents were asked if they knew a wildlife rehabilitator authorized to receive rabies vector species; few did. Only 8 of the 37 who answered this question (22 percent) knew the name and address of a rehabilitator who could receive RVS. Only 1 respondent (in 10) in the ACO/Shelter category reported knowing one. A third of responding Police and Other Governmental Agencies reported knowing one and 20 percent of NWCO reported knowing one.

Figure 5.2 How Respondents Reported Handling Orphaned Wildlife Calls (49 respondents)



Preventing Conflict by Educating the Public—Respondents were asked about their efforts to education the public at large, other than when responding to callers, about ways to prevent nuisance situations and conflicts. Slightly fewer than half the respondents reported that they distributed educational materials to prevent nuisance complaints about wild animals or engaged in other public education efforts to this end (Table 5.5). Public education efforts cited by respondents included maintaining websites; tabling at community events; distributing newsletters, press releases, flyers, brochures, and public service announcements; writing letters to the editors of newspapers; and making presentations at school.

Few NWCO report they offer preventative public education while all the respondents in the Other category offer it. Most of the ACO/Shelters report they offer preventative public education. Rehabilitators, who bear a large part of the burden for direct education when dealing with callers on the phone, report an average amount of this type of preventative education.

Trap Loans—An old and not uncommon practice to deal with public demand for help with wildlife has been to loan or rent live traps. Less than one-quarter of our respondents reported that they loan traps. The category of respondent with the highest proportion loaning traps was ACO/Shelters, half of which reported loaning traps.

Table 5.5 Public Education Activities

	Percentage Who Distribute Materials	Percentage Offering Other Public Education
Other (5)	60	100
Rehabilitators (23)	52	57
ACO/Shelters (10)	50	80
Other Government Agency (6)	50	50
Police (6)	33	33
NWCO (15)	27	7
All Categories (65)	45	49

Number in parentheses following category name indicates number of respondents in that category who answered the question.

Respondents were further asked about the disposition of the animals caught in loaned trapped and brought to the trap lender. The responses to this question are difficult to interpret since respondents who reported they did not loan traps nevertheless answered the questions about disposition. This suggests the questions were not well understood. Respondents could select "rehabilitation," "euthanasia," or "both" (meaning both rehabilitation and euthanasia) as the outcomes for animals brought to them as a result of trap loans. Considering only the 15 respondents who stated they loaned traps, more than half (8) selected "both," 4 selected "rehabilitation," and 2 selected "euthanasia."

These trap lenders reported some information about how disposition decisions for these animals were made. Of the 13 who answered, 4 reported that these decisions were made by others to whom the respondents turned over the animals. The other 9 reported animals' condition, availability of a rehabilitator, and state or county health department requirements for handing rabies vector species were the criteria in making disposition decisions.

Lethal versus Non-lethal Responses—How respondents made decisions about whether to use lethal or non-lethal techniques was queried. They were also asked what lethal techniques were available to them, whether they inform the public about lethal responses, and who performed euthanization.

The responses to the question about how decisions were made suggest that this question was not well understood by respondents and/or that it was understood differently by different types of respondents as they tried to answer it from their perspective. The aggregated responses, therefore, should be considered in this light (Table 5.6). Some respondents, perhaps showing their ambivalence about this issue or perhaps simply not understanding the question, gave self-contradictory answers (such as one that respondent used only non-lethal responses but listing criteria for euthanizing, a lethal response).

More than half the respondents who answered this question (57 percent) mentioned specific reasons for lethal response. These included legal or permit requirements (such as those applying to rabies vector species and animals that will not be releasable after treatment), danger to people, history of a bite, apparent illness of the animal, and degree of suffering. The remaining respondents who stated they responded lethally either did not supply a reason or gave

general responses such as they decided based on the species without explaining which species were killed, which were not, or why.

Table 5.6 Number of Respondents Citing Each Criterion for Deciding Between Lethal and Non-Lethal Responses

	All Respondents (49)
Use lethal when people endangered or bitten or when animal sick or suffering	19
Use lethal when law or permit requires	9
Use only non-lethal	8
Have no protocol for decision or response unclear	8
Use non-lethal, but lethal also used for some species or situations	7
Decision made by someone else (i.e. veterinarian, shelter, rehabilitator)	5
Use only lethal	2

Respondents could give multiple answers.

Slightly more than half the respondents (55 percent) reported that they euthanized themselves. For those respondents who reported they did not euthanize, 21 percent reported the animals were euthanized by a veterinarian, 17 percent reported they were euthanized by a shelter, and 7 percent reported they were euthanized by a rehabilitator.

Respondents were asked what lethal responses were available for them. Of those that answered this question, nearly half had injectible drugs available. Slightly less than a third had firearms available. Other lethal responses mentioned include lethal traps, burrow exploders (devices that pump propane gas into animal burrows and explode the gas, killing or maiming the animals inside by concussive force), knives, and cardiopuncture.

Respondents were asked to indicate whether they informed members of the public that an animal would be killed as a matter of protocol or only if a member of the public asked. Their responses are summarized in Table 5.7. Most (93 percent) answered that they did share information that an animal would be killed. All of the few respondents who did not share the information that an animal would be killed were NWCO.

Respondents were asked if they had to euthanize healthy wild animals due to a lack of other options. Just over half of those who answered (51 percent) reported that they did euthanize healthy wild animals for this reason. ACO/Shelters (78 percent) and Police (75 percent) were the most likely to report euthanizing for lack of options; Rehabilitators (29 percent) were the least likely. Sixty-four percent of NWCO reported euthanizing for this reason.

Respondents were also asked the number of healthy wild animals they euthanize for this reason. Only one respondent was able to report a precise number. Some stated ranges of numbers, often with qualification indicating the ranges were rough estimates. Some gave qualitative responses such as “some” or “few.”

Due to their role in field euthanizing deer struck by vehicles, police were asked for specific information about training and equipment for this task. Six departments responded; one stating they are not authorized to field euthanize. Of the five other respondents, most (3) include training for this task in regular department firearms course, one has officers train with Animal

Control, and one includes a specific training module on this topic in their Academy. One department mentioned that an Animal Control Officer is frequently present on the scene to advise responding police officers in accomplishing this task. All five responding departments use firearms. In addition, two departments use injectible drugs. One specified that Animal Control is requested to come to scene to euthanize as a first course of action and firearms are used if they are not available or other circumstances do not allow. Another department listed use of knives secondarily to firearms as equipment for field euthanizing deer.

Table 5.7 How Information on Lethal Response Shared with the Public

	Share Information as Protocol and When Asked	Only Share Information When Public Asks	Do Not Share Information on Lethal Responses
NWCO (13)	4	6	3
Police (5)	1	4	
Rehabilitators (16)	7	9	
ACO/Shelters (9)		9	
All Respondents (46)	12	31	3

Number in parentheses following category name indicates number of respondents in that category who answered the question. "Other" and "Other Government Agency" categories are not included as separate categories in this table because they had too few respondents to disaggregate.

