The Division of Housing and Food Service (DHFS)
WILD ANIMAL FEEDING POLICY

I. INTRODUCTION
Many enjoy feeding wildlife. Feeding wildlife allows people one of the few opportunities to get up close and personal with wild animals. Although the occasional snack thrown to a squirrel or pigeon may do little harm (providing it is a safe food for the species to eat), an over-abundance of “artificial feeding” can indeed kill with kindness by causing a myriad of problems from overpopulation to disease. In addition, public feeding of wild animals often leads to other problems within a community such as nuisances, complaints and threats to public health.

II. PURPOSE
The purpose of wild animal feeding policy:
- To prevent damage to DHFS buildings and grounds.
- To avoid potential health hazards.
- To avoid acts which either annoy or endanger the comfort, health or safety of staff and/or the wild animals.
- To avoid interference with the enjoyment of public property.

This policy applies to all DHFS staff.

III. DEFINITIONS

Wild Animal  
An animal that is wild by nature and is not normally considered domesticated includes, but is not limited to, the following: squirrels, pigeons, raccoons, possums, grackles, starlings, house sparrows and stray cats.

Feed  
Any material that can be utilized for consumption by wild animals to provide nourishment.

Feeding  
The feeding, spreading, casting, laying, depositing, throwing, placing, leaving or dumping of food.

IV. POLICY
Feeding or befriending wild animals in or around DHFS buildings and grounds is not permitted because:
- Feeding creates an accumulation of droppings on surrounding properties.
- Feeding causes actual or potential property damage or disfigurement, or degrades scenic attractiveness.
- Feeding has the possibility to attract rodents and other vermin.
- Feeding interferes with the enjoyment of DHFS property.
- Feeding may involve leaving food out for animals when the animals are not present.
• Feeding is potentially unhealthy for the particular species, or causes undue
distress or conflict for the animal being fed.
• Feeding creates or fosters a congregation or congestion of wildlife.
• Feeding increases the likelihood of diseases being spread from animal to humans.

In addition, no DHFS staff member shall knowingly leave or store any feed in a
manner that would constitute a lure, an attraction or an enticement of wildlife.

V. PENALTY
Any DHFS staff member that engages in the feeding or befriending of wild animals
will be subject to DHFS disciplinary action.

VI. RATIONALE

OVERPOPULATION An abundance of food can lead to a population
increase that the natural food supply cannot support. This can then lead to starvation and disease

MALNUTRITION A natural diet provides the animals with proper
nutrition which is often lacking in a human supplied
diet, even one that we consider to be “healthy.” Animals accustomed to easy to obtain, but less
nutritious foods will often ignore more nutritious
natural foods in favor of less work. Feeding may also cause many animals to unnaturally gather in
small areas, thus depleting the most nutritious
foods, leaving only those that have a marginal
supply of nutrients. By not feeding the wildlife, you help to protect the health of the animals as well as
their food supply.

LOSS OF Nuisance wildlife problems are often caused by
FEAR OF those animals that have lost their natural fear of
HUMANS humans. Property damage and unwanted
“houseguests” are often the result. You might enjoy
getting to know your furry friend but your neighbors might not, and may take action to
eliminate the “pests.”

Animals that become used to close interaction
with humans become easy targets for people who do not respect wildlife and would hurt them intentionally. Also, there are many people who are afraid of wildlife and may injure an animal in an
attempt to defend themselves against a mistaken “attack.”

| **DISEASE** | Stress from crowding, competition for food, and an inadequate diet can increase the susceptibility of individual animals to diseases and parasites. Many diseases can result in slow, agonizing death for the infected animals. Some wildlife diseases can be transmitted to other animals and humans. |
| **INJURY RISK** | Wild animals do not understand that you are trying to be their friend by feeding them. They may misinterpret your actions and injure you. There is no guarantee that a wild animal knows where the food stops and your fingers begin. Often, an animal must be destroyed because it bit or scratched someone. Bites can also cause substantial injury, trauma and disease. |
| **UNNATURAL INTERACTIONS BETWEEN WILDLIFE SPECIES** | Feeding can cause injuries and harmful interactions between wildlife species that would normally forage separately, by often bringing incompatible, competitive or even natural enemies together. |