

Dogs and Wildlife

What kind of damage can unleashed dogs do to wildlife and habitat?

Wildlife such as small mammals and shore/waterbirds are disturbed by dogs, which they see as natural predators. Disturbance triggers reactions that can lead to harm and/or death.

Allowing even a single dog off-leash can disturb wildlife and impact the significant habitats within the city parks.

- Off-leash dogs disturb nesting areas and damage sensitive wildlife habitat
- Ground-nesting birds are particularly vulnerable to off-leash dogs
- Dogs urinating in nesting and sensitive wildlife habitats "marks" the territory, which makes it undesirable or uninhabitable to the wildlife living there
- Dog fur/paws pick up seeds, which can spread invasive plant species
- Unleashed dogs can chase and injure (or even kill) squirrels, ducks and other wildlife
- Contamination of groundwater and water bodies

When considering dogs' impacts on wildlife, it is important to remember that just as dog owners want to be good guardians for their pets, **we all share the responsibility of being good stewards for wildlife and their habitats.** That responsibility means we all must accept reasonable regulations of our recreational activities where they result in impacts to wildlife and habitats.

Reference sources:

<https://www.portlandoregon.gov/parks/article/91738>

Parks & Recreation

Healthy Parks, Healthy Portland

<http://wildequity.org/faqs/3007>

GGNRA Off-leash Dog FAQ

Golden Gate National Recreation Area