

## Overview

Urban deer are not unique to Ashland. Communities throughout Oregon and across the United States and Canada struggle with managing urban deer populations. But Ashland, like all communities in Oregon, is constrained in its ability to address deer concerns. In Oregon, the management of deer populations is the exclusive purview of the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW). ODFW has been very responsive to Ashland's concerns and Ashland has done what is legally allowed by adopting ordinances that prohibit the feeding of deer and allowing property owners to construct 8-foot high deer fencing.



If you live in Ashland, you live with deer and other wildlife as your neighbors. Read on to learn more about living with deer and check out the other resources that are available to you to help you co-exist with our wild neighbors.



## Deer are part of our environment

The City of Ashland recognizes that deer are a part of our natural environment. Over the years, the City has received reports of deer damage to property and even a few reports of deer acting aggressively with people and pets. Deer have not become more aggressive, but have become more accustomed to being around people. As such, they don't fear us and try to get away when we get close. The deer are not going away. And since we can think and reason, but deer can't, it's up to us to educate ourselves about living with deer and to do what we can to reduce human/deer conflicts.



### Resources

For more information about living with deer and other wildlife visit:

- [www.dfw.state.or.us/wildlife/living\\_with\\_deer\\_elk](http://www.dfw.state.or.us/wildlife/living_with_deer_elk)
- [extension.oregonstate.edu/linn/sites/default/files/problem\\_wildlife.pdf](http://extension.oregonstate.edu/linn/sites/default/files/problem_wildlife.pdf)
- [www.recologyashlandsanitaryservice.com/index.php/for-homes/bear-proof-carts](http://www.recologyashlandsanitaryservice.com/index.php/for-homes/bear-proof-carts)



# Living with Urban Deer





## Behavior of Black-tailed Deer

The black-tailed deer is common in northern California, western Oregon, Washington, British Columbia and the Alaskan panhandle. Deer are browsers and eat a broad variety of plant material. The mating season occurs during November and early December.

Bucks can be observed running back and forth, often across roads, in the pursuit of does. They drop their antlers between January and March and re-grow their antlers beginning in April through August.

The gestation period for does is six to seven months with fawns being born in late May and into June. Twins are the rule, although young does often birth single fawns. Does are very protective of their fawns and view humans and animals as predators.



## Deer Encounters and You

- Don't approach a deer or their fawns, ever.
- Between April and early June, assume all does will have fawns somewhere nearby and will defend them. Keep a greater distance during fawning season. Likewise, deer bucks can be aggressive during the rut (breeding season) from November through December.
- Deer always move forward, so the "stalking" behavior is probably not stalking at all.

- If a deer appears to respond to your presence by changing its stance, moving in your direction, raising its ears, scratching the ground with its front feet, etc., you are too close. Unless deer have a very clear path of escape, they will continue to move forward.
- Most, but not all, encounters involve dogs. Deer will sense your dog's presence likely before you see the deer, particularly if they are in a semi-enclosed area such as dense shrubs, between fences or parked cars or buildings – anything that impedes their ability to escape. Even if you feel they have room to get away they may not perceive it in the same way and will keep moving forward and an encounter may occur.
- Always walk your dog on a leash and be ready to let go of the leash if a deer attacks.



As we said, deer have not become more aggressive, but have become more accustomed to being around people, so they don't fear us but can feel trapped and will try to get away when we get too close.



## Deer and Your Yard

Homeowners can protect yards and gardens by installing deer fencing, using deer resistant plants and using non-toxic repellent sprays for plants. There are also a variety of electronic repellents available. Neither the City of Ashland or the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife warrants the effectiveness of these repellents. The surest way to protect your property from deer damage is with fencing. Deer fences must meet the standards set by Ashland Municipal Code 18.08.175. For information on deer resistant plants see [www.ashlandsavewater.org/listplants](http://www.ashlandsavewater.org/listplants).

## Don't Feed the Deer!

Deer are wild animals. They are not tame. They are not pets. They should never, ever be intentionally fed. The intentional feeding of deer within the city limits of Ashland is a violation of City ordinance. The ordinance clearly states that it is a violation when a person who knowingly places, deposits, distributes, stores or scatters food, garbage or any other attractant so as to knowingly constitute a lure, attraction or enticement for deer, raccoon, or potentially habituated wildlife. If found in violation of the ordinance fines can exceed \$500. **Do not feed deer.**



## Deer and Driving

Deer can cross a road at any time or bound from a hill or brush. By following posted driving laws you are better prepared to react appropriately when confronted with a possible deer collision. Deer are very active at night, requiring extra vigilance when driving between sunset and sunrise. If it appears hitting a deer with your vehicle cannot be avoided, according to defensive driving training, it is recommended to hit the deer rather than trying to swerve, which could result in over-correcting or hitting another vehicle.

## Extreme Measures?

While it's illegal to kill wildlife without the proper permits, under Oregon law, you can do whatever is necessary to protect yourself if you feel an imminent threat of physical harm from deer or other wildlife. Too, the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife can issue a "harassment permit" to a property owner who is suffering extreme property damage caused by wildlife. For more information about a harassment permit and what it allows you to do, contact the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife at 541-826-8774.

