



CITY OF RANCHO PALOS VERDES

MEMORANDUM

TO: HONORABLE MAYOR & CITY COUNCIL MEMBERS
FROM: GARY GYVES, SENIOR ADMINISTRATIVE ANALYST 
DATE: MAY 5, 2009
SUBJECT: THE CITY'S PEAFOWL POPULATION
REVIEWED: CAROLYN LEHR, CITY MANAGER 

RECOMMENDATION

Provide Staff with direction regarding the City's peafowl population.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The City's peafowl population has increased by an estimated 53% over the last eight years as detailed in Exhibit A and on page 3. Staff has received an increasing number of peafowl related complaints from residents concerned with and agitated by the steadily growing peafowl population. Common complaints consist of excessive noise due to bird calls, birds walking on rooftops, excessive animal waste and damage to yards, gardens, roof tops and automobiles. The City's FY08-09 Budget and Proposed FY09-10 Budget do not contain an appropriation for wildlife trapping. Based on information provided by the Los Angeles County Department of Animal Care and Control (Animal Control) and assumptions made by Staff, it would cost approximately \$33,000 to trap 71 peafowl, which would reduce the number of peafowl to the 2000 census level.

BACKGROUND

On October 10, 2000 the City entered into a contract with the University of California Davis for Dr. Francine Bradley, poultry specialist, to study the peafowl population in the City and to provide recommendations to manage the population. At the February 20, 2001 meeting, as recommended by Dr. Francine Bradley, the Council adopted a peafowl management plan to reduce the City's peafowl population. The management plan consisted of a City sponsored demonstration project to trap and relocate up to 50 peafowl and the creation of a team of volunteers to assist residents with too many

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peafowl on their property. The volunteers would assist the residents with trapping and relocation of the peafowl as demonstrated by Dr. Francine Bradley.

The four largest flocks targeted for the trapping and relocation by Dr. Bradley were located in the Vista Grande area at Eddinghill Drive and Trailriders Drive, in the Ridgecrest community on Middlecrest Road and in the Portuguese Bend area on Cinnamon Lane and Sweetbay Road. Although Dr. Francine Bradley planned to trap up to 50 peafowl, only 19 were actually trapped and relocated. Based on a recent conversation with Dr. Bradley, peafowl enthusiasts routinely sabotaged the traps, which resulted in only 19 of the planned 50 peafowl being trapped. In addition, the volunteers that were trained to assist residents with trapping and relocation were ultimately unsuccessful due to: (1) the difficulty of setting up the large and complex traps, (2) the required patience and attention required to successfully trap the peafowl, (3) the difficulty of finding homes for the peafowl, and (4) if a home was found, the logistical problems associated with transporting the peafowl.

DISCUSSION

2008 Peafowl Census

At the recommendation of Dr. Francine Bradley, the City entered into an agreement with Michele Palmer to conduct the City's 2008 Peafowl Census (2008 Census). Michele Palmer is a graduate of U.C. Davis and participated in the City's 2000 Peafowl Census (2000 Census) as a member of Dr. Francine Bradley's team. Ms. Palmer has an extensive background in poultry and is currently an employee of the Cooperative Extension Poultry Unit at U.C. Davis. The 2008 Census Report is attached as Exhibit B. A copy of the 2000 Census Report has also been attached as Exhibit C. A summary of the 2000 and 2008 Census data by geographical area is detailed in the chart below.

CITY OF RANCHO PALOS VERDES 2000 & 2008 PEAFOWL CENSUS DATA SUMMARY

Geographical Area	2000 Peafowl Census Data	2008 Peafowl Census Data	Increase (+)/ Decrease (-)	% Increase (+)/ Decrease (-)
Portuguese Bend	67	75	8	12%
Vista Grande	29	89	60	207%
Crestridge	38	30	-8	-21%
Sunnyside Ridge	0	11	11	N/A
TOTAL	134	205	71	53%

As detailed above, the City's peafowl population has increased by an estimated 53% over the last eight years. Most of this increase (45%) has occurred in the Vista Grande area of the City. It is believed that the population in the Vista Grande area has

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increased this dramatically due to the abundance of food, prime habitat and lack of predatory animals in the area. Although a new flock consisting of approximately 11 birds has established itself on Sunnyside Ridge Road on the East side of the City, the populations in the Portuguese Bend and Crestridge areas of the City have remained relatively stable. Due to limited access to potential peafowl habitats, the census data presented above and in the attached reports represent the minimum number of birds in the City. Due to the census takers inability to access potential habitat areas in both 2000 and 2008, there are undoubtedly more birds that were not observed and counted.

