

# Don't Feed the Animals

When wild animals rely on human food instead of their natural diet, their health suffers. Learn how to keep wildlife healthy and wild.



Photo credit: Debbie Thiem

## What you should do

- Attract wildlife to your yard naturally with native plants and bird houses.
- If you have outdoor garbage containers, make sure they are wildlife-proof. Keep garbage in a shed or garage and use sturdy bins with secure lids.
- Wait until pickup day before putting out your garbage, rather than the night before (animals often feed at night).
- If you compost, use a covered composter.
- Pack any food waste out of parks and wilderness areas and dispose of it properly.
- Feed pets inside, and store pet food inside.
- Report people who are intentionally feeding wild animals, as many municipalities have bylaws against this practice.

## What you shouldn't do

- Do not put out food indiscriminately to attract wildlife to your backyard.
- Do not intentionally feed wildlife in parks or on vacation! This creates problems for locals when you leave.
- Do not dispose of food waste in uncovered containers.
- Do not litter, especially on roadways.
- **Never attempt to care for a wild animal at home. It is ILLEGAL to keep wildlife without a permit.**



## You can help wildlife now

An injured or orphaned animal's best chance for success is to be cared for by a wildlife rehabilitation centre. Help us care for wild animals in need at:

[www.wildarc.com](http://www.wildarc.com)

## Who to call

Contact the BC SPCA's wildlife hotline for more information or to locate a wildlife rehabilitation facility:

1-855-6BC-SPCA  
(1-855-622-7722)

# Wildlife Feeding Facts

- When wild animals are attracted by food, they may become habituated, losing their healthy fear of people and posing risks to humans, pets, and the wild animals themselves. Feeding wildlife is also responsible for human-wildlife conflicts in many B.C. communities.
- Feeding wildlife can disrupt population and movement patterns. Animals adapt to an artificial abundance of food, but when food becomes scarce, as in winter or when people stop feeding them, animals face starvation.
- When you attract “harmless” wildlife, you also encourage their larger predators, and animals such as rodents.
- Feeding draws unnaturally large numbers of animals to the area of the food source. These gatherings can increase the spread of disease among animals.



Photo credit: Bob Orchard

## What about birds in the winter?

This type of feeding does not appear to disrupt natural migration, but it does carry some risks. Feed birds only when weather conditions are harsh and follow these tips:

**To avoid window strikes,** set up feeders far from any windows, or very close (within 1 m). Window decals also help prevent strikes.

**Keep cats inside.** Collar bells will not prevent cats from killing birds.

**To prevent disease,** clean up hulls and disinfect feeders regularly using a 9-to-1 (10%) bleach solution.

**To avoid feeding other species,** make sure the feeder is not accessible to squirrels, raccoons, rodents, deer, or bears.

Photo credit: Scott McPherson



## Feeding hummingbirds

Nectar feeders provide a food source for hummingbirds in winter, but they must be cleaned regularly to prevent bacterial growth.

**Clean feeders** with a solution of 1 part white vinegar to 4 parts water once a week.

**Change nectar solution** every few days, ensure it never freezes and can be provided through the whole winter season.

**To make nectar,** bring water to a boil and boil for two minutes. Take off heat and mix sugar (never honey) with boiling water at a ratio of 1 part sugar to 4 parts water.

Let the nectar cool before filling your feeder.

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