

**Inter-Agency
Human-Wildlife Conflict
Response Protocol
Kingston**

May 4, 2010

Introduction

Over the last number of years the various agencies that manage animals have seen an increase in public calls for assistance and advice around human wildlife conflict events. For the purpose of the protocol, human – wildlife conflict can be defined as any situation when a person feels that a wild animal or bird causes concern to the person by threatening the person with the safety, or damaging or destroying property. Although there has been a lot of interest from the public about wildlife encroaching on their property, people also just want to know if there is anything they can do to alleviate potential conflict. Numerous media stories have recently appeared noting wildlife preying on pets, wildlife requiring assistance or virtually unknown wildlife like fisher or elk appearing close to residential areas. Municipal parks, greenbelts and increased housing development into traditional wildlife habitat have contributed to the increased volume of calls.

This Human Wildlife Conflict Response Protocol has been developed by various agencies in the Kingston area, to try and list which agency would play a main role in a conflict situation. With each agency's agreement, the protocol will also allow each agency to provide accurate and timely information to the caller, thereby increasing our collective public service by not redirecting the caller to someone else.

A number of other jurisdictions have developed various tools to help agencies address human wildlife conflict situations, including the City of Ottawa's response table (modified version at end of document). The intent of this Human Wildlife Conflict Response Protocol is to add to the response table by identifying the roles and responsibilities for the various agencies.

The agencies contributing towards the development of this protocol include:

- Ministry of Natural Resources (MNR), Kingston Area office
- City of Kingston (Licensing and Enforcement)
- City of Kingston Police
- Ontario Provincial Police
- Kingston, Frontenac and Lennox & Addington Public Health
- Canadian Wildlife Service
- Ministry of the Environment (MOE), Kingston
- Parks Canada, Rideau Canal
- St Lawrence Parks Commission
- Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs
- Ministry of Health
- Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA)
- Kingston Humane Society
- Wildlife Rehabilitation Centres
- Cataraqui Region Conservation Authority (CRCA)

It was decided that since this Inter-Agency document was developed and adopted by all the listed agencies, we are all accountable for its success and efficient delivery. It was decided no signatures are required on the final document as it is a "living document" that may change with time.

Human Wildlife Conflict Response Protocol

The Human Wildlife Conflict Response Protocol is designed to facilitate effective coordination and communications among stakeholders and the public in the event of a wildlife conflict situation. This protocol applies only to conflict situations in the City of Kingston and immediate surrounding area. This protocol does not apply to situations that are the result of the natural life history of a wildlife species. Examples of natural life history might include natural predation or deer die off due to severe weather conditions. This protocol is not intended to circumvent or replace specific in-house agency protocols where an agency already has a specific protocol in place to address a wildlife conflict situation.

1.0 IMPLEMENTATION OF THE HUMAN-WILDLIFE CONFLICT RESPONSE PROTOCOL

The final Human Wildlife Response Protocol will be reviewed by all agencies at least once a year to ensure the information is still accurate. The City of Kingston Licensing and Enforcement section will remind all agencies once a year of the review requirement and receive any required updates. Email communications are the preferred medium. The draft contact list is provided as Appendix 2. Please note that Appendix 2 is intended for internal agency use only. Appendix 1 is for general public distribution if requested.

If a meeting is required to review the update, this decision can be made after the annual updates are received.

2.0 INITIAL WILDLIFE CONFLICT REPORT

The MNR and other protocol agency partners, regularly receive reports from the public related to wildlife conflicts. The magnitude and cause of wildlife conflicts can vary depending on the location, species involved, time of year, and other factors. The agency responsible for responding to a wildlife conflict is dependent on the cause, and is then deemed the Lead Agency in managing that conflict. The following outlines the general steps that will be taken by the Lead Agency, beginning with the initial report of the wildlife conflict situation.