6.0 Discussion of Findings

Volume of Demand

The findings from our survey, as well as the information summarized in Table 2.2 in Section 2 about wildlife hotlines, confirm the individual experience of everyone performing animal related jobs in the MWCOG region and elsewhere. Large public demand exists for information and assistance with wildlife questions and concerns. Currently in MWCOG, this large public demand is falling unevenly on a patchwork of public and private entities with varying missions and resources; some with missions entirely unrelated to wild animals and most with limited resources to perform their primary missions leaving little to deal with wildlife.

This is particularly true of ACO/Shelters who reported the largest volume of wildlife calls per respondent but who are generally tasked and funded to deal with wildlife only in specific limited circumstances. The second largest volume is reported by rehabilitators. Rehabilitators' mission of helping individual animals return to wild lives is more closely aligned with meeting some of the demand for wildlife information and assistance; in particular the demand relating to injured and orphaned wild animals. At the same time, they are also bearing much of the demand not specifically related to their mission.

Significant volume of demand is also falling on Other Government Agencies and Police. Considering these together with ACO/Shelters, public agencies are carrying a great deal of the

burden of this demand. Clearly, the public sees their wildlife concerns as matters of public responsibility. This interpretation is reinforced by the finding that the NWCO in our survey, nearly all private businesses, reported the least volume of demand.

The finding that Rehabilitators are second to ACO/Shelters in the volume of demand they are receiving may reflect the degree to which the other types of entities refer the public to rehabilitators although our survey did not measure this directly. The survey did find that referring calls was a common respond to various types of wildlife concerns. It was reported as the most common response for calls about orphaned young wildlife, a concern which is best addressed by rehabilitators.

This survey only asked about telephone calls. No information was collected about the volume of walk-in or e-mail demand. It is likely that as internet access is greater now than when this survey was conducted, public demand for information may have shifted towards electronic sources. Neither did the survey collect information about websites respondents may maintain nor the volume of traffic those websites receive. All these; walk-ins, e-mails, and website traffic, are also forms of public demand for information and assistance that were not measured.

Nature of Demand

Not surprisingly, our survey found that common situations and common animals generated more demand than less common situations and animals. Thus, more demand for information and assistance was reported for animals seen in yards (a very common occurrence) than for situations that occur less frequently such as animals behaving strangely. Similarly, most demand was reported for animals that are most common in MWCOG urban and suburban areas.

The frequent demand for information and assistance in the common situation of an animal seen in a yard, a situation that rarely represents a significant threat to people or property, deserves particular notice. Many members of the public continue to call about seeing animals, especially rabies vector species which are acting normally because they retain out-dated or misunderstood information that suggests to them that merely seeing the animal is enough to indicate the animal is rabid and/or dangerous. Basic education on common wildlife species more generally communicated in advance of sighting should reduce this unnecessary demand.

Our survey results suggest that demand is often directed to the most appropriate entities for specific types of concerns with the exception that the public turns to ACO/Shelters for all concerns. For example, the public mainly contacts organizations or individuals dedicated to animal welfare (ACO/Shelters and Rehabilitators) with welfare-related orphaned wildlife concerns. It is not possible to determine from our survey if this is because the public is sophisticated enough about wildlife concerns to direct their demand appropriately or if this is because of referrals between categories redirecting demand.

Further, the role of referrals in driving up apparent volume of demand is not measured here but may be an important factor in overall volume. It is a common tale that when a caller finally reaches someone with an answer that caller has already talked with someone else, often several someones, who could not help but suggested other phone numbers. In the specific cases of calls about migratory birds, the volume of calls may be driven up, in part, by legal restriction that requires referral to Migratory Bird Permit holders for direct aid or handling of nearly all bird species. One way to reduce the overall volume of demand placed on all entities may be to direct each type of demand to the most appropriate resource in the first place or, at least, very early in the search for help.

Responding to Demand

Typical Responses

Typical responses reported to each of the typical concerns were generally appropriate for the nature of each concern. For example, Injured Animals were more frequently taken to a facility for care than any other concern; just as one would expect. Babies that Seem to be Without Mother was occasionally responded to by taking them to care, suggesting appropriate public education was distinguishing real orphans from those young the public often mistakes for orphans. No other concern led to the response of taking an animal to care.

The most resource-demanding response, dispatching to site, was not mentioned for concerns that were unlikely to require this level of assistance (Animal in Yard, Babies that Seem to be Without Mother). For other concerns, dispatching to site was not a frequently mentioned response. As would be expected, it was most commonly reported for Animals Behaving Strangely, a concern that likely includes sick animals requiring this level of direct assistance.

Trapping was most frequently mentioned as a response to Animal in Building, a response that is more appropriate to this concern then to any of the other concerns. However, trapping was not an uncommon response to Animal in Yard; primarily from NWCOs. While the most common response to an Animal in Yard was to educate the caller, the use of trapping in this situation that very infrequently presents any real threat to human health or property suggests that some animals are being inappropriately removed.

While a majority of respondents were able to supply a specific rehabilitator referral with phone number for orphan wildlife concerns, less than a quarter knew the name and address of a rehabilitator authorized to receive RVS. Hardly any ACO/Shelters knew where they could take RVS for rehabilitation. This general lack of knowledge about where these common species could receive care strongly suggests that few are benefiting from rehabilitation.

Educating the Public to Prevent Conflicts

Any conflict requires two parties and conflicts between people and wild animals are no different. It is common to think that people must respond to these conflicts by dealing with the animals. However, conflicts can also be approached from the other side; by dealing with the people. This is done primarily by educating the public about what is normal for the wild animals they see, how they can prevent conflicts from developing, and how they can resolve some conflicts by making changes themselves.

Our findings suggest that for most of the categories of respondents, the tendency is to responding by dealing with the animals. Only Rehabilitators reported a strong tendency to respond to immediate demand by dealing with the people in the form of educating callers. Further, less than half the respondents reported that they undertook pro-active public education to prevent conflicts. These findings suggest that public education that might reduce the volume of demand is not currently being conducted as widely.

Lethal and Non-Lethal Responses

To decide the fate of wild animals, our respondents often cited well-accepted legal, regulatory, human health and safety, and humane concerns for their decisions to use lethal responses. However, a large minority did not report how they decide in sufficient detail to understand what factors influence these animals fate. Our findings leave a great deal of uncertainty about why many of the wild animals who die were killed. One clear result is that many of our respondents kill healthy wild animals due to a perceived lack of other options.

The questions in the survey about lethal responses and euthanization did not define these terms. The responses suggest that all methods respondents used to kill animals were reported to us as "euthanization" even though some of the methods specifically cited, such as conibear traps and exsanguination, do not meet accepted standards for euthanization (for example the standards established by the American Veterinary Medicine Association, see 8.0 Sources). The nature of our data does not allow us to determine how many animals are killed by which methods. However, some methods that can cause significant animal suffering were reported by some of our respondents.

