

# 2024 City of Salida Urban deer population discussion

Discussion regarding urban deer issues, experiences, and options





## Current conditions:

The council has received community feedback regarding the mounting interactions, concerns, and impact of the human and deer populations in town.

Staff met with CPW to discuss the current situation

- Approximately 180-200 deer (varies during mating and fawning season) and 5,809 humans in city limits = 1:29 deer to human ratio
- Salida - 2.77 sqmi. = 72 deer/sqmi.
- 3 separate "herds" or groups in Salida

50-75 deer die in town limits each year

- These deer are disposed of at a CPW dump area

Current dominant causes of death:

- Dogs
- Cars
- Fences
- Illegal feeding





## Community concerns:

- Unhealthy population density
- Over competition
- Disease spread
- Aggressive behavior
- Human feeding leading to digestive failure
- Vehicle encounters
- Feces
- Landscape damage





## **Previous 2013 Deer Task Force recommendations:**

- *Recommendation 1* - Public Education & Awareness
- *Recommendation 2* - Support Colorado Parks and Wildlife's Current Deer

Management Strategies in areas surrounding the City of Salida

- *Recommendation 4* - Birth Control for Urban Does





## Possible actions according to Colorado Parks and Wildlife :

- Reduce the deer population
  - Birth control
    - Expensive
    - Slow
    - Unsustainable
    - Not recommended
  - Trap and Transfer
    - Labor intensive
    - Slow
    - Death
      - Trauma
      - Hit by vehicles returning to town
    - Not recommended
  - Culling
    - Reduce the population by harvesting
    - Quick
    - Efficient
    - Use meat for food banks and pantries
- No action



## Helena, MT. experience

- Helena MT pop. 33,885 humans and 701 deer = 1:48 deer to human ratio
- Helena – 11 sqmi. = 46.9 deer/sqmi.
- Started the Helena Urban Deer Program in 2008
- After 3 years, population = less than 25 deer/mile (the recommendation)
- Halted from 2019-2021 – deer population grew to over 63 deer/sqmi
- 2 full-time officers with the PD
- Respond to all animal calls, including deer death and deer-vehicle accident calls
- Depending on the census, they are approved to remove up to 158 deer per year
- Trapping/Culling season is Nov 15 – March 31
- Officers place traps on private property, trap deer, euthanize deer, test deer, and take them to a local processing plant
- 1,472 pounds of venison produced for the local Food Share



### **Possible next steps for Council to consider:**

- Status Quo
- Direct staff to do more research with CPW to determine our deer population social interaction threshold

