Feeding Wildlife

Loving them, doesn't mean feeding them!

Wild animals have a diet based on the food available in the forests and areas with vegetation. If you do any of the following activities, we invite you to change that today, for everyone's wellbeing:

- Feed wildlife with corn kernels, breadcrumbs, or rice (including pigeons or other birds as well as mammals).
- Place fruits or leftovers outside to attract birds, squirrels, or other animals.
- Hang bird feeders full of sugary liquids to attract hummingbirds to get a closer look at them.
- Offer fruits, cookies, or leftovers to monkeys or coatis to get their attention and snap a cute photo for social media.
- Put out fruits or pet food or discard organic waste from your home, allowing wild animals to feed on it (including coatis, birds, racoons, skunks or even street animals).
- Participate in illegal tourist activities such as feeding crocodiles or other animals.

What harm could it cause, if it's only food?

There are many ways to feed wildlife, directly or indirectly, there are also many reasons for doing so. Some of them come from sincere love for and wish to help the animals, along with ignorance of the subject, others are for pure enjoyment, custom, or personal and economic interest.

Whatever the motive is, the truth is that there are many examples of situations that begin with feeding wildlife, and end in terrible consequences for wildlife populations, the ecosystem, and occasionally for public health.

Some negative effects of feeding wildlife:

1. Offering food to wildlife alters their natural behavior and affects the role they play in the environment, as well as their relationship with individuals of the same species and with other species.

2. It changes their natural behavior towards human beings, in many cases making them dependent on the food sources that are offered to them.

3. They see human beings as their food source. Depending on the situation, this unnatural behavior can cause some species to claim their food, stealing, threatening, biting and, in some cases, attacking people.

4. The number of animals around feeders or feeding sites causes a series of negative consequences. For example, exchange of diseases and parasites can increase, as well as level of aggressiveness between animals due to competition for food.

5. Some species can increase numbers of individuals in populations as a result of food provided by people, which can increase outbreaks of diseases and imbalances of populations of other species.

6. By coming into direct or indirect contact with humans and pets, wild animals are exposed to transmission of diseases from animals to people and vice versa. Diseases of human origin affects wild animals but can also be re-transmitted to pets and people.

7. The presence and permanence of a large number of wild animals at a site can cause the deterioration of the surroundings, filth, bad odors and can create breeding grounds for infections that can have serious consequences for public health.

8. As the number of wild animals in a community increase, so do various negative interactions with the people who live or work nearby, generating annoyance, inconvenience and sometimes even contempt for the presence of these wild animals that could lead to acts of violence and cruelty. There have been cases where some people end up killing or eliminating wild animals because of the nuisance caused.

9. The food provided by people does not meet the nutritional values suitable for wild species, which exposes them to suffering from multiple diseases, such as obesity, cholesterol, beak deformities, immune system deficiency, etc. Monkeys with fatty liver and cavities have been reported inside National Parks due to food provided illegally by tourists.

If I want to see wildlife in my garden in a responsible way- What can I do?

1. Plant fruit trees in your garden, to provide food and shelter for wildlife naturally and organically. Preferably native species.

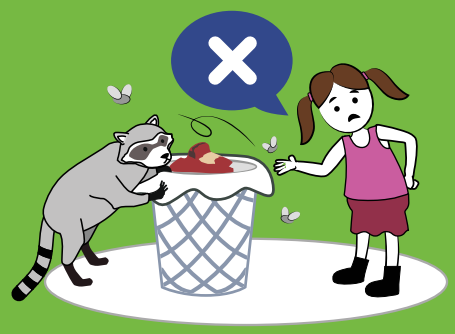
2. Plant species native to our country, with or without flowers. Without a doubt, their presence will increase the probability of observing wild animals. Research which plant species attract the types of animals you want to visit your garden.

3. Preserve forests, forest patches, or areas with vegetative cover as they are home to wildlife.

4. Participate in initiatives for biological corridors and urban biological corridors, for the recovery and rehabilitation of green areas in your town as well proper management of waste. Look for information in your municipality.

Good Wildlife Practices

Remember that the possible garbage or sources of food available in our homes are the main factors that provoke the presence and residency of wildlife in residential zones which can be bothersome to humans and other wildlife.



1. Completely avoid allowing wildlife access to organic food waste or pet food.

2. Educate your children, neighbors, tourists. Create awareness about the risks and negative effects of feeding wild animals.

3. Although many wild animals are lovely, they are not pets. Keeping them is punishable by law.

4. Remember that capturing, translocating, eliminating, and feeding wild animals is prohibited, according to the "*Ley de Conservación de Vida Silvestre, No. 7317*". If you are aware of any of these illegal practices, report it to 1192 or on **www.sitada.go.cr**

5. Help us create awareness. Don't feed them!

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