Resident Complaints

Staff has received an increasing number of peafowl related complaints from residents concerned with and agitated by the steadily growing peafowl population. As expected based on the census data, most of the complaints are from residents living in the Vista Grande area of the City. Common complaints consist of excessive noise due to bird calls, birds walking on rooftops, excessive animal waste and damage to yards, gardens, roof tops and automobiles. Staff has also received numerous complaints from residents in the Crestridge and Sunnyside Ridge areas of the City. Interestingly enough, Staff does not recall receiving a complaint from residents living in the Portuguese Bend area of the City in over 18 months. It is Staff's belief that the residents living in the Portuguese Bend area have become accustomed to the peafowl. Although Staff has received an increasing number of complaints, it is believed that more complaints would have been received if it was not widely known that the City currently has a hands off policy towards peafowl and all other wildlife.

Although the City has no formal policy concerning peafowl, when possible, Staff attempts to educate residents that feeding peafowl and other wildlife is a violation of the City's Municipal Code. In an attempt to assist residents, Staff provides information on helpful suggestions to discourage peafowl from visiting private property, which is also available on the City's website. These suggestions range from the types of plants to avoid for landscaping and known peafowl-deterrents such as lawn sprinklers and the presence of dogs. Many residents have pointed out the futility of these measures due to the overabundant number of peafowl in their area.

Peninsula Cities – Peafowl Programs/Policies

Rancho Palos Verdes (RPV): The City of RPV does not have a trapping and relocation program for the City's peafowl population, or any other type of wildlife. However, the City does provide interested residents with traps and a video detailing how to trap the birds. If the resident is successful, the trapped bird can be picked up by the Animal Control or picked up by a person interested in adopting peafowl. Although the list is short, Staff maintains a database of people looking to adopt peafowl. Unfortunately, as stated above, it is extremely difficult and time consuming to trap peafowl. If residents have been trapping peafowl, they are not informing Staff of their success. Therefore, Staff believes that it is extremely rare for residents to successfully trap peafowl.

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Palos Verdes Estates (PVE): The City of PVE has a peafowl trapping and relocation program that is administered by a member of their public work's department. The peafowl trapping is performed by the public work's employee on an overtime basis only. There are three peafowl flocks in PVE and the city tries to maintain the population of each flock at 21 birds. Based on an annual census, the public work's employee will trap excess peafowl and house them in a 40' by 40' pen located adjacent to PVE City Hall until an appropriate home can be found. The initial cost to PVE to reduce each of the three flocks to the desired number of 21 birds is unknown. However, the ongoing program cost for FY07-08 was approximately \$9,000, which includes the annual census, overtime pay to trap excess peafowl (>21 birds for each flock) and peafowl food. Since the City of RPV has 10 known peafowl flocks, this ongoing cost would undoubtedly be much higher in RPV.

Rolling Hills (RH): The City of RH does not have a "city sponsored" trapping and relocation program for the city's peafowl population. In addition, the City of RH does not provide any assistance (e.g. traps) to its residents for trapping peafowl.

Rolling Hills Estates (RHE): The City of RHE does not have a "city sponsored" trapping and relocation program for the city's peafowl population. However, like RPV, RHE does provide interested residents with traps. If the resident is successful, the trapped bird is picked up by Animal Control. Prior to capture, RHE obtains a commitment from a peafowl recipient who will immediately (within 24 hours) pick up the bird from the animal shelter. RHE adopted an ordinance allowing peafowl trapping by residents a few years ago. However, the ordinance excludes trapping within two HOA boundaries (Dapplegray Lanes HOA and Strawberry Lane HOA). In 2005, a census accounted for approximately 218 peafowl within these two HOA's boundaries.

ALTERNATIVES

1. The creation of a one-time City sponsored trapping project to reduce the number of peafowl to a desired level.
2. The creation of an ongoing City sponsored trapping program to reduce and maintain the number of peafowl to a desired level.
3. No action by the City. Continue hands-off practice.

FISCAL IMPACT

The City's FY08-09 Budget and Proposed FY09-10 Budget do not contain an appropriation for wildlife trapping. Therefore, if implemented as a City initiative, a peafowl trapping and relocation program would represent an expansion of City services.

Staff contacted Animal Control to request a cost estimate for peafowl trapping. A representative from Animal Control informed Staff that they do not provide cost

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estimates, but could perform the work based on a rate schedule of \$75.51 an hour for a worker (trapper) and \$11.87 for each bird per day for housing. The peafowl would be housed at the Carson Animal Shelter until a suitable home could be found. Animal Control will not euthanize peafowl unless the bird is injured.

Although the rates charged by Animal Control are known, it becomes extremely difficult to estimate the cost to trap and relocate peafowl. As stated above: (1) the traps are large and difficult to set up, (2) peafowl enthusiasts will undoubtedly sabotage the traps, (3) patience and attention are required to successfully trap peafowl, and (4) it is often difficult to find and transport peafowl to suitable homes.