A large minority of our respondents report they do not euthanize wild animals themselves. This adds additional demand to others; primarily veterinarians and secondarily shelters. This demand for euthanization services adds to the burden the ACO/Shelters category is bearing to meet the overall public demand for assistance with wildlife concerns.

7.0 Recommendations

In preparing this White Paper, the Animal Service Committee confirmed the informal impression of its members that public demand for information and assistance with wildlife concerns directly and significantly impacts the members of the Committee, most of whom are Animal Care and Control agencies of local governments, as well as other public agencies and private entities in MWCOG jurisdictions. Its impact on public agencies is of most immediate concern to MWCOG and its member governments. These member governments fund animal care and control activities as part of their public responsibilities. These agencies are mandated and funded primarily to handle domesticated species with only limited responsibilities for wild species. However, the public is placing significant demand on these agencies and their contractors to also provide services for wild species tangential to or totally outside their limited official responsibilities.

This demand is also impacting private entities, most significantly wildlife rehabilitators, who voluntarily provide a very significant amount of services to the public, often after that demand has been referred to them by others including by public agencies. While our survey did not include the general public, our results suggest by extension that local residents and businesses are also negatively impacted by the existing situation. Rather than clear understanding about where to turn for helpful authoritative information or direct assistance, local residents and businesses find a patchwork of entities with varying but limited responsibilities, missions, and resources who offer varying but limited services to help them deal with what residents and businesses perceive as significant and often urgent concerns about wild animals.

Even when members of the public negotiate the existing labyrinth of legal requirements, referrals, and sometimes conflicting advice, there are significant gaps in services available from

any source, public or private. Both the difficulty for the public to find help when it is available and the gaps in services cost public agencies, private wildlife organizations and businesses, and residents real time and money. As a civil society, we must consider the costs in animal death and suffering that could be avoided by addressing confusion and gaps in services. Therefore, this section of the White Paper puts forward several recommendations that can be implemented as separate actions or concurrently to address the impacts of public demand for information and assistance with wildlife concerns to benefit both people and animals.

Examples of What's Happened Elsewhere

While developing recommendations for action, the Committee researched how other North American communities are addressing this common issue to see what had been tried elsewhere and how these efforts had worked. Appendix C presents information about just a few; these are in no way intended to be either a comprehensive survey of all such examples or a suggestion that these examples are necessarily superior to others that could have been included if information had been available.

Recommendations for MWCOG Jurisdictions

The recommendations for potential actions were ranked in priority order by the Animal Services Subcommittee. Each member of the Subcommittee was asked to indicate the relative importance, urgency, and practicality of the seven recommendations identified by the Wildlife Subcommittee. The seven recommendations are discussed below in order of their ranking; with the highest ranked recommendations discussed first.

Professional Education

Professional education of animal care and control professional and police officers is very well accepted. However, training specific to their wildlife-related responsibilities and the additional wildlife-related activities many undertake is generally not the highest priority. Few have extensive wildlife-specific training and many have none.

Wildlife rehabilitators must obtain continuing education to maintain their rehabilitation licenses. Some of the required training may include wildlife conflict topics, however much of it focuses on care and housing topics.

New regulations for NWCOs in Maryland became effective August 25, 2008. NWCOs must now pass a written examination to obtain a permit. No continuing education is required after passing the examination. In Virginia, NWCOs must "demonstrate continuing knowledge, skill, and proficiency" when applying for and renewing their permits. They may do this by passing a test, attending approved training, or holding certification from a recognized professional wildlife management organization. The District of Columbia currently has no requirements relevant to NWCO training.

1. MWCOG jurisdictions' animal care and control agencies and police departments review existing professional training offered and/or required on their wildlife-related responsibilities and activities to identify existing regional training resources and gaps.

2. The Animal Services Committee identify best practices regionally and/or nationally that may be appropriate to emulate.
3. MWCOG jurisdictions' animal care and control agencies and police departments formally include training on their wildlife-related responsibilities and activities in existing professional education where such training is not currently required and/or offered.
4. The Animal Services Committee explore the potential for partnering with rehabilitator groups or organizations to offer and/or encourage increase availability of training for rehabilitators on resolving wildlife conflicts.
5. MWCOG jurisdictions work with state and District regulators towards requiring professional education for NWCOs who operate in the MWCOG region so that these private businesses are operating in a manner that best serves the public and the animals and that does not create additional demand on public agencies or other private entities.

Targeted Public Education

The survey results strongly suggest a substantial lack of basic knowledge about common wild species among members of the public, such as knowledge of what constitutes normal behavior and what is a threat. Lack of basic knowledge creates demand for inappropriate services, such as to remove animals who are not real threats or to rescue animals that do not need assistance. Currently, dispatchers, ACOs, and wildlife rehabilitators are educating one person at a time by phone or in person which is extremely resource intensive. The national animal welfare organizations among our respondents conduct public education. However, it is only one of their many activities and is aimed at a national audience, not focused on the MWCOG region. Local animal care and control agencies, shelters, and wildlife rehabilitators will benefit if public demand for basic information can be met by efficiently increasing basic knowledge among the general public.

MWCOG animal care and control agencies, shelters, wildlife rehabilitators, NWCOs, and potentially other interested parties could work cooperatively to develop a public education program to communicate basic information. Much of the demand generated by animals in yards behaving normally and young animals without parents in obvious attendance can be met by disseminating simple authoritative factual information. This should decrease demand for this information and for inappropriate services.

Animal services agencies, organizations, and individual rehabilitators and businesses may initially feel overwhelmed by the sense that there are simply too many uninformed or misinformed people to make effective change. However, another way to view the public is to see it as a large untapped resource. Members of the public can be effective educators of others. Compared to the existing situation, it may be a more efficient use of limited resources to educate a large number of people on a small number of basic points through targeted public education than to educate few members of the public individually but on more topics and/or in greater depth.

Many organizations have created informational messages for the public about wildlife. Content is generally consistent across these messages. This content could be adapted to a MWCOG regional program. By adopting a regional approach to messaging and "branding" regional wildlife information as coming from a local authoritative and trusted voice, the messages' effectiveness and effect can be significantly improved.

Currently, delivery of these messages is typically static. Websites, for example, presume users have an existing interest to seek out information. Similarly, pamphlets and flyers placed at shelters and veterinary clinics reach a small segment of the general public; a segment that is already more knowledgeable and/or more motivated then the public at-large. To maximize the value of public education, a proactive delivery system is necessary.

1. A public/private partnership potentially including MWCOG jurisdictions animal care and control agencies, other government agencies, sheltering organizations, wildlife rehabilitators, national animal welfare organizations with regional affiliations, local and regional animal welfare and wildlife organizations, wildlife related businesses, and any other like-minded public and private entities be formed to undertake a targeted public education program.
2. MWCOG Animal Services Committee review existing public education efforts by member agencies and others for models to adopt or adapt regionally.
3. Delivery be proactive including such things as public services announcements on radio and TV, targeted advertising such as radio and TV traffic sponsorships, print advertisements, press releases and other media outreach, compelling visual signage, posters, and flyers in places and at events that will achieve greatest exposure to segments of the public least likely to be reached by existing static messaging.

