

PEAFOWL MANAGEMENT PLAN



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City Council Adopted:



RANCHO PALOS VERDES

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PLAN PURPOSE

The purpose of this Management Plan is to humanely manage the peafowl population within the boundary limits of the City of Rancho Palos Verdes.

GOAL

The goal of this Management Plan is to reduce and maintain the peafowl population within certain City neighborhoods to levels identified in the 2000 Peafowl Census Report and to create an environment that supports the coexistence of peafowl within the semi-rural character of the City. This goal will be achieved by implementing the following two strategies:

- 1) Deterrent Measures & Public Education
- 2) Humane Trapping & Relocation of up to 150 birds in a calendar year in order to maintain the 2000 peafowl population.

PEAFOWL MANAGEMENT PLAN

The intent of this Management Plan is to provide educational guidance for City Staff and residents on how to deal with and manage the peafowl population in the City of Rancho Palos Verdes. The guidelines and provisions of this Plan do not supersede federal, state and county regulations or policies.

The City will update and modify the Plan as needed on a biennial basis based on the frequency of resident complaints and survey data conducted periodically by professional wildlife stewards.



PEAFOWL BACKGROUND

EARLY HISTORY

Peafowl have a long, storied history in Rancho Palos Verdes and on the Palos Verdes Peninsula. The peacock originally comes from India, Sri Lanka, and Burma. However, the original peacock colony on the Palos Verdes Peninsula is a result of a gift of 16 birds from the daughter of William Wrigley, Jr. to Frank Vanderlip, Sr. from Mr. Wrigley's aviary on Catalina Island.

These birds were maintained at the Vanderlip Estate in Portuguese Bend for years. It is also suspected that some of the birds were introduced to Palos Verdes Estates by former mayor Fred Roessler sometime in the period from 1960-65. There are now numerous peacock flocks in various neighborhoods in Rancho Palos Verdes including the Crestridge, Vista Grande, and the Portuguese Bend areas, as well as in the Lunada Bay and Malaga Cove areas of Palos Verdes Estates.

RECENT HISTORY

Due to an increase in resident complaints about the City's peafowl population and the impacts experienced by those who live in close proximity to peafowl flocks, such as noisy calls, excessive animal waste and damage to private property (i.e. yards, roofs, vehicles, etc.), in October 2000, the City Council enlisted the professional services of Dr. Francine Bradley of U.C. Davis to study the City's peafowl population and to provide recommendations to manage the population.

Between October 2000 and January 2001, Dr. Bradley conducted workshops to educate the public on how to humanely trap peafowl and to increase public awareness on how to coexist with peafowl and minimize impacts caused by the birds. Additionally, Dr. Bradley conducted field visits to observe the City's peafowl presence, flock behavior and to conduct a population count. A total of 134 peafowl were counted in the Crestridge (also referred to as Ridgecrest), Portuguese Bend, and Vista Grande neighborhoods. In response, in February 2001, the City Council approved a program to humanely trap and relocate up to 50 peafowl in an effort to reduce the City's peafowl population in the Crestridge (Ridgecrest), Portuguese Bend and Vista Grande neighborhoods. However, only 19 birds were trapped and relocated due to routine sabotage to the traps by peafowl enthusiasts.

In 2008, the City conducted another peafowl census which concluded that the overall peafowl population grew by 53% since 2000/01 with the majority of the growth occurring in the Vista Grande neighborhood. This was attributed to the abundance of food, prime habitat and lack of predatory animals in the area. In response, in May 2009, the City Council approved another trapping and relocation program, and adopted Ordinance No. 488 to prohibit the feeding of, and interference with efforts to trap and relocate, peafowl.

Due to the substantial peafowl population growth in the Vista Grande neighborhood, in June 2009, the City Council approved the reduction of the peafowl population in this neighborhood by approximately 60 birds. Trapping in the Vista Grande neighborhood occurred between August 2009 and January 2010 resulting in 71 birds being trapped and relocated to approved locations in California.

