

# WHY PROTECT OUR PARKS?



Wild animals, such as bats, raccoons, squirrels, birds and alligators, pose a legitimate threat to human safety. Park visitors enjoy seeing wild animals and view them as an added attraction, but unknowingly, humans can jeopardize their own health and harm these critters as well.



— Port St. Lucie —  
**PARKS & RECREATION**

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[www.PSLParks.com](http://www.PSLParks.com)



IT STARTS IN  
**PARKS**

**DON'T FEED**

**WILD**

**LIFE**

**IN PUBLIC PARKS!**



# KEEPING WILDLIFE

# SAFE

# HOW YOU AFFECT THE WILDLIFE



## Poor Nutrition in Animals

Bread and other processed foods lack the nutrients needed for good health. Visible symptoms of poor nutrition and advanced stages of starvation are often seen in animals that grow dependent on humans for food. Moldy bread can be fatal to birds.

## Loss of Instincts

Animals such as raccoons, alligators and squirrels that are fed by humans, resist their natural instincts to forage for themselves. They also lose their fear of humans and become aggressive.



**DON'T FEED THE WILDLIFE**



**STORE FOOD, PET FOOD AND TOILETRIES IN A SEALED CONTAINER OR VEHICLE**



**RECYCLE PROPER MATERIALS**



**CLEAN UP AFTER YOURSELF AND DISPOSE OF FOOD**



# HUMAN RISK



## Disease

Birds and mammals can carry diseases and parasites transmittable to each other and to humans. When you feed animals in the park they may return and beg for food from other visitors. Any wound caused by a wild animal, even a scratch, creates a risk of disease in humans, such as rabies or parasites.

## Injury

Although a food-conditioned animal may tolerate being close to you, it is still a wild and unpredictable creature. Feeding an animal is dangerous—it could bite, kick or attack you if it becomes frightened.

## Unsanitary Conditions

Animal waste in public picnic areas is unsanitary and potentially harmful to humans.

## Predators

Feeding encourages small mammals and birds to concentrate in areas like roadside pullouts and picnic areas to beg and steal food. This can attract larger predators such as bobcats and alligators that prey on these smaller animals. Once these large predators become accustomed to people, small pets and children can be at risk as well.



## Property Damage

Feeding encourages large numbers of wild animals to congregate in small areas and these animals can cause damage to parks, golf courses, and public areas by spreading trash and garbage.