Improving Data Collection and Reporting

Currently, the quality and accessibility of information about the activities this White Paper addresses varies widely, where it exists at all. Not all the entities who address public wildlife demand collect data. Some, such as many NWCO, collect and report only what is legally required. Most animal intake reporting from animal control agencies and shelters nationally lumps wild animals into a general "other" category that includes every species other than dogs and cats. The survey this White Paper reports on fills some data gaps for these issues but is limited to a single snap-shot in time on the questions it explored.

MWCOG jurisdictions could better understand the nature and quantity of demand placed on them and of the resources they are expending to deal with that demand if they collected and reported this information. Data collected could support the case for changing the ways wildlife issues are currently handled. These data would also serve as a baseline for evaluating the effect of changes; to answer the important question of whether actions taken improved agencies' operations, service to the public, and the lives of animals.

Data collection and reporting at the agency, organizational, and business level would benefit each agency and organization. Even more benefits could be expected from a regional data collection and reporting effort. Regional data may reveal trends and allow reporting entities to compare their experiences with others' to identify opportunities to improve and cooperate.

Some MWCOG animal service agencies are participating in a regional effort to standardize animal intake and disposition data. Based on a national model called the Asilimar Accords, this effort is expected to increase transparency and allow "apples-to-apples" comparisons. As implementation proceeds, data on wildlife concerns could be added to this effort. Agencies could alternatively collect data on public contacts about wildlife, dispatch activities for wildlife, and wildlife intake and disposition independently to inform their own management.

1. MWCOG jurisdictions animal care and control agencies collect and report information on their activities relating to wildlife such as intake and disposition of animals by species, volume and nature of inquiries and requests, action taken in response to inquiries and requests, and similar activities.
2. MWCOG jurisdictions animal care and control agencies add wildlife data collection and reporting to regional data collection and reporting effort for companion animals.
3. The Animal Services Committee approach wildlife rehabilitators and NWCO in the MWCOG region and solicit their participation in regional data collection and reporting.

Regional Wildlife Hotline

The results of our survey clearly demonstrate that most of our respondents are expending significant resources on answering questions and making referrals for wildlife questions and concerns; activity that is very similar to operating a wildlife hotline. It is not practical for animal care and control agencies, sheltering organizations, and others to simply turn away from the public's wildlife demand. The public will continue to make that demand, regardless, and more resources will be expended in the long run by continuing the existing patchwork of services than would be used by rationally addressing this demand.

One way to address this demand is to offer one consolidated source of information and referrals in the form of a regional wildlife hotline. A single first point of contact for wildlife concerns would relieve existing agencies and organizations of much of the burden they are currently bearing for wildlife concerns. A single first point of contact would significantly reduce the amount of information other agencies and organizations would need to keep available and up-to-date on these topics and staff training required as they would be able to direct calls to this single, knowledgeable source. It would also be expected to reduce the total number of public contacts over the current situation. Currently, many individuals contact several entities seeking answers or following referrals. One first point of contact would significantly reduce these multiple contacts, reducing the overall contact volume.

Section 2.2.2 of this White Paper summarized information about a number of wildlife hotlines operated across North America. These examples reported an average of 5 calls per year per 1,000 human population in their service areas. Based on this average experience, the MWCOG region with approximately 4.2 million population (2000 Census) might expect to generate 21,000 calls to a wildlife hotline each year. If a MWCOG hotline experienced the largest volume reported per capita (15 calls per year per 1,000 population), it might expect to receive about 63,000 calls per year. This is in contrast to our respondents' combined reported volume of more than 141,000 calls per year or more than 33 calls per year per 1,000 population. Additional examination of current calls would be helpful to estimate what proportion of calls would likely be directed to a new regional hotline and, therefore, the likely reduction local ACO/Shelters, rehabilitators, and others would experience. The actual volume would be impacted by many varied factors and clearly these simply derived estimates can provide only a starting point for planning.

Currently, the Northern Virginia Wildlife Rescue League (WRL) operates a hotline in the MWCOG region. However, it is not the intent or mission of this organization to serve the entire region on all wildlife questions. Their hotline's main purpose is to triage wildlife potentially

needing rehabilitation in northern Virginia. Nor, very significantly, is WRL currently funded to expand their volunteer efforts to take on a larger role.

The federal USDA, APHIS, Wildlife Services offices for the states of Maryland and Virginia accept phone calls from the public on many of the issues covered by this White Paper. However, they are not funded to handle all of the public's wildlife-related questions, especially questions outside their federal mandate to protect agriculture, property, human health and safety, and natural resources from animal damage. Concerns about the welfare of individual animals that occupy much local agency and rehabilitator time are not within Wildlife Services' mission. Nor are questions about wild animals that are not causing or threatening damage such as animals simply considered a nuisance or animals that might present immediate public health concerns.

There are potentially many options to operate a regional wildlife hotline. Hotlines can be answered live by staff in dedicated space. Or hotlines can be operated remotely with callers leaving messages that are returned after retrieving messages from any location (sometimes termed a warmline).

One MWCOG jurisdiction agency could operate a hotline to which other jurisdictions refer calls and contribute funding. Alternatively, MWCOG collectedly or its member jurisdictions individually could contract for services from an existing hotline or from a contractor who would create a new hotline. WRL's hotline may be considered for this type of arrangement if they are interested and able to expand to offer this level of service. Hotline services could be contracted from a vendor who is not currently operating a hotline but with potential to development one. A hotline would not necessarily need to be located in the MWCOG region. An existing hotline with the required expertise for advising the public on wildlife conflict resolution and on triaging wildlife for rehabilitation, the basics for most hotlines, could be provided with regionally specific information to make appropriate referrals.

As an alternative or supplement to a hotline, MWCOG or its member jurisdictions could develop an automated system as a first point of contact for wildlife concerns. An automated attendant could direct callers initially to a library of recorded tips and answers to frequently asked questions before directly calls to agencies or rehabilitators. Such a library could also be available for agencies to refer or transfer calls to when they are contacted directly with common non-urgent wildlife questions.

1. Animal Services Committee investigate options for providing hotline services and develop a plan to implement a MWCOG regional wildlife hotline.
2. MWCOG assist member jurisdictions to identify and work with potential hotline operators who could be contracted to provide hotline services on behalf of jurisdictions.

Identifying and Fielding Existing Resources

The MWCOG region contains many resources for wildlife issues. However, information about existing resources, especially identifying the most appropriate resources for a specific concern, is not as widely known as it could be. A simple up-to-date inventory of wildlife resources would be very beneficial to all public and private entities dealing with the public on wildlife issues.