2.1 Lead Agency Action

- If the wildlife concern is one of public safety, the area police should immediately be notified (OPP, City Police via 911).
- Wildlife conflicts associated with illegal hunting are normally the responsibility of the Ministry of Natural Resources
- The Ministry of Natural Resources should be contacted regarding concerns with Species at Risk, black bears or protection of private property measures.
- Any wildlife conflict concerns on City of Kingston property or matters dealing with Municipal bylaws, are to be addressed by City of Kingston 613-546-4291 unless another agency has a specific mandate (e.g. bears – MNR; geese – CWS etc).
- Any suspected spills or contaminant releases that may or may not result in wildlife impacts are to be referred to the MOE's Spills Action Centre 1-800-268-6060 for appropriate follow-up.
- Wildlife conflicts associated with federal land would result in the appropriate federal agency to taking the lead (e.g. Parks Canada for Rideau, St Lawrence Seaway, Fort Henry etc)
- The Canadian Wildlife Service would take a lead for wildlife conflicts associated with migratory birds
- Injured wildlife may be referred to the Kingston Humane Society, however, since the Humane Society can only respond to domestic animal situations, they would refer the caller to an area wildlife rehabilitation centre. If deemed necessary, the Kingston Police or OPP, depending on location, may be able to assist to euthanize the animal to end unnecessary suffering.

- Diseases related wildlife conflicts may involved a number of agencies including KFLA Public Health, MNR, Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs and Canada Food Inspection Agency and Canadian Cooperative Wildlife Health Centre (CCWHC)
- The Canadian Food Inspection Agency is the lead for diseases in livestock that may impact wildlife populations

2.2 Collection of preliminary information relating to the Human-Wildlife conflict

If the human-wildlife conflict is unknown, protocol partners should collect appropriate information from the individual reporting the conflict and advise the appropriate lead agency, which will coordinate communications of the information to the protocol partners.

3.0 SITUATION RESPONSE

3.1 Determine the Extent of the Wildlife Conflict

As part of normal business practice, each agency is encouraged to document human-wildlife conflict situations they have assisted with to determine if the conflict is a one time event or a growing trend in a specific area, and pass on to the Lead Agency. If it is a growing trend, the Lead Agency should explore why this is occurring and collectively develop a strategy to minimize a continued concern (eg public education around cleaning up fallen fruit etc)

3.2 If the Wildlife Concern is a Die-off (e.g. rabies, suspected poisoning etc)

In order to determine the cause of a significant wildlife die-off, the lead agency will:

- Contact Ministry of Environment to review available information regarding potential contaminant releases in the area and take appropriate samples if required
- Contact MNR to assess the situation to determine if the die-off is a natural process like severe winter kill.
- Contact CFIA to arrange to collect samples as appropriate for wildlife pathogen testing. Please note that pathogen testing results may require a number of weeks. CFIA will be the main contact if the die off is linked to livestock diseases. The Canadian Cooperative Wildlife Health Centre (CCWHC) may also be contacted for disease testing
- If the die off is related to birds, the Kingston Frontenac Lennox Addington Public Health will have to be involved for West Nile Virus or other disease related concerns

4.0 COORDINATION AND COMMUNICATIONS

4.1 Protocol coordination

At the onset of a *significant* human wildlife conflict situation (e.g. raccoon rabies outbreak), the lead agency will coordinate the contact of appropriate protocol agency partners to provide initial information regarding the nature of the event. Agency partners to be contacted include:

- Ministry of Natural Resources (MNR), Kingston Area office
- City of Kingston (Licensing and Enforcement)
- City of Kingston Police
- Ontario Provincial Police
- Kingston, Frontenac and Lennox & Addington Public Health
- Canadian Wildlife Service
- Ministry of the Environment (MOE), Kingston
- Parks Canada, Rideau Canal
- St Lawrence Parks Commission
- Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs
- Ministry of Health
- Canadian Food Inspection Agency

- Kingston Humane Society
- Wildlife Rehabilitation Centres
- Cataraqui Region Conservation Authority (CRCA)
- Corrections Canada
- Canadian Forces Base Kingston

The lead agency will work with protocol partners to coordinate regular scheduled updates via email, teleconferences, or meetings for agency staff to share information with one another. Frequency of updates will be determined based on the magnitude of the wildlife conflict, availability of new information, and requirements of agency partners. In addition, protocol partners will establish communications and share messages with additional agency partners (e.g. those outside the area currently affected by the die-off) to provide available information and updates.