Based on the cost information above, and the assumption that it would take 5 hours to catch each bird and 7 days to find a suitable home, it would cost approximately \$33,000 to trap 71 peafowl, which would reduce the number of peafowl to the 2000 census level. This cost assumes that the City would not be responsible for transporting the peafowl. Additional costs would be incurred on an annual basis if the Council chose to maintain each of the City's 10 flocks at a desired level.

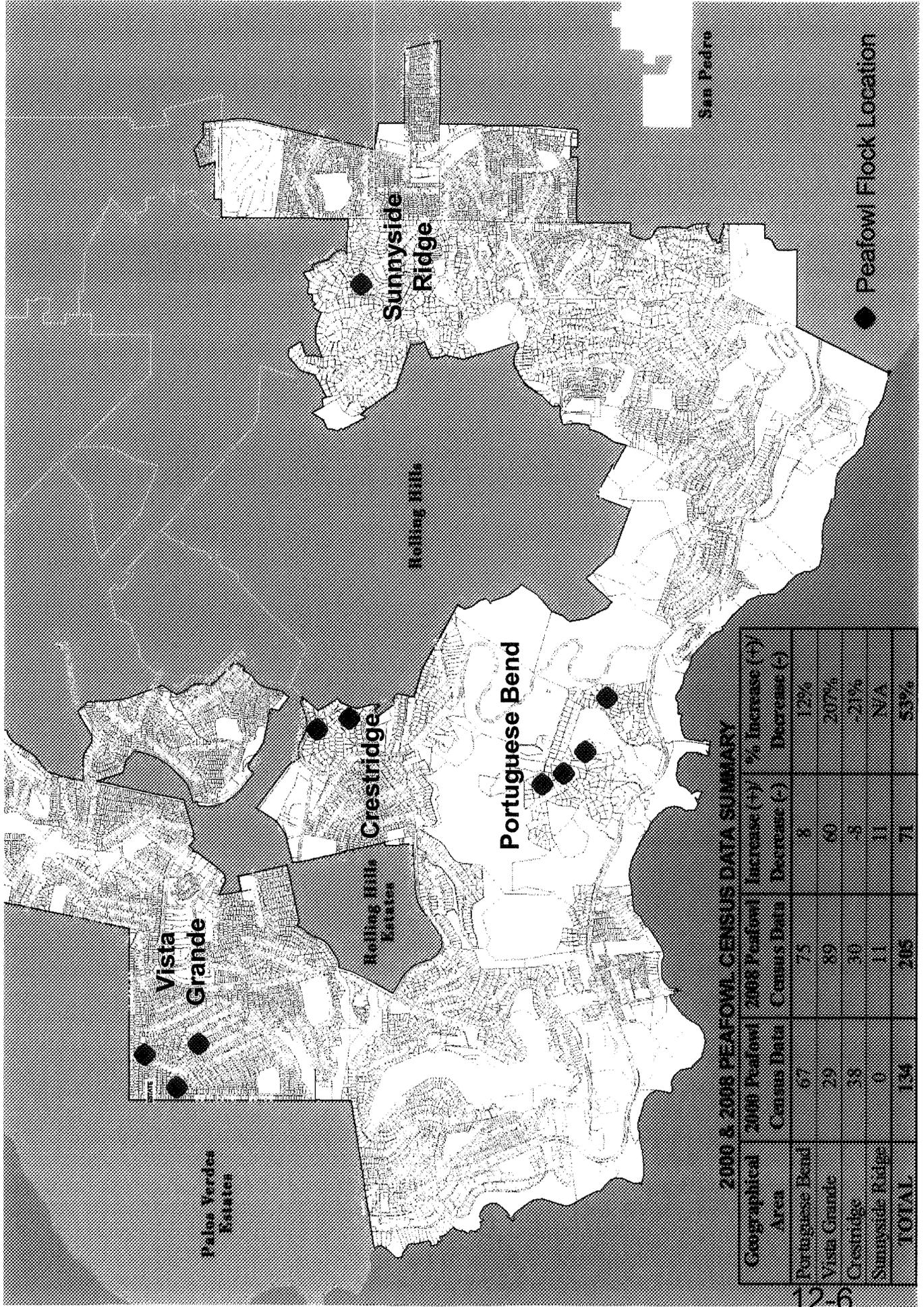
Exhibits:

Exhibit A – 2008 Peafowl Flock Locations / Census Data Summary

Exhibit B - 2008 Census Report

Exhibit C - 2000 Census Report

EXHIBIT A - 2008 PEAFOWL FLOCK LOCATIONS / CENSUS DATA SUMMARY



2000 & 2008 PEAFOWL CENSUS DATA SUMMARY

Geographical Area	2000 Peafowl Census Data	2008 Peafowl Census Data	Increase (+) / Decrease (-)	% Increase (+) / Decrease (-)
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TOTAL	134	205	71	53%

EXHIBIT B

Peafowl Population Assessment for the
City of Rancho Palos Verdes

Fall 2008

Michele Palmer
Animal Sciences Department
University of California, Davis

EXHIBIT B

Introduction

The City of Rancho Palos Verdes (RPV) contacted the University of California, Davis (U.C. Davis) in the fall of 2008. The City indicated that they wanted a census conducted in areas of the City known to have established Peafowl populations. At the recommendation of Dr. Francine Bradley, the City entered into an agreement with Michele Palmer to conduct the census. Michele Palmer is a graduate of the U.C. Davis and participated in the City's 2000 Peafowl census as a member of Dr. Francine Bradley's team. She has an extensive background in poultry and is currently an employee of the Cooperative Extension Poultry Unit at U.C. Davis.

Materials and Methods

Based on locations studied for the 2000 Peafowl Census and complaints made to City Staff, the areas designated for study were Portuguese Bend, Vista Grande, Crestridge, Sunnyside Ridge, and Bay Ridge. The Peafowl located in each area were counted a total of four times. Each area was surveyed on two different dates at both sunrise and sunset in order to obtain the most accurate count possible. Bird numbers are reported for heavily populated areas on each street and as a total for the neighborhood.

Summary of Census Results 2000 & 2008 Peafowl Census Data

Area	Peafowl Census Data 2000 (*)	Peafowl Census Data 2008	Increase (+)/ Decrease (-)	% Increase (+)/ Decrease (-)
Portuguese Bend	67	75	8	12%
Vista Grande	29	89	60	207%
Crestridge	38	30	-8	-21%
Sunnyside Ridge	0	11	11	N/A
TOTAL	134	205	71	53%

* Numbers from 2000 census done by Dr. Francine A. Bradley, Cooperative Extension Poultry Specialist, UC Davis.

Detailed Census Results by Area

Peafowl tend to feed in the early mornings and late evenings at the feed source closest to their roost site. Peafowl were found to also feed in the residents' yards as well as foraging in the general area. During the day, Peafowl headed for the open areas of the four different neighborhoods.

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Portuguese Bend

The population in Portuguese Bend was observed on December 5th and December 14th, 2008. There are four distinct flocks in the area. The largest flock is on Sweetbay Road and consists of approximately 27 birds. The majority of the birds roost at 32 Sweetbay Road and 26 Sweetbay Road. The rest are scattered throughout the street from the corner of Narcissa Drive to Pepper Tree Drive.

There are two flocks on Cinnamon Lane. The first flock is at 5 & 7 Cinnamon Lane and consists of a minimum of 20 birds. The birds roost in pine trees in the front yards. This flock was difficult to count due to the pine tree's location behind a fence and the presence of other trees blocking the view of the roosting site. The second flock roosts at 11 Cinnamon Lane and consists of approximately 17 birds. Birds roost in the large pine tree in the front yard.

The fourth flock in the Portuguese Bend area is located on Lime Tree Lane and consists of approximately 11 birds. This flock was difficult to survey due to steep hills, dense brush and limited views and access. This was also the case in the previous census done by Dr. Francine Bradley in late 2000. Due to the difficulty in accessing the area, no specific roost site was observed.

All four flocks have remained in approximately the same place since 2000. The peafowl population in the Portuguese Bend area has grown by approximately 8 birds in the past eight years. It is believed that predatory animals that have access to or live in the general area have kept the population stable.

Vista Grande

The population in the Vista Grande area has tripled in the past eight years. Birds in the Vista Grande area were observed on December 7th and December 13th. The largest population of birds roost at 28318 Trailriders Drive and consists of approximately 61 birds. The birds roost in the two large pine trees between the driveways of 28318 and 28310 Trailriders Drive.

The second flock in the Vista Grande area is on Brookford Drive and consists of approximately 23 birds. In 2000 the population was 5 birds. The birds roost in the pine trees that line the street.

There are 5 single males that are in the area as well. They are at 7019 Lofty Grove, 2819 Lobrook Drive, and 28313 Plainfield Drive. These were not identified as roost sites in the 2000 census. It is believed that the population in the Vista Grande area has increased this dramatically due to the lack of predatory animals in the area.

Crestridge

The population in Crestridge was observed on December 6th and December 14th, 2008. There are 3 flocks located in the Crestridge area. In the 2000 census the largest flock was located at 5360 Middlecrest Road. During the 2008 Survey, no birds were observed actively roosting at this site.

