



Photo: John B. Davis

**IF YOU HAVE LIVE IN OR VISITED ALPINE** you are probably aware of our large deer population that can be frequently spotted in town. From off the highways to in our neighborhoods we see them all over town and as beautiful as they are to look at there are some concerns to be aware of.

You can see deer in the city limits of Alpine all year round but, it seems we see an increase in town during the fall and winter months.

Deer, especially during the wintertime when there are more of them in town, are hit by vehicles. The main areas in town that we see hit deer are Hwy 90, Hwy 118 and Loop Road. Animal Services main hit by car deer calls are in the early morning when the sun is coming up, in the evenings when the sun is going down and at night when they are very hard to see.

## **HERE ARE SOME SUGGESTIONS FOR AVOIDING A COLLISION WITH A DEER:**

- 1** Always drive the speed limit, the faster you are going the harder it will be to stop or avoid a deer in the road.
- 2** Look for their glowing eyes on the side of the road. If you are traveling at night, your headlights should make the deer's eyes glow when it hits them just right. If you see eyes slow down and pass with care, you may not be able to see all of the deer that are present.
- 3** If you see one deer there are probably more to follow. Slow your speed and keep an eye out for additional deer crossing the road.
- 4** Young deer may not be as street savvy as an adult, they will follow their mothers/herds when crossing and can be harder to see because of their size.
- 5** If you do have a collision with a deer it is important that you call us immediately especially if the deer is still in the road. If the deer is still alive the most humane thing to do is euthanize it to relieve them of pain and suffering if the injuries are too severe. Alpine Animal Services will respond to a suffering animal immediately, do not take it upon yourself to put the animal down. If you can stay with the animal until help arrives that is best. If the animal is able to move we may not be able to find it if you leave the scene. You may want to file an accident report with a police officer if there is damage to your vehicle anyway.

## **REMEMBER FEEDING DEER IS AGAINST CITY ORDINANCE:**

Many homeowners feed the deer because they enjoy watching these browsers from their windows. The problem with feeding deer is that they can become a nuisance. Once they get comfortable eating the corn provided for them, they have less fear of humans and will eat landscape plants and garden vegetables. Deer love to eat the tender new growth of plants, often eating roses, and other favorite landscape plants. Feeding deer also leads to more fawns being born, and while that may sound desirable, it can lead to an overpopulation which usually means starvation for many animals. This is an issue many urban areas are dealing with today.

**The ordinance reads as follows:**

### **ARTICLE I. – IN GENERAL**

#### **Sec. 10-10 - Wildlife Feeding**

Within the city limits of Alpine the feeding of wildlife has resulted in overabundant and highly concentrated populations of wildlife throughout the City and within City parks; and specifically, the feeding of deer has been shown to increase the concentration of deer in these areas, thereby increasing the likelihood of collisions between vehicles and deer and increasing damage to residential and commercial vegetation and landscaping in the City.

The City of Alpine and the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department find that discouraging and prohibiting the artificial feeding of wildlife is in the best interest of the health, safety and welfare of the community and wildlife populations.

1. Feeding of wildlife prohibited.
  - a. Except as provided below in 10-62, (b) (1) and (2), a person commits an offense if the person intentionally feeds wildlife by making food available for consumption on private or public property within the city limits of the city.
  - b. A person shall be deemed to have purposely fed or caused wildlife to be fed if the person places food, as defined in this section, in any form, (not including live vegetation such as ornamental landscaping or flowers) on the ground, or within reach of wildlife.
  - c. A person who violates any provision of this ordinance commits an offense.
2. Exceptions; Affirmative Defenses
  - a. This ordinance does not apply to the placement of food into feeders kept at a minimum of 5 feet above the ground surface and intended for birds.
  - b. This ordinance does not apply to an animal control officer, veterinarian, peace officer, City employee, federal or state wildlife official, who is acting pursuant to a lawfully authorized program to treat, manage, capture, trap, hunt, or remove wildlife and who is acting within the scope of the person's authority.

- c. It is an affirmative defense to prosecution under this section if a person places food, in good faith, for the purpose of feeding domestic livestock or domestic pets located on their property.
3. Enforcement.
- a. Animal Control Officers, Park Rangers, Code Compliance Officers and Police Officers are hereby given full power and authority to enforce this ordinance.
  - b. It is a violation to hinder, molest or interfere with anyone authorized or empowered to perform any duty under this ordinance.
4. Penalties.
- a. A person who commits a violation of this ordinance will first be given a warning and will be provided information on the negative impacts of wildlife feeding. A second offense will result in prosecution in municipal court. Any violation of this ordinance is deemed a Class C misdemeanor punishable by a fine of not less than \$75.00 or more than \$500.00. Each day any violation of any provision of this Code shall continue shall constitute a separate offense.
  - b. Nothing in this section shall be construed as to limit any civil action the city may take to enforce the terms of this ordinance.

**Sec. 10-11 - Hunting.**

- a. No person shall hunt, molest, harm, frighten, tease, shoot, or throw missiles at any animal, including domestic or wildlife within city limits.
- b. No person shall remove or have in his possession the young of any wildlife, or the eggs, or nest or young of any reptile or fowl within city limits.

**LEAVE THE FAWNS ALONE:**

Late spring and throughout summer is when the does begin to have their fawns. The fawns are brown with spots covering their backs. The spots create a camouflage for the fawn and protect it from predators. Often they are left alone for hours at a time, while the mother feeds. Sometimes fawns are found by hikers and others in the woods and thought to be orphaned or abandoned. Like most animals, deer mothers do not abandon healthy offspring. They are usually nearby and watching while humans carry the fawn away intending to “rescue” the baby. The best thing to do if you find a fawn in the wild is to leave it alone. They are very cute but they don’t need to be rescued by humans, what they need are their mothers and when you go away, mother will return.

