

Frequently Asked Questions – Deer Management

The issue of managing the growing population of black-tail deer in our community is complex. We will continue to listen to our residents and to work with the CRD and the provincial government to ensure that we have the most accurate and up to date information available. We are committed to act responsibly and to protect the safety of our residents. We are committed to reducing the risks of deer-human conflict in Oak Bay.

What is the Regional Deer Management Strategy?

The CRD Board provided direction to move forward with a Regional Deer Management Strategy in 2011. The CRD utilized a citizens advisory group (CAG) consisting of eleven members of the public, chosen from applicants by the CRD Board, to guide the development of a regional deer management strategy (RDMS). The strategy is designed to be actionable using the Urban Ungulate Conflict Analysis (Hesse 2010) as a foundation to address the deer-human conflicts within the Capital Region.

In April of 2012 the CRD assembled an expert resources working group (ERWG) to advise and clarify information for the citizens advisory group. In December of 2012 the CRD Board adopted the Regional Deer Management Strategy. A “terms of reference” was drafted to give the framework for an urban and an agriculture pilot project. The Oak Bay council voted to work with the CRD initiative in June of 2013.

<https://www.crd.bc.ca/docs/default-source/regional-planning-pdf/Regional-Deer-Management/regional-deer-management-strategy.pdf?sfvrsn=2>

Why did Oak Bay agree to participate in the Pilot Program?

Like municipalities throughout the CRD, we have, over the past several years, been hearing concerns from residents throughout Oak Bay telling us that the growing population of black tail deer in Oak Bay is problematic, and that deer human-conflict is becoming dangerous on our streets and in our community. We were asked to take action.

Public safety is our primary concern. In the absence of any natural predators, the deer population is on the rise, and as a consequence so are the incidents of deer-human conflict throughout our streets and neighbourhoods. Forty deer died last year in Oak Bay due to human-deer conflict and these deaths were most often the result of vehicle collisions. These numbers are up dramatically from twenty three deer in 2012. This increase is the cause of great concern to Council as public safety is of paramount importance.

The Provincial Government, who has the authority for wildlife management in BC, has reviewed the CRD’s Regional Deer Management Strategy, and Oak Bay residents have urged council to step forward and participate in the urban pilot project.

Please see the following links for more information:

<https://www.crd.bc.ca/docs/default-source/regional-planning-pdf/Regional-Deer-Management/regional-deer-management-strategy.pdf?sfvrsn=2>

What does the Urban Pilot Project include?

- Public Education and Communication
- Deer Vehicle Collision mitigation:
 - Signage
 - Speed limit considerations
 - Bylaws that include:
 - Fencing (higher back and side fencing options for home owners)
 - It is a bylaw violation to feed the deer. Fines of \$300.00 will be levied.
- Database design and compilation: Deer count to better understand the size of the population in the community
- Data Analysis: Count + ICBC deer vehicle collisions + Oak Bay carcass removal + Oak Bay resident complaints
- Population reduction – if necessary.
- Evaluation of Pilot Project
- Determination of next steps

What can residents do to help address the risks associated with human-deer conflict?

Be Deer Aware:

- Use caution when in the proximity of the deer. When driving, slow down and be very aware.
- Deer are most aggressive when they have young to protect (spring and early summer) and in the fall during mating season (end of October through early December.)
- Educate your children, neighbours and friends, and prevent your pets from chasing or confronting deer.
- Do not feed the deer. A fine will be levied for feeding the deer in Oak Bay.

For Further reference:

[Deer in the Capital Region Brochure](#)

[Reducing Deer-Human Conflict Brochure](#)

[Ministry of Environment - Discouraging Ungulate Conflicts](#)

When are deer most aggressive?

Deer are most aggressive during the spring birthing period as well as during the fall/winter mating period (the rut). The instinct to protect their young (fawns) from a perceived threat could provoke a defensive reaction. The rut is another sensitive time to be aware of potential conflict. When bucks are

looking for mates they can become very aggressive towards pets and, in rare cases children, due to elevated levels of testosterone which causes the bucks to become very focused on the does.

Why is Population Reduction an Important Component of a Successful Deer Management Strategy?

Population reduction is **only one** component of a deer management strategy. When dealing with an overabundance of deer in an area where there are no natural predators, there needs to be a mechanism to reduce the population to more manageable numbers. Population reduction programs can be ongoing – an initial reduction phase followed by a maintenance phase after localized population densities have been reduced.

Public education, outreach, bylaw enforcement, street signage and traffic calming measures along with fencing, landscape design and deer repellent utilization are all important components of a successful deer management strategy.