In 2014, the City began to once again experience an increase in resident complaints regarding peafowl. The majority of the complaints were once again coming from the Vista Grande neighborhood. In response, a census was conducted in June and October 2014 which revealed that the peafowl population had significantly increased in some City neighborhoods since the first census in 2000. As a result, in November 2014, the City Council directed Staff to develop a Peafowl Management Plan intended to reduce and manage the City’s peafowl population, particularly in the 5 neighborhoods where previous census reports were conducted, since 2000.

CITY OF RANCHO PALOS VERDES PEAFOWL POPULATION CENSUS DATA TABLE								
Geographical Area	2000	2008	2011-12	June 2014	October 2014	Average 2014	2011-12 to 2014 Comparison	2011-12 to 2014 Percentage Comparison
Portuguese Bend	67	75	70	97	74	85	+15	+22%
Vista Grande	29	89	40	71	71	71	+31	+76%
Crestridge	38	30	27	33	50	41	+14	+52%
Sunnyside Ridge	0	11	25	38	90	64	+39	+156%
TOTAL (4 neighborhoods)	134	205	162	239	285	261	+99	+62%
Monte Verde	n/a	n/a	3	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Grandview	n/a	n/a	n/a	14	20	14	n/a	n/a
TOTAL (6 neighborhoods)	134	205	165	253	305	276	+114	+69%

GENERAL PEAFOWL INFORMATION

The Peafowl (*pavo cristatus*)

Males are referred to as peacocks and females are referred to as peahens, and are collectively known as peafowl. However, the term "peacock" is commonly used to refer to birds of both sexes. There are two common peafowl species: Indian or blue peafowl and green peafowl. Most people, including residents of Rancho Palos Verdes, are familiar with the Indian peafowl, since that is the kind found in many zoos and parks.

Peafowl Characteristics

Peafowl are large, colorful pheasants (typically blue and green). The males are known for their iridescent tails. These tail feathers, or coverts, spread out in a distinctive train that is more than 60 percent of the bird's total body length and boast colorful "eye" markings (ocelli) of blue, gold, red, and other hues. The large train is used in mating rituals and courtship displays. It can be arched into a magnificent fan that reaches across the bird's back and touches the ground on either side. Females are believed to choose their mates according to the size, color, and quality of these outrageous feather trains.

When a peacock is in his second year, he grows his first train, but it has no ocelli and is not as long as a full-grown male's. The train gets longer and more elaborate every year after that. At about five or six years of age, it reaches its maximum splendor. The peacocks that are the toughest—those that are able to survive long enough to have a really impressive train—are the ones that have the most mates and offspring. The coveted blue-eyed feathers of the train are dropped once a year; new feathers immediately begin growing and are completed a few months later.

Peahens seem to prefer males with the longest trains and biggest displays. In fact, the peacock's female-attraction power is directly related to the perfection of his spectacular train, including its overall length, the number of iridescent "eyes" that are present, and even the symmetry of their patterning.

Normally, when a peacock is just walking around, his train trails behind him but held just above the ground. But when he wants to show off for a peahen, he props up the train with his shorter, stiffer tail feathers and unfolds it like a fan into a semicircle 6 to 7 feet (1.8 to 2.1 meters) wide! If the peahen seems interested, he quivers, making his feathers shimmy and flash to entice her further.

Peafowl Daily Routine

Peafowl follow a certain routine every day. They roost overnight in large groups in tall, open trees. That way they are safe from predators during the night, and the males can travel through the branches. In the morning, they break up into small groups. In the nonbreeding season, these are usually groups of all peacocks or all peahens; but during the breeding season, there are groups of one peacock and several peahens or all bachelors. These groups forage on the ground for food. During midday, peafowl drink, preen their feathers, rest in the shade, or take dust baths. Once it cools down, they go back to foraging for food before taking one last drink and returning to their roost for the night.