Protocol partners will be asked to provide the following:

- Timely and regular updates to the protocol contact list,
- Communications support – sharing of approved messages amongst various agencies, posting of approved materials on websites, preparation of news releases, etc. in keeping with any Communications Plans developed for that situation,
- Communications products including awareness and education materials that can be shared with the public, and
- Public service
 - Respond to public calls related to their roles and activities
 - Provide approved communications from protocol partner agencies to stakeholders

4.2 Distribute information to key stakeholders

All agencies listed in this protocol may wish to maintain a list of key stakeholders to whom they will distribute approved messages in a proactive manner. This will aid non-government organizations and public opinion leaders in their communications with the public and the media, at both a local and international level.

4.3 Coordinate media updates

The lead agency will coordinate media updates and briefings which may include partner agencies (regular conference calls as required). Protocol partners will be asked to maintain a media contact person as required. Protocol partners will also develop communications and education products for distribution to the media.

5.0 ADDITIONAL ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF PROTOCOL PARTNERS AND AGENCIES

Ministry of Natural Resources (Provincial)

The Ministry of Natural Resources is responsible for the management of healthy and sustainable wildlife populations in Ontario. MNR provides educational information to the public, completes wildlife surveys, determines population health, sets annual harvest limits, and works closely with other agencies like CFIA, Public Health Units and others around wildlife disease concerns. MNR will take the lead on some human-wildlife conflict situations like black bears, through its Bear Wise program. MNR also ensures that the various laws and regulations pertaining to wildlife are enforced.

The Ministry of Natural Resources has a mandate to manage Species At Risk (SAR) in Ontario. Species at Risk flora and fauna are listed on the MNR Species at Risk website <http://www.mnr.gov.on.ca/en/Business/Species/2ColumnSubPage/276722.html> on the Species at Risk in Ontario (SARO) list. Those species listed as Threatened or Endangered are protected under the Endangered Species Act, 2007 and MNR should be contacted if there is potential for SAR related conflicts (or SAR to be adversely affected). Some local examples of SAR include Gray Rat Snake, Blanding's Turtle and Loggerhead Shrike.

The Ministry of Natural Resources has a responsibility to manage rabies in Ontario, as well as certain wildlife diseases like Chronic Wasting Disease.

In addition to the roles and responsibilities identified above, MNR:

- Provides, maintains and promotes educational materials
- contacts with wildlife rehabilitation facilities and area trappers
- Maintains MNR Crown properties including Provincial Parks
- Provides support for MNR's enforcement staff as required

Kingston Police and/or Ontario Provincial Police

The police will attend wildlife situation calls for services when there is:

- a concern for public safety
- immediate danger or the animal is aggressive and may injure someone and may require the destruction of the animal
- an injury to the animal that humanity dictates it's suffering be ended or
- is a motor vehicle accident involving an animal.

When police receive call fro service regarding wildlife situations not outlined above, the appropriate referrals will be made to the partner agencies.

Canadian Food Inspection Agency (Federal)

The Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) is responsible for the administration and enforcement of the federal *Health of Animals Act*. Consequently, CFIA is the lead authority for the monitoring, control and eradication of foreign animal diseases (FAD) in Canada. CFIA has developed strategies to deal appropriately with FAD that could be introduced into Canada. These strategies include the science available for FAD, organized procedures, structures and resource management that lead to early detection of disease or infection, prediction of the likely spread, containment, targeted control and elimination.

The infrastructure developed by CFIA efficiently addresses most FAD outbreaks. However, the speed at which some highly contagious FAD (HC-FAD) can spread (e.g. Foot and Mouth Disease, Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza, Classical Swine Fever), means that combating the disease will likely exceed the capability of any single agency. In addition, the potential of some of these diseases to affect human health will also necessitate additional resources. It is therefore recognized that effective control and eradication could require rapid mobilization of extraordinary resources and cooperation from the provincial government, local government(s) and industry stakeholders to minimize the potentially severe negative impacts.

The Ontario Ministry of Agriculture and Food and Rural Affairs (OMAFRA) has been assigned responsibility for dealing with agriculture and food related emergencies in the province. This includes emergencies arising from an animal disease outbreak.

CFIA, Emergency Management Ontario (EMO) and OMAFRA in collaboration with other ministries have developed the provincial Foreign Animal Disease Emergency Response (FADERP) plan to augment CFIA's disease control capability with the provincial emergency management system.

