

POLICE MEMORANDUM
#10-2022

DATE: July 11, 2022

TO: Honorable Mayor Meredith Leighty and City Council Members

THROUGH: Heather Geyer, City Manager *Hmg*

FROM: James S. May, Jr., Chief of Police *JSM*
Randall L. Darlin, Deputy Chief of Police

SUBJECT: Nuisance Wildlife Information and Public Education

PURPOSE

To provide Council with an overview of nuisance wildlife within the City, including information on State regulations defining nuisance wildlife and methods to prevent, trap, and control nuisance wildlife within the community. This item is being presented due to complaints from residents and questions about the City's role in responding to complaints about nuisance wildlife, specifically rats.

BACKGROUND

Few places in North America offer such an abundance of wildlife as Colorado. Unfortunately, wildlife habitats are impacted as cities along the Front Range expand. Northglenn's urban environment provides refuge from significant predators such as bears and mountain lions (although downtown Denver recently had a mountain lion sighting), but nuisance wildlife is an ongoing concern for residents and property owners. The most common types of nuisance wildlife in the City are raccoons, squirrels, skunks, opossums, rats, and mice. These species are attracted to homes and property because trash, food, and reliable resources serve their everyday needs. Unfortunately, these animals can carry harmful diseases and can cause damage to property, so immediate removal and methods of control are necessary.

Rats and mice are of particular concern in Northglenn. They can chew through wires, insulation, and drywall, and wreak havoc in homes, causing untold amounts of damage. There are many ways to help reduce Northglenn neighborhoods' rat and mice population and provide a cleaner and safer community. Under Municipal Code Section 14-1-4(d), it is unlawful to allow mice or rats to infest any real property within the City. Rats and mice are attracted by fruit and nut trees, vegetable gardens, ground composting, trash, litter, outdoor pet hutches, feed, straw, and hay. These sources of food and shelter provide the opportunity to nest and increase population through reproduction.

The City does not remove rodents from private property. Educating the public on nuisance wildlife, specifically rats and mice, is essential in controlling and preventing infestations within the community. In addition, continued education and information are crucial to protecting residents from the destruction and dangers that may be caused by nuisance wildlife. Currently, the City utilizes its communication platforms to educate the public on nuisance wildlife. Seasonal reminders and information are shared with the public at least twice per year. Additionally, City code enforcement employees, animal control officers and park rangers provide printed materials to community members when contacted regarding wildlife issues.

BUDGET/TIME IMPLICATIONS

The financial impact on the City will be the reoccurring costs associated with the materials and the methods of delivery utilized to provide information and education to the public.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

This item is for informational purposes only.

STAFF REFERENCE

If Council members have any questions, please contact:

- James S. May, Jr., Chief of Police, at jmay@northglenn.org or 303.450.8967
- Randall L. Darlin, Deputy Chief of Police, at rdarlin@northglenn.org or 303.450.8964

ATTACHMENT

1. Presentation

NUISANCE WILDLIFE

City Council Meeting

July 11, 2022

James S. May Jr.

Chief of Police

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Michelle Soustek

Animal Control Officer

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CITY OF
Northglenn

PURPOSE

To Provide Council with Information Regarding Nuisance Wildlife



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COLORADO NUISANCE WILDLIFE STATE LAW

Per Statute 33-6-107: Wildlife Commission regulations defines nuisance wildlife as:

- Tree squirrels, cottontail rabbits
- Prairie dogs, bats
- Rats, mice
- Voles, moles
- Skunks, raccoons
- Coyotes, foxes
- Many others not listed



FACTS ABOUT RATS



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- There are over 60 species of rats in the world.
- The most common found in U.S. cities is the “Common Brown Rat.”
- Rats are omnivores, but many prefer meat when they can get it.
- Brown rats use humans for their primary food sources.
- Brown rats can have up to 22 young at once, though 8 or 9 is the average.



HOW FAR WILL RATS ROAM ?

- **The brown rat has an average home range of 25-100 feet from its nest.**
- **The rat will typically travel that distance at night looking for food and water.**
- **Rats living close to available food will have a shorter range.**
- **Mice will only roam 10-30 feet.**
- **If a resident or business traps rats at their specific location, this could resolve a personal rat concern due to such a small territory.**



WHAT CAN RESIDENTS DO?

Under Statute 33-6-107:

- **A person, employee or agent of property may trap without securing a license to do so.**



LEGAL METHODS TO TRAP RATS



- **Cage or box traps.**
- **Body gripping traps (Rats and mice only).**
- **All traps are required to be checked at least once a day.**
- **Per Statute 33-6-203(1)**



LEGAL USE OF TOXICANTS AND POISONS

Per Statute 33-6-130:

- Toxicants/poisons are legal for rats and mice.
- Instructions and applications must be followed as directed.
- Can only be used for species listed on product to be lawful.



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DOES COLORADO PARKS AND WILDLIFE MANAGE RATS?

Per Statute 33-1-102(51):

- **CPW does not manage rats, advises to check with local authorities or pest control for advice.**



MUNICIPAL CODE

Per Section 14-1-4(d) Unlawful Acts:

§ It is unlawful and deemed a nuisance to allow any mice, rats, squirrels, skunks, rabbits, or prairie dogs, to infest any real property within the City so as to encroach upon, or cause damage to the property of another.

§ Northglenn Animal Control receives on average less than 10 calls per year on rats.



WHAT ATTRACTS RATS AND MICE?

- **Fruit and nut trees/shrubs**
- **Vegetable gardens**
- **Ground composting**
- **Trash/litter**
- **Chicken coops**
- **Outdoor pet rabbit hutches**
- **Chicken feed/straw/hay**
- **Displacement due to local construction**



DO LOCAL CITIES TRAP OR REMOVE RATS FOR RESIDENTS?

- **Westminster: No**
- **Denver: No**
- **Brighton: No**
- **Thornton: No**
- **Commerce City: No**
- **Broomfield: No**
- **Federal Heights: No**
- **Firestone: No**
- **Longmont: No**
- **Adams County: No**



DO LOCAL CITIES TRAP OR REMOVE RATS FOR RESIDENTS? **CONT'D**

- The City does not trap or remove rats but will provide education.
- All cities and counties provide education to manage and prevent rats.
- All complaints are referred to pest control or managing with traps and/or toxicants and poisons themselves.
- Orkin Pest Control advised they do not do citywide programs but can provide contracts to specific residents, businesses, and government buildings and parks.



EDUCATION AND PREVENTION

What Can Be Done to Reduce Rat Populations?

- Remove any food or water sources
- Keep property clean and free of trash, litter, and yard waste
- Keep chicken coops/rabbit hutches clean
- Keep chicken/rabbit or pet food supplies sealed or stored inside
- Keep gardens protected from wildlife
- Keep trees and bushes trimmed to discourage habitat (including keeping fallen fruits off the ground)
- Educate through the City website, Channel 8, and Northglenn Connection



QUESTIONS?

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