

Selected pages from 2012 Final
Report of the Joint City of
Bloomington-Monroe County
Deer Task Force

Full report available at:

<https://bloomington.in.gov/boards/deertaskforce>

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the Task Force's survey, we know that some areas of the community have reached social carrying capacity while others have not. The goal of the Task Force was to come up with an integrated, multi-pronged approach that addresses the social and geographic differences. Because resident concern is localized, because the urban deer herd is likely to grow in the absence any limiting factors, and because resident concerns are unlikely to be resolved using only non-lethal means, the Task Force recommends both non-lethal and site-specific lethal strategies for neighborhoods.

1. FEEDING BAN (CITY)

Many residents feed deer with the best of intentions. Some may be concerned that deer do not have enough to eat, especially in the winter. Others might enjoy seeing deer up close. However, supplemental feeding is actually *not* in the best interest of the deer.

Supplemental feeding may:

- Increase the reproductive capacity of a herd;
- Increase deer-vehicle collisions. Most deer feeding is conducted near homes, which places deer in close proximity to well-travelled roads;
- Concentrate deer and increase nose-to-nose contact, thereby possibly spreading disease;
- Cause increased landscape damage. Deer are browsers and will heavily graze areas surrounding feeding stations;
- Cause deer to lose their fear of humans. Deer using a feeding site can become acclimated to, and no longer fearful of, humans. A fear of humans is in the best interest of deer. Increased acclimation will create more conflict between humans and deer and between humans and other humans;
- When placing feed on the ground for deer, residents will likely attract other critters, such as raccoons and mice. White-footed mice are reservoirs of Lyme disease;
- In the winter, deer typically eat and move less to conserve energy. Feeding sites may cause deer to travel further to reach the site than they would for natural forage. Feeding sites situated in residential areas mean that deer are more likely to be chased by neighborhood dogs. Even if they are not injured, provoking deer to run through deep snow and frigid temperatures causes them to waste a lot of energy they cannot afford to lose.

The IDNR makes it clear that deer in Monroe County are not starving and that local winters are not severe enough to warrant supplemental feeding. If a resident sees a deer with its ribs showing, it is most likely a doe nursing her young in the spring and summer. Such weight loss is normal and temporary.

Because intentional feeding of the deer just exacerbates concerns with deer as "nuisance" animals and because it is not good for deer, the practice should be prohibited within the city limits. It is commonly acknowledged that anti-feeding ordinances are difficult to

enforce; enforcement occurs most usually upon complaint. However, such a ban does have deterrent and educational value. The ban should be accompanied by public awareness efforts (See “Education and Outreach” Chapter). Language for a City of Bloomington ban might look something like the following:

7.29 DEER FEEDING

7.29.010 Deer Feeding Prohibited

- (a) Except as provided in 7.29.020 below, a person commits an offense if the person intentionally feeds deer or makes food available for consumption by deer on private or public property within the corporate boundaries of the City of Bloomington
- (b) A person shall be presumed to have intentionally fed deer, or made food available for consumption by deer, if the person places food, or causes food to be placed, on the ground outdoors or on any outdoor platform that stands fewer than five feet above the ground.
- (c) For the purpose of this section, the following shall constitute food: corn, fruit, oats, hay, nuts, wheat, alfalfa, salt blocks, grain, vegetables, and commercially sold wildlife feed and livestock feed.

7.29.020 Exceptions

- (a) This chapter does not apply to an animal control officer, veterinarian, peace officer, City employee, federal or State wildlife official, or property owner who is authorized by the Indiana Department of Natural Resources to treat, manage, capture, trap, hunt, or remove deer and who is acting within the scope of the person’s authority.
- (b) The following material are excluded from the prohibitions of this chapter:
 - (1) Planted material growing in gardens, or standing crops;
 - (2) Naturally-growing matter, including but not limited to fruit and vegetables;
 - (3) Fruit or nuts that have fallen on the ground from trees;
 - (4) Stored crops, provided the stored crop is not intentionally made available to deer;
 - (5) The normal feeding of livestock and/or the practice of raising crops and crop aftermath, including hay, alfalfa and grains, produced, harvested, stored or fed to domestic livestock in accordance with normal agricultural practices;
 - (6) The cultivation of a lawn or garden; and
 - (7) The feeding of birds.

7.29.030 Violations

- (a) Any animal control officer may issue to any person in violation of this chapter a notice of ordinance violation.
- (b) Upon notice, it shall be the duty of each property owner to remove any and all food placed on the property in violation of this ordinance. Failure to remove such food within 24 hours after written notice from the City, or otherwise continuing to feed deer after receiving notice from the City, shall constitute a violation of this ordinance.
- (c) Persons who violate any provision of this chapter shall be subject to a fine of fifty dollars for the first offense, with the fine of each subsequent offense of this chapter increasing by an increment of fifty dollars.

Measurement

Measuring the efficacy of a feeding ban will be difficult. However, complaints about deer feeding, reduced damage to vegetation and neighborhood complaints about deer in general might be indicators.