Where do Peafowl Live

Peacocks are very unique animals. They can live anywhere there is shelter and food/water. Extreme environments with very high temperatures are not ideal for the birds.

What do Peafowl Eat

Peacocks are ground feeders. They hunt for small animals, like spiders, reptiles (snakes) and amphibians in tall grasses, and minnows in shallow streams. They also eat plant parts, such as flower petals, seeds, berries, figs, leaves, and seeds.

As Loud as a Peacock

Peafowl have 11 different calls, but the peacocks are the ones that really yell. They have a call that carries for a long distance and sounds like “may-AWE, may-AWE.” Some say the call sounds like a human crying for help! Peacocks call in the early morning and late evening, and practically all day during the breeding season. Because peacocks make so much noise in the early morning or late evening, some consider them a real nuisance! Other animals don’t mind, though. With their sharp eyes, peafowl are likely to be the first to see a predator and call out a loud alarm.

Breeding & Nesting Season

Generally, nesting/hatching season takes place between April and May. During this period, a peahen makes a scrape in the ground and lines it with sticks, where she lays three to eight light green or tan eggs. She sits on them almost constantly for about four weeks. The peachicks are able to walk and forage on their own right after they hatch, but they are very vulnerable. It takes two weeks before they can flap up into a tree for safety, where they crowd on both sides of their mother and are covered by her wings. At four weeks, the young grow crests, and at two months they look just like their mother (both males and females) but are only half her size. It is not until their second year that the males achieve their mature coloring. Only half of the chicks that hatch, survive to join the rest of the group. The typical lifespan of peafowl is 15 years.

MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES

The discussion on the following two management strategies is intended to be used by the City and its residents to humanely manage the peafowl population in the City of Rancho Palos Verdes:

1. Deterrent Measures & Public Education
2. Humane Trapping & Relocation of up to 150 birds in a calendar year in order to maintain the 2000 peafowl population.

1. Deterrent Measures and Public Education

Deterrent Measures

Based on information gleaned from various resources, the City has been advised that in situations where residents are adversely impacted by peafowl, the implementation of one or the combination of the following deterrent measures may help discourage peafowl from returning. The success of the listed deterrent measures is dependent on residents working together and consistency.

- **Peafowl do not like water.**

Water is one of the best known deterrents for peafowl. During non-drought conditions, the intermittent use of sprinklers or a hose with a jet nozzle will act as a negative reinforcement for the birds. Or consider a motion sensor activated water spray, such as the Scarecrow, that is battery operated and covers an area of about 35 feet and can be connected to your garden hose. It's available on-line or at home improvement and garden stores.

- **Peafowl are afraid of dogs.**

Walk your dog around the property and neighborhood. Additionally, keeping your dog in the backyard will also serve as a deterrent.

- **Peafowl will avoid certain repellents.**

Cat repellent and mothballs around planting beds, porches, and along walkways may be an effective means of repelling peafowl. Caution should be used so as not to allow young children or animals to ingest the repellents.

- **Trim or Remove Large Trees**

Since peafowl prefer to roost in large overhanging trees, trimming or removing said trees will help deter peafowl. The Canary Island Pine is a favorite resting spot for peafowl because of its sturdy horizontal limbs and ample cover. Albeit a short-term, balloons in trees can deter peafowl from roosting in trees.

- **Be cautious when composting.**

Avoid open compost and manure sacks as they tend to attract peafowl because they love to take dirt baths. If you wish to compost, use a covered compost bin and keep the composting area clean.

- **Peafowl like to eat wild birdseed, bread and pet food.**

These are delectable treats to peafowl. Once they're hooked, it's difficult to wean them. It's a good idea to remove any leftover pet food immediately, feed pets indoors, or cover/enclose animal food bowls.