There are also many resources that are not specific to animal concerns and are not held or primarily used for animal-related activities. However, some of these resources held by government agencies, private organizations, and businesses could be used in partnership with

animal welfare agencies and organizations to further this White Paper's recommendations. As one simple example, state and county highway and roads department have programmable signage, some fixed and some portable, typically used to warn of specific traffic impacts or problems. When not in use for this purpose, signs are typically simply turned off. However, during the periods of greatest deer crossings, such as the fall rut at dusk, signs not needed for traffic warnings could be deployed and programmed to warn about the greater likelihood of drivers encountering deer in the road. There are potentially many other examples of such innovative use of existing resources.

1. The Animal Services Committee inventory existing animal-related resources in the MWCOG region and make this inventory widely available to public agencies and private entities dealing with the public on wildlife concerns as well as explore how to appropriately make the information in the inventory available directly to the public.
2. The Animal Services Committee research potential innovative uses of existing resources held by MWCOG jurisdictions' public agencies, including non-animal related agencies, private organizations, businesses, and other.

Public Agencies' Policies

Appropriate policies for addressing wildlife-related public demand can guide public agencies' activities in the most rational, efficient, and beneficial direction. The responses to our survey indicate that there is variation across the jurisdictions on how they are handling wildlife-related demand. Therefore, it suggests variation in policies on this activity across jurisdictions.

Policy differences between jurisdictions can create confusion for the public as they try to negotiate available services. It may also shift demand between agencies or from public agencies to private organizations or vice versa creating incentive to forego offering the public wildlife information for fear of bearing a disproportionate burden. To the extent agencies have discretion to do so, harmonizing policies throughout the region could reduce public confusion and avert demand shifting. Additionally, working together as a region through MWCOG could be an efficient route to help local jurisdictions identify and implement the most efficient and beneficial policies.

1. MWCOG jurisdictions' public agencies review existing policies relating to handling demands for wildlife information and assistance for each jurisdiction.
2. The Animal Services Committee identify best practices regionally, nationally, and/or internationally that may be appropriate to emulate and develop model policies for handling demand for wildlife information and assistance.
3. The Animal Care and Control Committee recommend adoption of best practices by MWCOG jurisdictions animal care and control agencies.

Comprehensive Community Animal Services

All MWCOG jurisdictions offer extensive, high-quality public animal care and control services to the public for companion animals, other domesticated species, and animals threatening human health and safety. Therefore, many will say that these jurisdictions already have comprehensive community animal services. Indeed, compared to the situation for animal

care and control in even the recent past and in many other places, MWCOG jurisdictions are very well served. However, the public demand for services related to wild animals is clearly not being adequately met.

This White Paper has explored this situation and put forward recommendations to address some of the negative aspects of this situation, in particular the impacts on public agencies. The recommendations put forward to this point do not represent sweeping change but ways to improve, enhance, and expand existing activities to improve the situation.

It is also appropriate here to consider a broader approach to addressing this situation; to perhaps see this not as a burden to be removed but an opportunity to better serve the public and animals. State and local governments could accept that public demand for help with wildlife-related concerns is a valid demand for them to fulfill and make some wildlife services part of local government-provided animal services with necessary funding to carry it out. Local services need not duplicate or conflict with state wildlife authority but focus on the unserved and underserved concerns identified in this White Paper; preventing and resolving wildlife conflicts and concerns about wild animals who may be injured, sick, or orphaned.

To a greater or lesser degree, with more or fewer resources, and well or poorly, local public agencies are already performing these tasks in response to public demand. These agencies could be authorized and funded specifically to do so. This would provide the public with significantly improved services in this area and benefit many wild animals. It would also benefit local agencies who would be able to plan programs and depend on funding instead of squeezing resources to meet wildlife-related demand out of existing budgets appropriated for other purposes.

1. Animal Services Committee investigate options for including wildlife-related services specific to preventing and resolving wildlife conflicts and concerns about injured, sick, or orphaned wild animals as part of local government animal care and control activities.
2. Animal Services Committee investigate options for local governments to offer wildlife-related services specific to preventing and resolving wildlife conflicts and concerns about injured, sick, or orphaned wild animals through agencies other than existing animal care and control agencies or through contractors.

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Appendix A

Summary of Survey Findings
Wildlife in Shelters
1997
The Humane Society of the United States

In spring 1997, The Humane Society of the United States (HSUS) surveyed humane agencies and animal shelters throughout the US about their involvement with and handling of wildlife in their shelters. Ninety-eight surveys were returned out of 199 distributed (49 percent response rate).

Most (93%) dealt with wildlife in some capacity. About 60 percent of these handled volume in excess of 500 contacts and/or animals a year; some well in excess. Nearly three-quarters handled more than 100 contacts and/or animals a year. One shelter reported physically responding to 2,000 wildlife calls a year; down from 6,000 in previous years. Most (87%) reported that they took in some wild animals. Nearly all of responding shelters that dealt with wildlife provided telephone assistance or advice. Most shelters referred callers to others, with a high percentage referring to wildlife rehabilitators. Most (94%) reported that they euthanized wild animals under at least some circumstances.

Wildlife Services Provided by Responding Shelters

Services	Percentage of Shelters Providing
Telephone assistance or advice	97
Referral of wildlife calls	80
Capture/rescue of injured wildlife	77
Transport wildlife to rehabilitators	75
Pick up of orphaned wildlife	64
Relocation/release of healthy live-trapped wildlife	62
Transport wildlife to veterinary clinic	62
Live trapping or other capture of rabies suspect wild animals	51
Pick up of trapped animals	48
Rental of live traps	48
Free loan of live traps	44
Disaster response	44
Site visits and counseling by staff	38
Live trapping or other capture of nuisance wildlife	37
Euthanasia services for NWCOs	34
Emergency live trapping (public hazards)	30
Live trapping by shelter staff	18

Where Shelters Referred Calls

Referrals	Percentage of Shelters Referring
Wildlife rehabilitators	86
Local game warden	68
Private NWCOs	42
Nature centers	41
Private pest control company	30
State Cooperative Extension Services	21
Federal agency (such as USDA-APHIS Animal Damage Control)	19
Other	11

Of the shelters that admitted wildlife, very few had specific receiving area (16 percent) or specific housing area for wildlife (26 percent). For the most part, wildlife were being admitted and housed with the shelters' general domestic animal populations despite different needs on the part of these two types of animals. No one type of wildlife (mammal, bird, reptiles and amphibians) dominated the mix of those admitted.

Types of Wildlife Admitted to Shelters

Types of Wildlife	Percentage of Shelters Admitting
None	13
Mammals	81
Birds	83
Reptiles and amphibians	71

However, when shelters reported the species or species groups they dealt with in any manner, not just those admitted, some were much more commonly mentioned than others.

Wildlife Species or Species Groups Shelters Most Commonly Dealt With

Species or Group	Percentage of Shelters Citing as Commonly Dealt With
Raccoons	73
Birds, all species	52
Opossums	44
Squirrels	41
Deer	34
Skunks	21
Rabbits	16
Woodchucks	14
Ducks and Geese	12
Raptors, all species	11
Bats	8
Snakes, all species	8
Coyotes	7
Foxes	7
Pigeons	7
Turtles	7
Hawks	5
Crows	4

Eighty-five percent of the responding shelters indicated that wildlife rehabilitation services existed in their communities. These shelters characterized who provided those services.