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However, there are now two flocks on Middlecrest Road. The largest flock is at the end of the road between 5204 and 5200 Middlecrest Road. It was difficult to obtain an accurate count of this flock. The pine trees in which the birds roost are between driveways. Also, the driveways are at different elevations so there is limited views and access to the pine trees. There are a minimum of 18 birds in this flock. The second flock is located at 5325 Middlecrest Road. There is a total of 5 birds that roost in 2 pine trees at the street's edge. There are a few other birds scattered along Middlecrest Road and up and down the water drainage area.

There is a flock of 5 birds on Scottwood Drive. In all the minimum number of birds observed in the Crestridge area is 30.

Sunnyside Ridge Road

There is one flock consisting of 11 birds located at 2563 Sunnyside Ridge Road. The birds roost in a large tree in the backyard of the residence. During the day birds disperse in the neighborhood or the sloping hill that backs up to Sunnyside Ridge Road.

Bayridge Road

The Bayridge Road area was visited three times and no birds were observed.

Summary

All birds tended to feed in the early morning and late evening at the nearest feed source closest to their roost site. Birds were found to also feed in the residents' yards. During the day birds headed for open areas within the neighborhoods. Also, birds headed to the horse trails, backyards, and corral areas in Portuguese Bend. There are many trees in the spaces between the streets, however, no active roosting sites were observed in the horse trails and horse barn areas.

Due to limited access to potential peafowl habitat, the numbers presented in this report represent the MINIMUM number of birds in the requested areas. Because of the rich habitat, inaccessible areas and birds not leaving fenced yards, there are undoubtedly many more birds that were not observed and counted.

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2000 Peafowl Population Assessment

Report for the City of Rancho Palos Verdes

Francine A. Bradley, Ph.D.

Extension Poultry Specialist

University of California, Davis

Acknowledgments

The author wishes to acknowledge the assistance of the citizens and staff of Rancho Palos Verdes, Palos Verdes Estates, and San Pedro. So many individuals generously shared information and insight.

The patient and thorough field work of Avian Sciences senior, Claire Gallagher, is gratefully acknowledged.

Introduction

The Blue or Indian Peacock (*Pavo cristatus*) is native to India, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, and southern Nepal. None of the species and subspecies of peafowl are native to the Americas (Woodard, Vohra, and Denton, 1993). Visitors to the world's great museums, palaces, and estates will find peafowl. The birds may be depicted in tapestries, paintings, and sculptures or they may be truly life-like, wandering the grounds. Both forms of the bird, live and depicted, are found in such exclusive sites because of their historic association with mortals of prominence and with immortal deities. The peafowl's presence is no less limited in the great books, starting with the Bible (Bergmann, 1980).

While many may be familiar with the peafowl in art and legend, fewer may realize that in their native lands, peafowl have often been seen as sport animals or as a nuisance due to their overabundance (Wright, 1920). Thanks to the culinary introduction by Hortensius the orator, young peacocks became prized banquet fare in the Roman period (Goldsmith, 1866).

Historical Background

Locals have differing opinions as to the advent of peafowl on the Peninsula. It is generally agreed that the Vanderlip Family owned the first peafowl. At least two stories are told as to the source of those original birds. One version is that east coast friends of the Vanderlips sent the birds west. A second version holds that the first peninsula peafowl came from the peafowl flock that Elias "Lucky" Baldwin kept at his Rancho Santa Anita in what is now Arcadia. This opinion seems to be supported by references made to a letter written by Frank Vanderlip, Jr. in 1979 to the Las Candelistas charitable organization. In that letter he is said

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to have written that he recalled his father lunching with Lucky Baldwin in 1924 and his father complaining that Rancho Palos Verdes (RPV) was too quiet. Baldwin said he could fix that and the next day sent 6 peafowl from his ranch.

The definitive answer was provided by Mrs. John Vanderlip. Her father-in-law, Frank Vanderlip bought 365 acres on the peninsula around 1912. According to peninsula historian Fink (1966), Vanderlip organized a syndicate to develop the peninsula and the negotiations were finalized in the fall of 1913. He built the first house on the peninsula (the house where Mrs. Vanderlip continues to reside) in 1916. Mr. Vanderlip made trips to Santa Catalina and the Wrigley Family. Wrigley's daughter became quite fond of Frank. On one of his birthdays, she gifted him with 16 peafowl (Vanderlip, 2000). So, the source of the birds was not from the east, neither eastern Los Angeles County (Arcadia), nor the eastern United States. Rather the peafowl came from the west, across the sea from Santa Catalina.

