

Sent: Monday, February 25, 2013 9:22 AM
To: Sen Dingfelder; Sen Olsen; Sen Bates; Sen Hansell; Sen Hass
Subject: Senate Bill 474

Dear Chair Dingfelder and Members of the Senate Committee on Environment and Natural Resources,

I am director of Wildlife Center of the North Coast, a private non-profit 501(c)(3) wildlife rehabilitation center located near Astoria, OR. We serve a geographic area from the Central to North Oregon Coast and from the Columbia River basin to Klatskanine.

Please accept these comments in support of Senate Bill 474 and in support of the addition of raccoon to the list of potentially habituated wildlife.

Without exception, the majority of the nuisance wildlife calls our Center receives revolve around raccoons. The intentional feeding of raccoons creates aggressive behavior, property damage and potential human injury. I will share three incidents as examples.

1. A woman called me in tears from Hammond, OR. She had recently purchased a house which was formerly owned by someone who intentionally fed raccoons. The new owner would not feed the habituated animals. As a result, she had 30 raccoons tearing her house apart, confronting her to the extent she could not safely enter or exit her home without fear and she had no money to pay a trapper to remove them.
2. Frustrated neighbors of a couple that fed raccoons in Astoria called to see if there were any laws against feeding wildlife. Their home was being physically damaged by the raccoons (which they did not feed) and they could not convince their neighbors to stop feeding. In fact, the neighbors' obsession to feed continued even though they had been bitten and gone through the rabies injection treatment three times.
3. In late 2010 and early 2011, the Astoria raccoon population experienced an outbreak of canine distemper. This incident can be attributed to a condensed over population as a result of artificial feeding by humans.

I have tried to counsel people on a drawbacks of feeding potential problem wildlife. My arguments usually fall on deaf ears. It is my experience that people who spend hundreds of dollars on food for wildlife will continue to feed no matter what the consequence.

Law enforcement agencies should have the ability to respond to cases when all other options fail. Please support the inclusion of raccoon in the list of potentially habituated wildlife.

Thank you for considering our position.

Sharnelle Fee, Director
Wildlife Center of the North Coast