Type of Wildlife Rehabilitation Services in Shelters' Communities

Type of Rehabilitation Services	Percentage of Shelters Reporting
Rehabilitators are licensed/permitted by the state	47
Shelter used grassroots rehabilitation program, working with different home based, licensed rehabilitators	40
Local rehabilitation program was run by private group	31
Local nature center ran rehabilitation program	13
Shelter ran formal rehabilitation program	11
Shelter coordinates a formal rehabilitation program	10
Other	8

Shelters were asked about their perception of their responsibility to deal with wildlife and their ability to do so with the resources they had. Shelters could select more than one answer to the question about responsibility and several did. More than half agreed that their services to help animals should extend to wildlife when the public needed help.

Shelters' Perception of their Responsibility to Deal with Wildlife

Do Shelters Have a Responsibility to Deal with Wildlife?	Percentage of Shelters
Yes, in all cases where the public needs information or has problems	57
Yes, but only in cases of injured animals or threats to public safety	26
Yes, required by municipal government	8
No, shelters should focus primarily on companion animals	17
Other	7

Three-quarters of shelters indicated that their ability to respond to wildlife problems was excellent, good, or fair; with a large plurality indicating "fair." Less than one-quarter of shelters indicated their ability to respond was poor. This suggests that most shelters were coping with the public demand for help with wildlife but many were doing no better than coping.

Shelters' Ability to Respond to Wildlife Problems Relative to Resources

Ability to Respond	Percentage of Shelters
Excellent, our program is well established & thorough	8
Good, we have adequate resources	22
Fair, we usually can deal with issues as they arise	46
Poor, we are overtaxed and cannot focus on this issue as we would like to	13
Poor, we don't really think it's our responsibility, but we do what we can	10
Don't know	2

Sixty-five percent of shelters indicated they offered educational materials and/or programs concerning wildlife. Of those offering wildlife education, nearly all (98%) offered written materials and many (43%) offered public lectures on these topics.

Shelters were offered a list of topics and asked which they would most like to know more about. Information on the following topics was most desires: non-lethal solutions to problems; capture and rescue techniques; public outreach and education; handling techniques; laws, policies, and procedures regarding wildlife in shelters; diseases (both zoonotic and animal); and telephone advice on keeping wildlife out of shelters.

Appendix B

Metropolitan Washington Region Council of Governments

2004 Urban Wildlife Survey

1. Council of Governments' Jurisdiction:

2. Agency/Organization Name:

3. Agency/Organization Address:

4. Agency/Organization Phone Number:

5. Agency/Organization Representative:

6. Agency/Organization Mission Statement:

7. Areas/Cities Served by Agency/Organization:

8. How the Agency/Organization is Funded:

9. Agency/Organization's Current Budget:

10. Is the Agency/Organization permitted and/or equipped to deal with urban wildlife?

Documentation Concerning Urban Wildlife Calls and Responses:

1. What is the volume of wildlife-related calls _____ monthly _____ annually?

2. Does your Agency/Organization receive calls about:
_____ orphaned _____ injured _____ nuisance animal situations?

3. Please rank the top five wildlife species callers are concerned about:

4. Please rank the top three most typical wildlife-related calls, along with the typical Agency/Organization response:

5. Please rank these five typical wildlife-related calls (5 being most frequent and 1 being least frequent) by assigning a number to indicate the volume of calls, along with the typical Agency/Organization response:

Animal in yard rating: _____ response:
Animal in chimney, basement, attic, etc. rating: ___ response:
Injured animal rating: _____ response:
Animal behaving strangely rating: ____ response:
Babies that seem to be without mother rating: _____ response:

6. Which, if any, wildlife species has your Agency/Organization only recently begun receiving calls about?

7. What is the protocol for deciding whether to employ lethal techniques as opposed to non-lethal techniques when responding to a call? Which lethal techniques are available to your Agency/Organization?

8. If the animal you respond to will be killed, does your Agency/Organization share this information with the public as a matter of protocol, or only if the public asks?

9. Does your Agency/Organization feel there is a need for more public education about urban wildlife problem solving?

10. How many orphaned animal calls does your Agency/Organization get _____ monthly _____ annually on average?

11. How are these calls handled?

12. Do you refer callers to wildlife rehabilitators, along with the rehabilitator's phone number?

13. Is the Agency/Organization satisfied with its ability to handle these types of calls? If not, why?

14. Does your Agency/Organization have the necessary federal permits to respond to migratory bird calls? Without these permits, the Agency/Organization can only handle English sparrow, pigeons, and starlings.

15. If your Agency/Organization does not have these permits, how does it typically handle migratory bird inquiries (i.e. sick, injured, orphaned migratory birds)?

16. How many nuisance wildlife calls does your Agency/Organization get _____ monthly _____ annually on average? How are these calls handled?

17. Is your Agency/Organization satisfied with its ability to handle these types of calls? If not, why?

18. Does your Agency/Organization loan out traps to the public for nuisance wildlife problems?
_____ Yes _____ No

19. Are the animals then brought to your Agency/Organization for:
_____ Rehabilitation _____ Euthanasia _____ Both

20. How are euthanasia decisions made for the above?

21. Does your Agency/Organization find that it needs to euthanize healthy animals due to a lack of other options?

22. If yes, about how many healthy animals does your Agency/Organization euthanize a year?

23. Are educational materials given to the public for prevention of nuisance conflicts in the future?

24. Are there any other ways your Agency/Organization educates the public on how to solve nuisance wildlife problems (i.e. PSA's, newspaper articles, letters to the editor)?

25. Does your Agency/Organization have:
_____ Rehabilitators permit to care for raccoons, skunks, and foxes?
_____ Wildlife Cooperators permit to handle rabies vector species nuisance conflicts?
_____ Animal Control Officer permit to handle sick rabies vector species?

26. A. If you are a wildlife cooperator or animal control officer, do you have names and addresses of wildlife rehabilitators authorized to receive rabies vector species?
B. Do you euthanize animals yourself, use a vet, or use a wildlife rehabilitator?
C. If you use a vet or wildlife rehabilitator, which one?

27. What percentage of your Agency/Organization's calls concern deer?

28. Do most of these calls concern:
_____ orphaned fawns _____ deer hit by cars _____ nuisance deer

29. What percentage of your Agency/Organization's calls concerns Canada geese?

30. Regarding the rise in the exotic "pet" trade, what percentage of calls concern exotic species as opposed to native species?

31. What are the typical types of calls?

_____ abandoned exotics

_____ trying to find home for exotics no longer wanted

_____ other:

Special Section for Police:

1. What type of training techniques are in place for officers to learn proper procedures for "dispatching" wildlife (especially deer) involved in car collisions?