Historians report that Mr. Vanderlip was a passionate aviculturist and that he maintained 500 avian varieties in runs (flight pens) that covered 4 acres of his property. It is further reported that in later years, all of Mr. Vanderlip's collection was gifted to the Wrigley family, forming the breeding stock for their bird farm on Catalina. It is noted, however, that the only birds not given to the Wrigleys, were the peafowl (Fink, 1966). This would make sense if the original peafowl came from Wrigleys and Catalina. The Wrigleys would have no need for peafowl stock and Mr. Vanderlip might have feared offending the family by returning what he had received as a gift from them in the first place.

Background from City Staff

Senior Administrative Analyst reported that in 1998 her office received just a few calls related to the peafowl. She said the calls escalated dramatically in 1999. Staff members have identified five regions within the city as peafowl population centers. These regions are:

Portuguese Bend

Vista Grande

Crestridge/Ridgescrest (hereafter referred to as Crestridge)

Grandview

Marymount College area

Of the five regions known to have peafowl, most complaints are received from Portuguese Bend, Vista Grande and Crestridge.

Summary of Site Visits and Concerns Expressed by Residents

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Site visits - Portuguese Bend, October 20, November 12 and 26, 2000

Residents of Portuguese Bend are representative of most RPV citizens in terms of their opinion of the peafowl. Of the residents interviewed, more considered the number of birds to be a negative, rather than positive, aspect of the community. Several individuals had high levels of frustration with the birds. One individual has purchased a dog for the sole purpose of chasing the peafowl. While a number of individuals said they had dogs to keep away the birds, all of those with large dogs admitted that after a week, the dogs gave up trying to chase the peafowl. The only resident whose dog remained very aggressive to the peafowl, was an individual with a small, feisty, and "yappy" canine. Many residents were not at home during our visits, but there were indications in their yards that they were attempting to discourage the birds (tarped fountains, spikes on patio railings, etc.). A smaller number of residents favored the status quo. These individuals enjoy the birds and do not see them as a nuisance.

There is a great deal of open space in this area. Open fields, private lanes, backyards and lots not visible from the street, all provide hiding and nesting areas for the birds. The presence of other livestock, especially horses, provides for feed spillage and open feed storage areas that provide "stolen" nutrient supplies for the peafowl.

Site visits - Vista Grande, October 20 and November 25, 2000

The residents we spoke with universally agreed that the birds were too numerous and supported relocation of some, if not all of the birds. They were frustrated with the destruction caused to their roofs, plants, and walkways. Over and over we heard of the need to replace roofs and we observed ravaged yards and walkways permanently stained and/or discolored. Homeowners have utilized a variety of techniques to discourage the birds, including yard sprinklers timed to go on during birds' peak feeding times, dogs, roof sprinklers, and shortening tree height in an attempt to reduce roosting spots. Numerous residents reported their suspicions that the birds were being fed at the corner of Eddinghill and Trailriders.

While basically a typical suburban neighborhood, the terraced nature of many of the Vista Grande properties offers a good deal of peafowl habitat. In attempts to prevent soil erosion, property owners have planted the steep hillsides with vegetation that has become quite thick. While these slopes are not easy for humans to navigate, they provide no obstacle to the peafowl in search of a nesting or hiding area.

Site visits - Crestridge, October 21, November 10 and 25, 2000

Everyone we spoke with viewed the peafowl as a problem. Methods used to discourage the birds included the aforementioned techniques, plus throwing anything and everything at the birds. We actually saw two vehicles purposefully

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attempt to hit peafowl crossing the road. While interviewing one citizen, we counted 28 peafowl in three pine trees in the individual's yard (5360 Middlecrest).

Although the lots in this region are significantly smaller than in Portuguese Bend, there are numerous protected "open spaces." That is, ravines and water drainage areas, with lush habitat.

Summary of Public Meetings

The meeting held on October 19, 2000 for the residents in the Portuguese Bend region was educational and civilized. Participants included recent (late 1990s) and long term (1950s) residents. Several of the latter group were able to recall when the peafowl were restricted to the Vanderlip Estate. Residents complained that the birds scream between April and September, destroy new plant growth and new plantings, break tile roofs, soil roofs with droppings, preclude seeding lawns (must by more expensive sod instead), make sleeping at night impossible due to birds landing on roof and screaming), prevent families from having their children play on lawn due to profuse droppings, and necessitate radical tree pruning and removal in attempts to eliminate roosting sites. Many pointed out that the City's list of suitable plants was not useful. They agreed that the peafowl might not "enjoy" certain plants, but said they would greedily "sample" most anything until they found it was not to their liking. Residents were clearly distressed by the number of birds. One individual declared she would prefer having skunks to the peafowl. She said she was forced to run her air conditioning all night, to drown out the peafowl screams. Only one couple in attendance were pro-peafowl. They said they had actually moved to RPV because of the presence of the peafowl and of wildlife such as skunks and squirrels. While these individuals said they found the birds "amusing," they admitted that the birds were a legitimate nuisance to others.