This plan outlines the roles and responsibilities of those public organizations that may be required to respond to a HC-FAD outbreak in or affecting Ontario. The roles and responsibilities of the signatory organizations including the lead federal agency, CFIA, as well as the primary supporting provincial emergency coordination agencies, EMO, and OMAFRA are described in detail. Roles and responsibilities of other federal and provincial agencies may be found within this document and/or within the Provincial Emergency Response Plan (PERP).

Effective disease control and eradication will require all responsible agencies to work in a coordinated manner, with unified goals, objectives, strategies, response and communications.

Once engaged, the responsibilities of the CFIA include:

- Coordination of wildlife health testing at the Federal level aimed at confirmation of the presence of a reportable disease, and
- Communications associated with Federal wildlife health testing results, to MNR and to the public.

In addition to specific roles identified above, the CFIA have the following responsibilities associated with animal health:

- Identification of diseases designated reportable or notifiable in Canada because of their potential impact on trade and our economy,
- Implementation of surveillance and monitoring programs geared towards the early detection of fish diseases, and
- If the disease is related to livestock and that disease can impact wildlife, take the lead in coordinating the concern through the Federal Provincial Disease Response Protocol.

Canadian Cooperative Wildlife Health Centre (CCWHC)

The Canadian Cooperative Wildlife Health Centre can be contacted to test and diagnose wildlife diseases and parasites. The centre is affiliated with the University of Guelph. If the testing involves wildlife, the Ministry of Natural Resources can provide information around proper shipping procedures.

Ministry of the Environment (Provincial)

Specific to wildlife die-offs that are suspected to be the result of a spill or contaminant release incident, MOE's responsibilities include:

- Review available information as to spills and pollution incident reports, and available water quality information.
- Initiate special water toxicology sampling, as technically warranted, to help determine potential causes and/or effects of the wildlife die-off,
- Regulation/inspection of drinking water plants, and
- Provide guidance on waste management to Municipalities.

City of Kingston Municipality

With respect to a wildlife conflict, the roles of municipalities in addition to those identified previously include:

- Provide education to public, management of community events, by-law enforcement relating to dumping and litter, coordination of meetings and workshops when appropriate, access to equipment and municipal facilities
- As the landowner, manage any human wildlife conflicts on municipal property unless another agency has a specific mandate (e.g bears – MNR; – CWS etc).
- Advise on waste disposal services for residents if required.

Kingston Frontenac Lennox and Addington Public Health

In addition to the roles and responsibilities identified previously, health units will:

- Monitor health trends in our communities and keeps track of local disease statistics,
- Develop and distribute messaging associated with public health concerns relating to various wildlife diseases including West Nile Virus, Lyme Disease, Rabies etc
- Issue public health advisories (if required).
- Issues/advises human post exposure treatments for Rabies

Rideau Canal, St Lawrence Parks Commission (Federal)

The beds of the lakes that make up the Rideau Canal system, as well as the parks that make up the St Lawrence Parks Commission, are managed by Parks Canada. In addition to the responsibilities identified previously, Parks Canada will:

- Maintain Rideau Canal and St Lawrence Parks Commission owned properties.
- Monitor and manage federal owned properties for around human wildlife conflict situations

Federal Penitentiaries (Federal)

There are a number of federal penitentiaries in the Kingston and surrounding area. Due to their large land holdings, some of these properties act as either corridors or provide excellent habitat for a number of wildlife species that could create conflicts with neighbours. The main institutions that have large properties include Joyceville/ Pittsburgh, Collins Bay/ Frontenac, Bath/ Millhaven and Kingston Penitentiary. Corrections Canada responsibilities around human – wildlife conflict include:

- Monitor and manage penitentiary properties for human wildlife conflict situations
- Work with other appropriate wildlife agencies in surrounding area of penitentiary property

Conservation Authorities (CA's)

The role of a Conservation Authority in the management of aquatic habitat has greatly expanded over the past decade. CA's utilize the *Conservation Authorities Act* and the *Ontario Regulation 97/04: Development, Interference with Wetlands, Alterations to Shorelines and Watercourses* Regulation to regulate development and landscape alteration within the areas surrounding lakes, rivers and streams. Proper management of near shore properties will assist in the maintenance of healthy aquatic wildlife habitat and populations.

In addition to the roles and responsibilities identified previously, Conservation Authorities will:

- Work with other agencies around human wildlife management
- Maintain property at Conservation Areas.