2. What equipment is used to euthanize deer? What problems are encountered when doing so?

Conclusion:

1. If there is anything we have not covered, but may be pertinent, please add those additional comments here:

Thank you for your time and effort.

Appendix C
Examples of What's Happened Elsewhere

C.1. Toronto, Ontario

City of Toronto's Wildlife Strategy

The City of Toronto adopted a wildlife strategy in 1999 primarily in response to a new potential for raccoon rabies to spread into the area. The traditional approach for handling "nuisance" raccoons and other animals had been to trap and translocate. However, the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources (MNR), the provincial agency similar to a US state wildlife agency, found in field studies that about three-quarters of translocated animals die and, further, that this practice aids in spreading disease including rabies. Ontario MNR's action plan for provincial wildlife, released in 1993, considered various ways of resolving human/wildlife conflicts in urban Ontario.

MNR found that, while live trapping and removal of wildlife may appear to be temporarily successful in solving complaints, it does not provide a long-term solution to the problem. Therefore, MNR concluded that "to best resolve, minimize or eliminate human/wildlife conflicts, urban animal control services should emphasize effective public education and programs focused on changing the urban environment to prevent human/wildlife interactions and to promote ways in which people and wildlife can better co-exist." It was within this provincial context that the City of Toronto developed a wildlife strategy. The strategy is comprised of four components:

- Response to Nuisance Wildlife Concerns—Toronto animal control is directed to deal with nuisance wildlife concerns by educating the public. When a resident is unable to resolve the conflict with the educational information provided, an Animal Services Officer is to visit the property and make site-specific recommendations. Where the property owner has complied with all preventative measures and the problem still persists, the owner has the option of hiring a wildlife removal company (NWCO) or using a humane trap to capture the animal. Provincial law requires that trapped animals be released close to where captured; generally within one kilometer.
- Response to Wildlife Threats to Public Health and Safety—Toronto Animal Services is directed to respond when wildlife presents a real threat to public health and safety, including attempting to capture any animal that has scratched or bitten a person to have the animal tested for rabies. However, when an animal is perceived by the public to be a health and safety threat but there is no proof of such, Animal Services is to educate the public to alleviate concerns or misperceptions instead of removing the animal.
- Response to Sick, Distressed or Injured Wildlife—Animal Services is directed to respond to reports of sick, distressed, or injured wild animals. Animals may be turned over to a wildlife rehabilitator, released back into the environment, or euthanized.
- Wildlife Education, Program Expansion—Educational elements encompass environmental changes, wildlife avoidance, responsible pet ownership, and mandatory rabies vaccination of dogs and cats. An important component is to inform people about

changes they can make in their environment to reduce wildlife attractants, especially food and shelter.

Additional public education messaging was recommended to increase awareness of the unpredictable nature of wild animals, the importance of maintaining a safe distance from all wildlife, and why supervising pets is important to prevent disease spread. Public Health and Animal Services staff are supposed to ensure that all pet owners are aware of the requirement to vaccinate all dogs and cats against rabies.

Implementation

The Wildlife Strategy was adopted shortly after amalgamation of six municipalities created the new City of Toronto in 1999. Prior to amalgamation, each of the six municipalities conducted animal services independently with varying policies and practices for dealing with wildlife. In at least one municipality, animal services officers responded to residents' request to pick up all trapped wild animals from residents' properties. These animals were either translocated significant distances from the trapping site or, in the case of skunks, euthanized due to rabies concern.

No proactive education was conducted to warn residents about the change in this pick up service stemming from the Ontario MNR plan and the City's Wildlife Strategy. Animal services reported that for residents formerly accustomed to this service, reaction to the change was initially negative. Instances of residents calling for pick up of wild animals who were already in traps on residents' properties were reported. Residents were advised to open the traps and release the animals. No information was collected, however, on what action residents actually took in these instances.

Residents in municipalities that did not provide pick up service prior to amalgamation generally accepted the new strategy more quickly. Residents who had been accustomed to pick up services also generally accepted it after they had time to adjust. All residents tended to respond well to the strategy's promise of long-term resolution of conflicts and its benefits for animal welfare.

Toronto Animal Services reported seven years after the strategy was adopted that they continued to receive a significant volume of calls on wildlife. However, they handled many fewer wild animals. Animal services responded directly to some calls about sick or injured wild animals as well as to calls about animals that may be a threat to public health but only to these two types of wild animals concerns. Some calls about sick, distressed, or injured wild animals were immediately referred to others.

Calls about wildlife were handled by general dispatch staff who had only basic information about resolving conflicts by removing attractants and about determining when an apparently sick, injured, or orphaned animal may need human help. Calls requiring more information were referred primarily to the Toronto Wildlife Centre Hotline, described in more detail below, and/or callers were advised they may contact a wildlife removal company.

The strategy specifies that Animal Services implement specific services to resolve wildlife conflicts. They are to educate residents on ways to resolve the conflict themselves and, if this was not sufficient to resolve the conflict, make on-site visits to evaluate the conflict and recommend further actions to resolve the conflict. Only after these two steps were residents supposed to be able to have an animal trapped. However, Animal Services was not

implementing these portions of the strategy when contacted in 2006, seven years after adoption. They did provide some basic education to callers but beyond that, calls were referred to either the Wildlife Centre Hotline or to wildlife removal services. Animal Services was making no on-site visits to resolve wildlife conflicts.

Another component of the strategy called for increased public education. Toronto Animal Service educates the public through traditional printed brochures (which seven years after adoption of the strategy were nearly ready for distribution), information on the City's website, dispatchers giving callers basic information, and ACOs talking with people in the course of their normal work activities. Proactive education (public outreach, media outreach, PSAs) was not undertaken to implement the strategy.

When asked about implementing the strategy's provisions for resolving conflicts with wildlife, Toronto Animal Services said, "We're trying to get out of the wildlife business entirely." In common with most animal care and control agencies in North America, they felt they did not have the appropriate expertise to deal with wild species nor adequate funding even to accomplish their primary missions.

A representative of a Canadian animal advocacy organization who has followed the Toronto Wildlife Strategy since its development remarked that City administrators had unrealistic expectations of significant cost savings in municipal animal services from amalgamation. When the six independent animal services agencies in each of the amalgamating municipalities were combined into one larger agency the overall budget was expected to be smaller than the combined total for those six agencies prior to amalgamation. Therefore, in the opinion of this advocate, Toronto Animal Services has been consistently under-funded since amalgamation. If this is the case, it is not surprising that the agency is not able to undertake the additional activities required to fully implement the strategy.

Toronto Private Sector and Public/Private Partnerships

The City of Toronto is fortunate to be served by the busiest wildlife rehabilitation center in Canada, The Toronto Wildlife Centre, and a progressive, humane wildlife removal company, AAA Wildlife Control. The Toronto Wildlife Centre admitted over 4,600 wild animals in 2005, serving the entire greater Toronto region. Of particular interest is that in addition to the large number of animals receiving direct medical and rehabilitative care, Toronto Wildlife Centre's Wildlife Hotline believes it is the busiest of its kind in North America responding to approximately 30,000 calls a year. In addition to providing direct service to Toronto region residents, the Hotline, with assistance from The Humane Society of the United States, is developing a manual that will be available to other organizations developing or running wildlife hotlines. Funded almost entirely by donations and grants, the Centre receives less than 5 percent of its funding from government subsidy.