- **Peafowl like to eat seeds and plants**

Avoid planting young tender seedlings in areas you do not want peafowl to visit or cover the plants until they are well established. Additionally, certain plants are favored by peafowl while other plants are disliked. See Appendix A for a list of plants peafowl like and dislike, and follow the suggested list when landscaping. Peafowl like to take daily dust baths irrespective of the type of plants found in a garden and this can be destructive. It is suggested that gardens be covered with gravel or rocks to prevent peafowl from digging plants up to create loose soil for bathing purposes.

- **Prohibition of Feeding Peafowl**

The availability of food will cause peafowl to return. Thus, the City's Municipal Code prohibits the feeding of peafowl. Specifically, Section 6.04.020 of the Rancho Palos Verdes Municipal Code (RPVMC) enacts by reference Los Angeles County Code Section 10.84.010 which states the following:

Providing food for certain animals. Except as otherwise provided for in Section 10.84.020 of Los Angeles County Code, no person shall feed or in any manner provide food to any peafowl, crow, pigeon, seagull, non-domesticated rodent, including tree squirrels or ground squirrels, or to a non-domesticated mammalian predator, including coyotes, foxes, opossums, skunks and raccoons.

It is an infraction if any resident is caught feeding peafowl in violation of this ordinance which could result in penalty fines for each violation.

Public Education

Over the years, the City has received numerous complaints from residents expressing frustration with the destruction peacocks cause to their property, such as damaging roofs, plants, walkways, and vehicles. Nuisance complaints revolve around noise, fecal material, and emotional angst caused by peacocks. Thus, in an attempt to assist residents to minimize impacts caused by the peacocks, listed above are a number of deterrent measures to discourage peafowl from visiting private property. Because the effectiveness of these deterrent measures relies on cooperation among neighbors, a

public education campaign will occur on an as-needed basis using the following methods to disseminate information to the public:

- Website Updates (see Community Development Department Homepage under Code Enforcement)
- List-serve messages to the Peafowl notification subscribers
- Articles with helpful tips in the City's quarterly newsletter
- Speaking at:
 - Council of Homeowner's Association (CHOA) meetings
 - Homeowner's Association Meetings
- Public Service Announcement on Channel 33
- Communicating and sharing information with neighboring cities
- Preparing and distributing educational leaflets

2. Trapping and Relocation

In an effort to humanely maintain the peafowl population to the levels reported in the 2000 census, this section of the Management Plan describes a citywide trapping and relocation program. The program proposes the trapping and relocating of up to 150 birds per year in order to maintain the 2000 peafowl population level. The trapping and relocation program consists of the following 5 stages which are described below:

- Peafowl Census
- Selection of Trapping Vendor
- Seasonal Trapping
- Trapping Protocol
- Relocation

Stage 1: Peafowl Census

Every two years, the City will conduct a census survey to assess the peafowl population trends based on past census reports. The census will be in February and/or March in the Portuguese Bend, Crestridge, Sunnyside Ridge, Grandview and Vista Grande neighborhoods along with other neighborhoods where significant peafowl complaints or sightings have been documented since the previous census. Neighborhoods may be added, deleted or modified for future census years based on previous census results or the success of previous trapping efforts. The census will be used to determine whether to proceed with any trapping in the subject calendar year. If trapping is deemed necessary, the census will dictate the number of birds (up to 150 in a calendar year) to be trapped.

Stage 2: Selection of Trapping Vendor

Based on the outcome of the census report, if the City determines trapping is necessary to control the peafowl population, if a service agreement is not in effect, the City will go through the Request for Proposal (RFP) process to select an outside vendor. In

considering a vendor, the City will factor experience, capability and cost. The City Council will enter into a Service Agreement with the selected vendor.

Stage 3: Seasonal Trapping

Generally, the nesting/hatching season takes place during April and May when chicks flock with their peahen before being able to function on their own. This is not considered a humane time period to conduct trapping of peahen. Therefore, seasonal trapping of peahens (female) will take place July 15th through December 31st. Since peacocks (males) can be trapped all year long, if deemed necessary by the City, the trapping of peacock (males) may occur outside the July 15th and December 31st trapping window.

