

## Feeding, Handling & Transporting Wildlife is Harmful

Many people find it enjoyable to go to a park to feed the waterfowl and other animals. Some catch frogs to take home. Others leave unwanted pets in parks. These activities may seem harmless, but in fact, they can be quite harmful to wildlife. The greatest threats to wildlife in MetroParks are caused by humans.

## Feeding Wildlife Creates Unhealthy Conditions

Animals congregate in areas where they are fed, causing several problems. They exceed the carrying capacity of their ecosystem and become overcrowded. High levels of fecal material are concentrated in one area, which causes unsanitary conditions for animals and people. Overcrowding also increases the chance of diseases being spread. One disease that waterfowl can contract is avian cholera. This disease is contagious and has a high mortality rate among waterfowl and birds of prey that eat the waterfowl.

Finally, processed foods such as bread, popcorn and cereal are “junk food” to wild animals. They lack many of the nutrients the animals need in order to stay healthy.

Please help animals stay wild and healthy. Show your care by not feeding them.

## Feeding Wildlife Causes Loss of Wild Instincts

Wild animals that are hand-fed can lose their natural instincts to migrate and search for food. They become dependent on humans for food and lose their healthy fear of humans as well as predators. In other words, hand-fed animals lose their wildness and the ability to care for themselves.

## Handling Wildlife is Dangerous

For the well-being of the animals, environment and park visitors, it is important to not handle the animals or remove them from the parks. It is illegal to remove wildlife from a MetroPark, and it is dangerous to handle wild animals, even if they appear to be injured or orphaned. People may try to “rescue” animals, but it is usually better to leave them alone. If you find injured or orphaned wildlife in a MetroPark, contact a park employee. If you find native Ohio wildlife that may need help and you are outside of a MetroPark, contact the Bruckner Nature Center at (937) 698-6493.

## Releasing Pets & Wild Animals is Illegal

Alligators, tropical snakes and iguanas have been found in MetroParks as well as unwanted dogs and cats. These animals harm park ecosystems, property and even visitors. It is illegal to release any animal into MetroParks. Moving an animal can spread serious diseases and harm the wildlife. If you find a stray or have a pet that you can no longer care for, contact the Humane Society of Greater Dayton at (937) 268-PETS.

## Volunteer Opportunities

Get closer interactions with wildlife through volunteering! Volunteers help wildlife in MetroParks by surveying animals and birds and restoring and maintaining habitats. Volunteer opportunities include clearing invasive plants, planting native species, growing prairie plants, identifying and measuring fish, testing water in rivers and lakes, and surveying coyotes or birds. The teams are: Habitat Healers, Prairie Partners, Lake and Stream Teams and Wildlife Watchers. For more information, visit [www.metro parks.org](http://www.metro parks.org) or call MetroParks' volunteer services coordinator at (937) 275-PARK.



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# KEEP THEM WILD & HEALTHY



## HELP ANIMALS BY NOT FEEDING OR HANDLING THEM

## FIVE RIVERS METROPARKS



## Enjoying Wildlife in Metroparks

When visiting natural areas, many people look for wild animals. It's exciting to see an unusual bird or animal in its natural environment. There are several ways to safely observe and learn about wild animals and birds in MetroParks without harming them.

## Viewing Wild Animals and Birds

Observing animals in their natural state can be fun and rewarding. Five Rivers MetroParks has miles of hiking trails, through several types of habitats including prairies, meadows, woodlands and wetlands. Each park is open year-round to give you endless opportunities to look for wildlife. When visiting a MetroPark to look for animals and birds, bring a pair of binoculars and a wildlife identification book.



## Places to View Wildlife

**Carriage Hill MetroPark** hosts a variety of waterfowl at Cedar Lake and North Woods Pond, such as green herons, wood ducks and ring-neck ducks. The boardwalk at Cedar Lake is an excellent place to view frogs and turtles.

**Cox Arboretum & Gardens MetroPark** offers a bird blind near a pond, providing a viewing opportunity for bird and wildlife. The viewing area includes two wetlands and 13 acres of prairie. Visit the Butterfly House from late June through Labor Day to see several species of butterflies and caterpillars.

**Eastwood MetroPark** is an excellent place to see birds and other wildlife. Look for great blue herons, belted kingfishers, a variety of ducks and migrating birds. Beavers inhabit the Blue Lake at the south end of the park, and coyotes have been observed in the meadows near the lake.

**Englewood MetroPark** has a variety of habitats including woodlands, meadows and wetlands. The Stillwater River, lakes and ponds invite several species of waterfowl. Other birds in this park include warblers, hawks, owls and an occasional eagle. Coyotes are often observed in the prairie areas.

**Germantown MetroPark** is designated as an Important Bird Area by National Audubon Society and a Watchable Wildlife viewing site by Ohio Department of Natural Resources. Walk the nearly 16 miles of trails to search for a wide variety of birds and animals. Stop by the Window on Wildlife at the Nature Center to see birds. Staff or volunteers are often available to help with identification.

**Huffman MetroPark** is an excellent place to view migrating ducks. Huffman Lake, the Mad River and natural vegetation provide a welcoming home to birds, such as red-tail hawks, herons and several types of woodpeckers. In the evening, bats feed over the surface of the Huffman Lake.

**Possum Creek MetroPark** is a great place to look for beavers. They are abundant in the fishing ponds and Argonne Lake. Look for their dome stick lodges at the edges of the ponds and the lake. Beavers are most active in the morning and evening. Deer are also abundant in the prairie areas.

**Sugarcreek MetroPark** is home to the only population of spotted salamanders in MetroParks. In late winter, large numbers of these secretive amphibians come out to mate. Call (937) 275-PARK for information about viewing this rare event.

**Sunrise MetroPark** has a wildlife observation area at the confluence of the Great Miami River and Wolf Creek and in the shadow of the downtown skyline. This area supports incredible wildlife diversity, including riverine invertebrates, turtles and the yellow crowned night heron, which nests in only a few places in Ohio.

**Twin Creek MetroPark** hosts seventy species of nesting birds. The wild, beautiful landscape of this park includes over seven miles of walking trails, many along Twin Creek and through woodlands and meadows. The meadows of Twin Creek are good places to observe white-tailed deer.

## Guided Walks and Wildlife Programs

Pick up a current issue of Metro ParkWays or visit [metroparks.org](http://metroparks.org) and check the calendar of events for nature programs. Go on an owl search or look for beavers, bats, spiders or frogs. Join a naturalist on a guided walk and see some wildlife at your MetroParks.