Toronto Animal Services reported that they rely on the Centre for a large number of wildlife-related concerns and refer a significant volume of calls to their Hotline. While this lessens the burden on Animal Services, it is not entirely satisfactory for the Centre who do not receive funding from the City of Toronto. This is especially the case since the City's Wildlife Strategy states that Animal Services is to provide services for wildlife conflicts that they were not, in fact, providing. The burden of this demand, therefore, is falling more heavily on this private charitable organization than it would if the strategy were fully implemented.

AAA Wildlife Control, in business since 1984 and currently Canada's leading wildlife removal business, resolves wildlife concerns in a humane manner by educating property owners, offering preventative services or "wildlife proofing," and when necessary, hands-on removal of wildlife from structures. The company pioneered passive removal techniques, on-site release, and effective re-entry prevention measures. Removed animals are not relocated and nursing females stay united with their offspring.

The City participates in a public/private partnership to save migrating birds who collide with buildings. Toronto is on a major migratory flyway and many birds of nearly every migrating species are injured and killed each year because bright city lights attracts them towards buildings and/or confuses their sense of direction. Birds do not see window glass as the solid object it is, especially when the glass is lit from behind, but will fly directly into windows at their full flight velocity. Many birds break their necks, dying quickly. Others are injured or temporarily dazed. The injured and dazed birds frequently end up on city sidewalks where they are easy prey for predators and scavengers. Those birds found alive by people become additional burdens on local wildlife rehabilitators. The simple measure of turning out the lights when buildings are not occupied significantly reduces the number of birds harmed in this manner.

In 2005, the City adopted a lights-out policy after work hours in City-owned buildings. In 2006, the City launched Lights Out Toronto! in partnership with several private organizations and other government agencies. This public awareness campaign educates building owners, managers, and tenants to turn out lights, especially during migration seasons. A related policy incorporates the needs of migratory birds into the City's site plan review process for new building to encourage more bird-friendly lighting, glass, and other design features.

Harmony, Florida

Harmony is a new-built planned community near Orlando. Some neighborhoods and other facilities are currently completed and occupied, some are under construction, and additional neighborhoods and facilities are planned. Harmony calls itself an environmentally intelligent community where approximately 7,700 of its overall 11,000 acres of land will remain open space, including natural areas and both active and passive recreational areas. Development is being focused on previously disturbed land; former cattle pasturage, to minimize disturbance of native ecosystems. They additionally boast of their commitment to continuing conservation including employing a full-time conservation manager, restricting boating to electric and non-motorized crafts, using Dark-Sky compliant outdoor lighting (lighting which produces no upward light pollution) that benefits night-flying animals, preserving a 31-acre gopher tortoise habitat, and maintaining a 2-acre endangered orchid preserve among other wildlife-friendly actions.

Homeowners purchasing in Harmony become subject to specific restrictions on their properties (covenants) and to their Homeowners' Associations' guidelines and goals that include several related to companion animals and to wildlife interactions. These restrictions, guidelines, and goals were developed in cooperation with The Humane Society of the United States. They state that the community's overall goal "is to promote the peaceful coexistence of … human and animal residents within the community while striking a balance between the preservation, use and enjoyment of Harmony's natural areas." They continue, "[a]nimals are treasured members of the Harmony community. Promoting the bonds between people and all animals, safeguarding

the welfare of animals within the community now and in the future, and serving as a model to other communities for the humane treatment of all animals are guiding principles of Harmony."

Under the Harmony covenants, conflicts between humans and wildlife are to be resolved using nonlethal means unless there is extraordinary and immediate risk to the health, safety, or welfare of humans or companion animals. There are guidelines for developing a plan to resolve each conflict so that the least injurious and most effective approach can be taken. Emphasis is on changing human practices, modifying habitats, and /or modifying structural elements rather than removing animals. There are a number of additional requirements limiting feeding wildlife, prohibiting taming or rearing wild animals, specifying minimum euthanasia standards, and prohibiting purposeful harm or injury to wild animals, active nests, and critical habitat.

Harmony is not strictly speaking a municipality and does not provide public animal care and control services. However, when development is completed the HOA will function virtually as a local government in many respects. Harmony relies on covenants and HOA rules to implement its wildlife policy, incorporated jurisdictions could implement similar policies with the tools that are available to them.

Central Ohio, Greater Columbus Area

The Ohio Wildlife Center (OWC) began as a wildlife rehabilitation organization in 1984 and has treated over 50,000 injured or orphaned wild animals since then. However, it has broadened its scope beyond just treating and rehabilitating animals. Like many rehabilitation centers, it runs a wildlife hotline and offers educational programs to children and adults. OWC recently also began offering humane wildlife conflict resolution services. Humane Wildlife Solutions is a fee-for-service business affiliated with OWC that offers non-lethal wildlife control services based on the AAA Wildlife Control of Toronto model.

The Columbus regions includes a number of municipalities; one is the small affluent suburban City of Dublin, Ohio. Dublin and the OWC formed a partnership in 2001 to serve residents with wildlife issues and concerns. OWC receives funding from the City in return for handling wildlife issues including wild animal emergencies and educational services. Dublin residents are directed to call the OWC Hotline with wildlife questions. Additionally, Dublin residents may request an on-site evaluation of a wildlife conflict situation and get specific advice and recommendations to resolve the conflict. Implementing the recommendations is then up to the residents who may do it themselves or hire a wildlife service.

Los Angeles, California

In 2004, the Los Angeles Animal Services Commission approved a new wildlife policy motivated, in part, by California Fish and Game regulations that prohibited translocation. Because of this regulation, wild animals taken to City shelters were euthanized. The new Los Angeles wildlife policy made two major changes. First, licensed wildlife rehabilitators are allowed to respond to calls from members of the public about sick, injured, and orphaned wild animals and to pick up sick, injured, and orphaned wild animals directly from city animal shelters. Second, the City Animal Services Department will no longer issue permits to trap healthy wildlife that pose no immediate threat to public safety.

City Animal Services is directed to refer all wildlife calls not involving distressed, sick, or injured wildlife or public safety issues to wildlife rehabilitators. Residents wanting an animal

removed for any other reason are given an educational brochure explaining why trapping is not necessary and further advised that, if they still want the animal removed, they will have to hire a private service. If residents bring healthy wild animals into the shelter, they will be requested to return the animal to the location where they found it and advised that if they leave the animal, it will be euthanized. Additional elements of the new policy increase the trap rental fee, notify residents applying for trapping permits that trapped animals must be either released on the property where trapped or euthanized, plan for Animal Services staff training on handling wild species, and plan to create temporary housing appropriate for wildlife waiting in shelters for pick up by rehabilitators.