Stage 4: Trapping Protocol

The neighborhoods selected for trapping every two years will be determined by the City based on peafowl population trends memorialized in the biennial census reports, as well public input (See Appendix B for neighborhood boundary maps identified for trapping). The humane trapping of peafowl will occur as follows:

- Traps will be made from chicken wire, or other similar material deemed acceptable by the City.
- Traps will generally be approximately 8'(L) x 6'(H) in size intended to hold approximately 6-8 birds at a time.
- Traps will be placed on City property or private property based on agreements between the City and the property owner. Private property will be selected by the City based on input from the trapper.
- Traps will be serviced on a regular basis, but no less than once a week by the City's trapping vendor.
- Traps will be maintained and monitored in accordance to the State of California Department of Fish and Game and the U.S. Department of Wildlife and Fish standards.
- Traps occupied by peafowl will be serviced within 24 hours. The property owner where the traps are placed will be required to notify the City and the trapping vendor within 24 hours of the trap being occupied by peafowl.
- The trapping vendor will also be able to gather peafowl using large, soft hand-held "fishing" style nets as this method is considered a very effective and quick way to quickly and humanely remove the young and fearless birds from the trapping regions.
- The trapping vendor will be required to provide the City with dated photo documentation of each bird trapped, as well as information as to its relocation destination.

Stage 5: Relocation

Once peafowl are trapped by the vendor or removed from a trap by the vendor they become the property of the trapping vendor. Trapped peafowl will be relocated off the Palos Verdes Peninsula to homes that have been screened by the City and the trapping vendor to ensure the individuals adopting the peafowl have some avian experience and

have adequate space for peafowl to roam freely. The location and contact information (name and phone number) of the individual(s) accepting the trapped peafowl will remain confidential to protect their privacy. Under no circumstances will the trapped peafowl be euthanized or treated inhumanely.

Sabotaging Peafowl Cages

Pursuant to Section 6.04.070 of the RPVMC, no person shall prevent or interfere with the trapping or relocation of peafowl, either on public or private property, by releasing any captured peafowl or by damaging, disabling or disengaging any peafowl trap or enclosure.

If an individual is caught interfering with peafowl trapping, they will be subject to an infraction which will result in penalty fees for each violation.

Appendix A – Plant List

The following is a list of plants that peafowl like and dislike. It is suggested as an added deterrent measures that the following plants be considered when landscaping. It should be noted that peafowl take daily dust baths irrespective of the type of plants found in a garden and this can be destructive. It is not uncommon for residents to think peafowl are eating plants when in fact they are digging plants up to create loose soil for bathing purposes.

Peafowl dislike these plants:

Agapanthus
Azalea
Baby's Breath
Bee Balm
Bird of Paradise
Blazing Star Liatris
Bouganvillea
Butterfly Plant
Cactus
Camellia
Cannas
Clivia
Columbine
Coneflower
Ferns
Fuchsia
Gaillardia
Gardenia
Geranium
Giant Columbine
Gladiola
Gloriosa Daisy
Hen & Chicken
Hibiscus
Hardy Lavender
Hostas
Iris
Ivy
Lantana
Lavender
Marigold
Mint
Mum
Oleander
Painted Daisy
Periwinkle
Peonies
Phlox
Pink Lady
Plumbago
Poinsettia

Pyracantha
Rhododendron
Rose
Shasta Daisy
Snap Dragon
Sunburst Coreopsis
Weigela

Peafowl like these plants:

Amaryllis
Begonia
Broccoli
Brussel Sprout
Cabbage
California Poppy
Cauliflower
Chive
Holly Berries
Impatiens
Kale
Kohlrabi
Lettuce
Nasturtium
Pansy
Petunia
Primrose
Stock
Stock Cauliflower
Sweet Alyssum
Tomato
Water Stock
Young Spinach and
Any young plants

Appendix B – Trapping Neighborhood Limits

Portuguese Bend



Crestridge



Sunnyside Ridge