Unfortunately the meeting held on October 20, 2000 in the Silver Spur area had a very different and negative tenor. The citizens who attended this meeting were predominantly Crestridge and Vista Grande homeowners. Of the twenty plus in attendance, two individuals and one couple were very pro-peafowl. One resident said she purchased her home because of the peafowl and hates to see them thinned. Another said he likes the birds and volunteered to help with relocating some of the birds to the Wildlife Waystation. The wife in the pro-peafowl couple said she loves the birds, but thinks thinning the population is acceptable since currently people are killing them. Her husband attributed the problem to a lack of open space. The remainder of the crowd felt there were too many birds and favored thinning to complete removal. Their complaints included: noise, droppings, agitation of pets, potential for health problems, destruction of ornamentals and vegetables, birds walking into homes, people who feed the birds, and the hostility created between neighbors because of the birds (including threats of physical harm). Those disturbed by the birds have tried a variety of deterrents, including water guns with 50 feet trajectory, deer repellants, and bamboo stakes with white string around plantings. These same individuals had

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ideas about other solutions and wanted to know about the feasibility and efficacy of: collecting the eggs, egg auction, and caponization of peacocks.

Assessment of Peafowl Population Numbers, Territories, and Hot Spots

Portuguese Bend

The populations were surveyed on November 12 and 26, 2000. Four distinct flocks were identified and described. The potential for a fifth flock exists. The largest flock is Clovetree Place/Cinnamon Lane. The 34 birds roost in the pines at 11 Cinnamon Lane, at the juncture of Clovetree Place and Cinnamon Lane (see Figures A1,2,3, 4,5,6, and 7 in Appendix A). The resident at 11 Cinnamon stocks feeders with chicken feed for the peafowl. During the morning hours the birds feed in an open pasture and at 3 Clovetree (see Fig. A8), on their way to 6 Clovetree (Fig. A9&10). At 6 Clovetree they preen on the back patio of the residence.

The flock at Sweetbay Rd. is the second largest. At anyone time 19 fowl were observed near 30 and 31 Sweetbay Fig. A 11,12, &13). A few of these birds may be strays from Clovetree/Cinnamon, but at least 15 reside predominantly along Sweetbay. Daytime activity for the birds includes rather random dispersal along Sweetbay towards Peppertree Lane. The birds return down Sweetbay in an equally random fashion during the afternoon. The birds roost in the large pines at 32 Sweetbay (Fig. A14&15).

Approximately 10 birds make up the flock on Limetree Lane. It was difficult to survey the birds in this region due to the steep hills, thick underbrush, and limited views of residences Fig. A16&17). No preferred roosting site was observed.

The flock at Thyme Place is made up of 8 birds. Thyme Place begins at the juncture with 5 Cinnamon Lane. Birds were seen roosting in the large pines at 5 Cinnamon. They roost in the eucalyptus behind the terminus of Thyme Place (Fig. A18&19) . The residents at 8 Thyme Place (Fig. A20) do not specifically feed peafowl, but feed songbirds. They admitted that the peafowl find plenty to eat in their yard.

A total of 9 birds was observed feeding in a pasture at Vanderlip and Narcissa (Fig. A21) during the first count. The birds could not be found during the second count and it was suspected that they were up Vanderlip Rd., a private road to which we did not have access.

The Portuguese Bend flocks tended to stay in their own sections of the region. The counts made on the two dates were nearly identical, differing by one or two birds. Not including the numbers for the presumed Vanderlip Rd flock, we counted 67 birds. Given the abundant habitat present for hiding and the areas we could not enter, it is our opinion that there are 70-80 birds or more in Portuguese Bend.

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Vista Grande

The populations were surveyed on November 25, 2000. Two main flocks were observed. The larger flock, estimated at 24 , centers its activity around Eddinghill and Trailriders. The birds in this flock roost in the large pines along Trailriders Drive. More precisely, they roost at the property line of 28310 and 28318 Trailriders (see pines on the right hand side of Fig. A22), near the intersection of Trailriders and Ambergate Drives. During the day they move down the hill, divide into smaller flocks, and then reassemble at dusk. The birds frequent the residences along Ambergate, Larkvale, Hedgewood (Fig. A23), Eddinghill, Trailriders, Blythewood, and Golden Meadow Drives. The most activity centers around Eddinghill and Trailriders. The suspicion of residents that there are feeding stations at Eddinghill and Trailriders is probably accurate. The birds seem more attached to this spot, for no apparent reason, than any other part of the neighborhood.

