

April 30, 2013

The Oregon chapter of The Wildlife Society supports Senate Bill 474, amending ORS 496.731, to include raccoon. Raccoons are particularly susceptible to habituation through feeding, resulting in altered behavioral patterns with known negative consequences for public safety and ecological integrity.

The Wildlife Society is committed to a world where humans and wildlife co-exist and we are concerned that baiting and feeding raccoons creates unnecessary conflict between humans and wildlife. Wildlife that has grown accustomed to feeding can become aggressive towards humans and in many cases causes property damage. This aggressive behavior is a burden shared by neighbors and other citizens and is not limited to the people responsible for feeding the animals. Habituated wildlife also creates conflicts with domestic animals and pets as they often compete for food. This interaction between domesticated animals and wildlife increases the transmission of disease and the likelihood of dangerous clashes. Additionally, habituated animals can pass diseases to other non-habituated animals of the same species, thus impacting the wild populations. Finally, habituated wildlife that becomes aggressive or is destructive to property is usually killed. Wildlife rehabilitation centers have very limited budgets and cannot legally accept nuisance animals and release them back into the wild. The Oregon chapter of The Wildlife Society supports the public's interest in watching wildlife, and we believe the best way to do that is to observe wildlife in their natural habitat.

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