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# Deer Management Program



## Deer Management Program

### Protecting Baltimore's Forests and Parks

Baltimore City Recreation & Parks (Rec & Parks) is launching Baltimore's first Deer Management Program. This is a data-driven effort to protect park forests and reduce problems caused by too many deer.

Rec & Parks cares for more than 2,300 acres of natural areas in city parks. These areas include forests, streams, and wetlands. They help clean our air and water, reduce flooding, support wildlife, and give residents places to relax and explore.

Right now, these natural areas are under stress from climate change, invasive plants, and heavy deer browsing. Protecting young trees is especially important as Baltimore works to grow its tree canopy to 40% by 2037. By taking action now, Baltimore is helping ensure its parks stay healthy and welcoming for future generations.

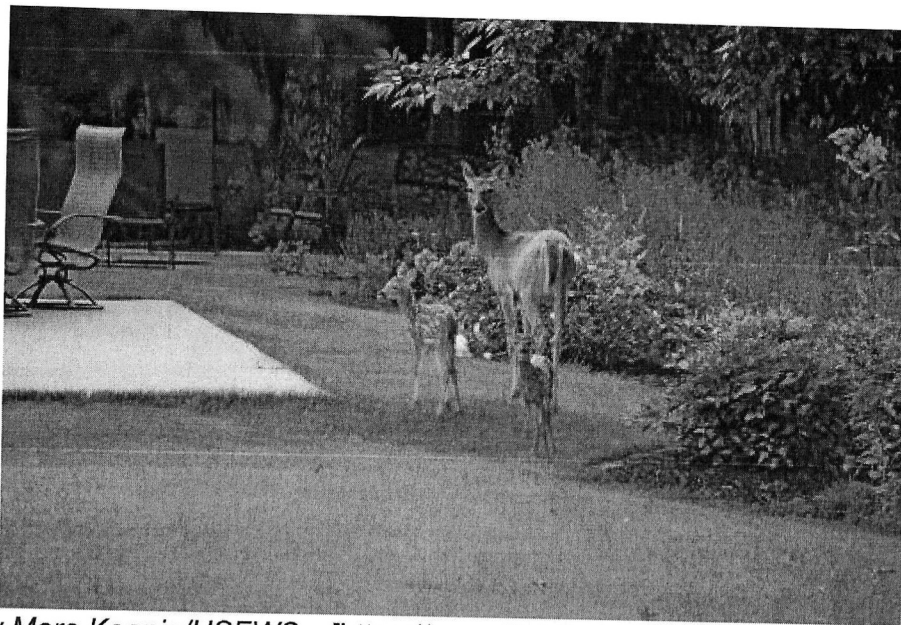
### Why Deer Management Is Needed

Data collected in city parks show that deer numbers in some areas are three to 21 times higher than what a healthy forest can support. Experts recommend no more than 20 deer per square mile in similar habitats.

When deer populations grow too large, they can:

- Eat young trees before they can grow
- Damage native plants
- Help invasive plants spread
- Reduce habitat for birds and other wildlife
- Increase deer-human conflicts
- Raise the risk of tick-borne diseases

Over time, too many deer can prevent forests from growing back. This program is designed to help restore balance so forests can recover.



*Original photo by Mara Koenig/USFWS* [<https://www.flickr.com/photos/usfwsmidwest/42099836314/>]



*Original photo by Courtney Celley/USFWS*  
[<https://www.flickr.com/photos/usfwsmidwest/53599953580/>]

## **Shaped by Community Input**

The Deer Management Plan was created through a strong community engagement process that began in January 2025 and continued throughout the year.

Outreach efforts included:

- A citywide resident survey (Early Summer 2025)
- Meetings with park “Friends-of” groups and community associations (June 2025)
- Public information sessions near affected parks (July 2025)
- Community focus groups discussing all management options (August 2025)

- Ongoing outreach and education

More than 3,700 residents took part in the survey. Results showed:

- 94% believe forests in city parks add value to Baltimore
- 58% see deer as a threat to forest health
- 62% believe the City should manage deer-related issues
- 59% understand deer management is an ongoing effort

This feedback helped guide the City's decision to move forward with the program.

## **How the Program Will Be Carried Out**


The program will be conducted in partnership with trained wildlife biologists from the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (USDA-APHIS), who have firearms expertise and follow national best practices. When management activities are happening, parks will be temporarily closed to keep residents and staff safe.

## **Online Resources**

### **Informational Videos**

#### **Healthy Forests**

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### **Public Information Sessions**

### **Additional Online Resources**

- White-tailed Deer Biology  
[[https://dnr.maryland.gov/wildlife/Pages/hunt\\_trap/wtdeerbiology.aspx](https://dnr.maryland.gov/wildlife/Pages/hunt_trap/wtdeerbiology.aspx)]
- Ornamental Plants Fact Sheet  
[<https://extension.umd.edu/sites/extension.umd.edu/files/publications/FS655-ResistanceDeer.pdf>]
- Repellents Fact Sheet  
[[https://extension.umd.edu/sites/extension.umd.edu/files/publications/FS810-A\\_UsingCommDeerReps.pdf](https://extension.umd.edu/sites/extension.umd.edu/files/publications/FS810-A_UsingCommDeerReps.pdf)]
- Deer Populations and Forests [<https://www.audubon.org/magazine/surging-deer-populations-are-crisis-eastern-forests#:~:text=Summer%202024%20Conservation-,Surging%20Deer%20Populations%20Are%20a%20Crisis%20for%20Eastern%20Forests,may%20need%20to%20step%20in.&text=Pledge%20to%20stand%20with%20Audubon,and%20work%20towards%20climate%20solutions>]
- Maryland Technical Guide  
[[https://extension.umd.edu/sites/extension.umd.edu/files/publications/EB354\\_ManagingDeerDamage.pdf](https://extension.umd.edu/sites/extension.umd.edu/files/publications/EB354_ManagingDeerDamage.pdf)]

## Contact Us

For more information about the Deer Management Program and to share your input, please email [deer.program@baltimorecity.gov](mailto:deer.program@baltimorecity.gov) [<mailto:deer.program@baltimorecity.gov>].