

Wildlife Management Plan for San Francisco

Draft Policy Framework

Existing City Policy (the Environmental Protection Element of the General Plan and the Biodiversity element of the Sustainability Plan) calls for wildlife protection and the protection and restoration of the City's biodiversity.

Harvard professor and Pulitzer-prize winner Edward O. Wilson defines biodiversity as "the variety of organisms considered at all levels, from genetic variants belonging to the same species through arrays of species to arrays of genera, families, and still higher...levels [of organization]." A sustainability plan for maintaining biodiversity must address genetic diversity, species diversity (the number and variety of species in the City), habitat diversity (the variety and quality of the City's ecosystems), and the ecological and evolutionary processes that sustain biodiversity.

The following Draft Policy Framework assumes (based on existing policy) that there is a City consensus that:

- 1) Wildlife belongs in the City; its presence enriches our lives.
- 2) It is in the City's interest to take steps to protect and restore the City's wildlife resources and to promote harmonious co-existence of people and wildlife.

Wildlife requires habitat

Habitat values (food, water, cover, nesting material, mating, nesting, bathing)

Habitat diversity (different strokes for different folks) – identify habitat types

Habitat connectivity (e.g., corridors to increase genetic diversity)

Habitat locations

Remnant indigenous biotic communities

City-owned (Rec & Park, Fire, PUC, DPW, Port, etc.)

State-owned-- UCSF (Mt. Sutro), CA Dept. of Parks & Recreation (CPSRA)

Federal- GGNRA and Presidio Trust

Naturalistic and landscaped areas, both public and private

Residential yards (front and back)

The whole City -- high-rise ledges, the open sky, non-native vegetation, streetscapes, roofs (especially "living roofs"), Ocean, Bay, lakes, etc., etc.

Threats to Wildlife must be addressed

Habitat destruction, degradation, fragmentation

land use changes

roads and traffic

trails

fences

vegetation removal (including for restoration projects)

Invasive Species

continued introductions, especially of aquatic species

loss of indigenous species, e.g., red fox driving out gray fox

Overabundance of opportunistic native species (anthropogenic changes in species composition)

Feeding by humans, both accidental and deliberate

Acclimatization to people, sometimes resulting in wildlife deaths

Effects of recreational activity (e.g., motorbikes on trails)

Noise (construction activities, fireworks, etc.)

Threats, continued

Artificial light (e.g., searchlights, lit highrises, ballfield lighting)
Climate change and sea level rise
 misguided efforts to deal with global warming
 loss of wetland habitat, with no room for wetlands to move upland
 temperature changes that are too quick to allow for adaptation
 reduction in water resources
Nesting interference (e.g., badly timed tree pruning or removal)
Willful destruction (pesticides, hive removal, removal of nests from buildings,
 vandalism, such as of bank swallow nests,
Pollution, toxics, combined sewage overflows
Disease (e.g., from dirty birdbaths, feeders; high concentration of critters in one
 area)

Opportunities for wildlife enhancement:

Promotion of landscaping with habitat value
Reintroductions and recovery strategies
Artificial nesting structures (?)
Corridor projects, e.g., the Green Hairstreak Project
Habitat stewardship programs
Availability of water
Habitat restoration, re-creation (e.g. wetlands enhancement)

In addition to fleshing out the Policy Framework and identifying recommendations to address the policies, a Wildlife Management Plan would include:

Education/Outreach methods and vehicles

messaging in multiple languages
school curricula and programs
demonstration projects
conferences, meetings, street fairs, ads, PSAs, signage, etc.
education for both management agencies and the public

Implementation strategies

identification of research needs (e.g. why do non-native rats thrive here)
gathering baseline data
ongoing program of monitoring and adaptive management
professional wildlife biologist(s) and naturalists on City staff
biodiversity database available to the public

Giving teeth to the plan's recommendations

Mayoral directives
Ordinances, code amendments (e.g. rear yard protection)
General Plan updates
Inter-Agency agreements
greater attention to wildlife impacts in environmental review, and enforcement of mitigation measures
green building regs to incorporate "Sustainable Sites" measures
incentives for voluntary habitat enhancements