

Dear Mayor and Council,

Sept 1/20

Wild Life Population explosion happening along the White Beach promenade:

I write to you as a long-time resident of the Semiahmoo Peninsula. My wife and I feel privileged and blessed to have raised our family here since our move to White Rock in 1980. We will never forget our first Christmas; luxuriating in the warm sun as we walked the pier and remembered our childhoods in Winnipeg shivering in the bitter cold.

The 40 years since have brought numerous changes to our community, many of them positive. That said, over the last four years of walking the White Rock beach promenade I've made some observations that have prompted this letter, which I send in hopes of inviting a community discussion about preserving the safety of our beach amenities, and surrounding area.

I have summarized some changes I have observed around the waterfront which I believe threaten the health and wellbeing of our community. I then offer some community actions for discussion and possible consideration.

In the early 1980's my wife and I were frequent visitors to the beach. At that time, feeding a seagull was considered a novelty that we enjoyed and encouraged with our kids. A beach day was a chance to enjoy the beauty of our natural waterfront habitat and the discoveries it could offer. We have since observed that such interaction between humans and animals is not always benign, and may have unintended and undesirable consequences. During this past summer I, and my neighbours have observed:

1. Crows and seagulls exist in unprecedented numbers on the beach front. They are now so plentiful, it is impossible to estimate their numbers. I have experienced incidents of dive bombing seagulls that have left stains on my clothes on three occasions this summer alone. Of more concern I have seen seagulls aggressively raiding food directly from peoples' food trays as they look for a place to picnic. People caught unawares are literally frightened for their children being attacked. As the gulls surround picnicking groups, well meaning visitors throw their fish and chip remnants into the air to attract the birds. This emboldens the birds in their increasingly dangerous interactions with humans and also results in food deposits collecting between the breakwater rocks. Granville Island and other beach locations have begun a campaign instructing visitors not to feed birds due to the dangerous scavenging behaviours that result and put visitors at risk of injury.
2. The White Rock city has placed numerous garbage cans along the boardwalk in numbers that were once sufficient to ensure that garbage could be safely discarded for later pick up by city workers. Close to 100 percent of these cans

had lost the moveable doors designed to prevent birds and other scavengers from accessing the contents. I noted this past week that these lids have been largely replaced with lids that close. However the remaining steel garbage containers remain with openings that have no closing mechanism.

This, in combination with the food deposits in the breakwater rocks has resulted in a massive growth of the rat population along the boardwalk. A late night stroll will reveal a macabre scene of rats scurrying along the boardwalk looking for food scraps. Their numbers are increasing dramatically.

3. An exponential explosion of the Canada Geese population is occurring on the waterfront. I estimate based after weeks of random counts on mornings when the geese are roosting on the grass that the current population exceeds 400 geese who are now permanent residents. Geese mate for life and live up to 20 years. A pair of geese lay 5 eggs a season so unless action is taken to limit the continued growth of the goose population our waterfront space will become unsafe for humans. The geese are defecating all along our waterfront greenspace leaving virtually no space untouched with their excrement. White Rock is not alone in facing this issue.

4. Crows, the most predatory birds in our local population, are being regularly fed by people who maybe unaware of the negative impact crows have on local song birds. Song birds are the most vulnerable of our bird population and they have become increasingly rare in the backyards of white Rock due to the aggressive ability crows have to poach the nests of tiny birds unable to protect their eggs.

All of this to conclude that our precious boardwalk promenade and beach front park areas are becoming unsafe for children and families. The interaction between humans and wildlife is not desirable or healthy. How long before we have a public health outbreak due to the unavoidable contact with bird excrement deposits literally everywhere you turn?

Possible actions for consideration:

1. Post signage that educates visitors of the dangers of feeding birds at the beach. This will provide locals the opportunity to refer to visual rationale when politely asking that visitors refrain from feeding the birds.
2. Evaluate different garbage containers that:
  - a. Are resistant to rats and scavenging crows and seagulls.
  - b. Meet the surge capacity demanded by the numbers of visitors to White Rock beach.
  - c. Create a suitable and sustainable waste system for the waste and plethora of cardboard trays created by fish and chip purchases that do not

fit into the garbage containers. Perhaps local restaurants can be incentivised in some way to assist with this?

3. In addition to signs, educate the public of the negative outcomes resulting when we feed the beach wildlife and alter the behaviour of the seabirds.
  
4. Consider strategies for controlling the explosion of the Goose population. This could start with a city sponsored program of “addling” as many of the nests as can be found each spring. This will help in reducing the current rate of population growth over a period of time.

Thank you for your time and consideration,

Kind regards,

Mark Kroeker



Ash Street Garbage



Garbage Marine Drive and Ash street



Ash Street and marine drive



Promenade Garbage can filled to overflowing



Garbage can overflowing on the promenade



Seagull scavenging garbage



Old fashioned open cans on Marine Drive



Geese on the promenade



geese roosting on Semiahmoo band land



garbage littered after scavenging birds have left





Rats in broad daylight on columbia street



**From:** Mark Kroeker <[md.kroeker1234@gmail.com](mailto:md.kroeker1234@gmail.com)>  
**Sent:** Monday, September 07, 2020 12:38 PM  
**To:** Clerk's Office <[ClerksOffice@whiterockcity.ca](mailto:ClerksOffice@whiterockcity.ca)>  
**Subject:** Monday morning labour weekend

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I hope that i am not the only white rock citizen embarrassed.





We are better than this.