Canadian Wildlife Service (Federal)

In Ontario, the Canadian Wildlife Service (CWS) is responsible for all migratory birds. As such, any human wildlife conflicts around migratory waterfowl, song birds or federally endangered species would fall to CWS.

- CWS will take the lead around human wildlife conflict concern relating to migratory birds, song birds and federally endangered species
- CWS will assist other agencies with communication and support as required

CANADIAN FORCES BASE KINGSTON

Canadian Forces Base (CFB) Kingston has a large land holding on the east side of the City of Kingston, which can act as either corridors or provide excellent habitat for a number of wildlife species that could create conflicts with neighbours. CFB Kingston responsibilities around human – wildlife conflict include:

- Monitor and manage penitentiary properties for human wildlife conflict situations
- Work with other appropriate wildlife agencies in surrounding area of CFB Kingston property

GENERAL PUBLIC

If human wildlife conflict occurs on private land, the landowner has the responsibility to manage that concern. Various techniques are available to assist the landowner to address the concern including:

- Being a good neighbour by ensuring that their action is not creating a wildlife conflict situation for someone else (e.g. dumping garbage, composters etc)
- remove the attractant that is keeping the wildlife in the area
- create an unattractive climate for the wildlife (e.g. barking dog, fencing etc)
- if private property is threatened, the landowner can harass or kill the wildlife in protection of their property
- an agent or private contractor can be hired to assist the landowner with the removal, relocation or disposal of the wildlife

Depending on the concern, various agencies may be called upon to assist the landowner by:

- providing factual information on how to address the concern
- provide information on rules around relocation
- provide information on what to look for when contracting a company to help
- appropriate agencies to be contacted depending on the type of concern (e.g. rabies, west Nile virus, Lyme disease, foot and mouth disease etc)

Private Wildlife Control Businesses

The Agencies who developed this Human-Wildlife Response protocol recognize that there are a number of private businesses in the Kingston area who focus on wildlife control. In situations where the public is responsible to manage a wildlife conflict on their own property, they will be advised they can also contact the various Animal Control or Pest Control Services listed in the Yellow Pages of the phone book. It should be noted that private animal control businesses can only remove and relocate wild animals within 1 km of the trap location and they cannot euthanize unless they possess a special permit from the Ministry of Natural Resources. Area trapper associations are also able to assist private landowners.

6.0 Response Guidelines for Human-Wildlife Conflicts

The Human Wildlife Conflict Response was partly developed from a template chart that was created in partnership with the City of Ottawa. The chart is listed as Appendix 2 and provides agencies with references and guidelines on how any agency could respond to a human wildlife conflict inquiry, regardless if they are the lead agency or not. One of the key components of the protocol is the ability to provide useful information for all protocol partners in such a way that the agency receiving the call can provide the information without having to redirect the caller to someone else.

All protocol partners will have to review the chart regularly to ensure that everyone has the most current information and contact numbers.

INFORMATION FOR PUBLIC

- If you are in "**immediate danger**", or if the animal is aggressive and may injure someone, call Police at 911; Protection of public health and safety is a priority
- If **you have been bitten, or had direct** contact with an animal, seek medical attention and report it to KFLA Public Health at 613-549 x 1232
- If **your pet or livestock have been bitten**, or had direct contact with a wild animal, contact your vet.
- If **wildlife disease** is suspected, Canadian Cooperative Wildlife Health Centre can diagnose; 866-673-4781
- If your **livestock is dead**, contact the City at 613-546-4291- for a livestock evaluator, extension 3150
- If a dead or alive, **potentially rabid raccoon, skunk, fox or bat** is encountered and it has been in **contact with domestic animals**, contact the Canadian Food Inspection Agency at 613-384-1230
- If a dead or alive, **potentially rabid raccoon, skunk, fox or bat is encountered** and it has been in **contact with humans**, contact the KFLA Public Health 613-549-1232
- If you wake and **find a bat** in your bedroom or sleeping area, or if you're pet is playing with a bat, contact KFLA Public Health 613-549-1232
- If **suspected spill**, contact Spill Action Centre at 1-800-268-6060
- If you encounter a **black bear** and you are in **immediate danger**, call the police at **911**. For other black bear encounters, call the MNR Bear Hotline at 1-866-514-2327
- Wildlife issues on private property at the responsibility of the landowner.