

Wildlife Policies

Landmark Ordinance for Wildlife and Georgia On July 15, 2010 the Berkeley Lake (Gwinnett County) City Council unanimously approved the first ordinance of its kind in Georgia. The ordinance was written and proposed by Elizabeth Nicholas, a licensed wildlife rehabilitator and wildlife specialist working with Michael Ellis, founder of AWARE, Atlanta Wild Animal Rescue Effort. ORDINANCE 0-112-10 Feeding. It shall be unlawful for any person to provide feed in any manner to wildlife on public or private property within the corporate limits of Berkeley Lake. The only exceptions to this ordinance are for bird feeders and fish. Penalties are a warning citation for the first offense and a \$1,000. fine for each recurring offense. This ordinance is precedent setting for Georgia and as far as we know, the entire Southeast. It institutes protections for wildlife and man that are far reaching and long overdue. An excerpt from Michael Ellis's presentation to the city council is as follows: People feed wildlife because they feel the animals will starve or simply because they enjoy seeing them. This will only result in negative consequences for the animals. They will become habituated to humans, which is dangerous. Additionally, the animals are lead to believe that the habitat will support more of their species than it actually does, so they overpopulate the area causing starvation, herd disease and death. Feeding wildlife also teaches predators that they can find a much easier meal from humans than they can by hunting. As a result favorite prey species like rodents, rabbits, snakes, etc go unchecked and also over populate affecting the entire ecosystem negatively. The ordinance has already created interest from neighboring municipalities concerned with protecting wildlife and the public. The passage of this ordinance by the progressive city of Berkeley Lake signals the beginning of a new understanding and appreciation of what is best for the planet, its wildlife, and habitat and ultimately man. For additional information contact Michael Ellis at (678) 418-1111 or visit www.awareone.org