The smaller flock of approximately 5 peafowl, roosts in the large pines on Brookford Drive (see pines at rear of Fig. A24). During the morning the birds make their way down Brookford Drive, perching on roofs and balconies (Fig. A25&26). The birds spend the rest of the day up the hill in the backyards of Braidwood Drive homes.

Crestridge

The populations were surveyed on November 10 and 25, 2000. The largest flock in this neighborhood consists of 28 birds that roost in 3 pine trees at 5360 Middlecrest (see pines at rear of Fig. A27). In the morning the birds leave the roosting area and meander down the hill. They either head directly down the road or cross the ravine and follow the crest of the hill. Most morning activity is centered around 5350 Middlecrest (Fig. A28,29, & 30) until 9:30 AM. After that the birds move (Fig. A31,32, & 33) to 5330 Middlecrest (Fig. A34). After 11 AM the number of observable peafowl decreases. They are probably preening and sleeping in area backyards. A vehicular survey revealed that this flock divides into three during the day. These smaller groupings consisted of 13 peafowl at 5350 Middlecrest (driveway, roof, and landscaping); 9 peafowl at 5417 Middlecrest (front yard); and 2 peafowl on roof admiring their reflections in the windows of 28879 Crestridge (Fig. A35 & 36). In the late afternoon (~3:35 - 4:35 PM) 18 birds can be observed in yard of 5350 Middlecrest (patio, fountain, vegetation, roof, front door). By 4:45 PM the three groups have merged back into one large , loose flock of 29 located between 5330 and 5350 Middlecrest. Several residents reported that the birds are being fed at 5330 Middlecrest. In addition, there are two peacocks in the Middlecrest area that remain separate from the large flock in the day and appear to roost at a different location.

There is a flock of 8 birds in the Scotwood Drive area. In all, 38 birds were counted in Crestridge.

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Grandview

No site visits were made to the Grandview area. Only one complaint about peafowl in this area has been registered with City Staff. That one resident on Lightfoot Place reported seeing birds for a few years, but has seen more since August 2000.

Marymount College area

No site visits were made to the Marymount College area. Again, only one resident registered a complaint about peafowl. The resident is from Seaclaire Drive.

Spread of Peafowl on the Palos Verdes Peninsula

Pre-1913 there is no evidence that any peafowl were on the Palos Verdes Peninsula. Peafowl are not native to this continent, so there would have been no indigenous birds and there is no documentation of any being kept by the area's early residents. The period between 1913 and 1937 encompasses the time that Frank A. Vanderlip was involved with the Palos Verdes Peninsula. Sometime in this period, he became the owner of the area's first peafowl.

Long term residents of Portuguese Bend indicate that in 1960 the only peafowl on the Peninsula were at the Vanderlip Estate. Residents of equal tenure in the Crestridge area, report that in 1960 there were peafowl at what they refer to as the cut flower farm at the Shultz Ranch. Mr. Stephen Shultz (2000) has indicated that the flower farm was actually operated by tenants, the first of those being the Yoshioka Family. Mr. Shultz points out that neither his family, nor the tenants, "kept peafowl," but rather that the flower farm provided a "walk through breakfast and lunch" for the birds coming down Johns Canyon Road.

One Portuguese Bend resident recalled that sometime after 1960, the Mayor of PVE, Roessler, wanted to have peafowl in his city. H.F.B. Roessler was Mayor of PVE from 1940-1965 (Heslenfeld, 2000), so it can be assumed that the peafowls' advent to PVE occurred between 1960 and 1965.

By 1976 the peafowl were in the Portuguese Bend Community. Vista Grande residents remember no peafowl in their region in the 1960s, but many remember the advent of a few peafowl by 1985-90. One resident remembers seeing the occasional bird in 1974.

In 2000 San Pedro residents, in the area northeast of Palos Verdes Shores Golf Course and southeast of San Pedro Park, report that there is a flock of 12 peafowl on Grandeur Drive. They indicate that birds are seen in the canyon above Mermaid Drive. A three year resident on Grenadier in the South Shores area of San Pedro says peafowl were present when he arrived. He feels the numbers have increased recently.

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From the little written history on the topic of the peafowl, supplemented with the oral history we were able to collect, our theory as to the spread of peafowl on the Peninsula is as follows. Prior to Frank A. Vanderlip's arrival on the Peninsula in 1913, the area had no peafowl. Sometime between 1913 and 1927, Vanderlip acquired the peafowl. An accomplished aviculturalist, Mr. Vanderlip managed all his birds. It is recorded that he had acres of flight pens on his property. Before his death, he sent his avian collection, all but the peafowl, to the Wrigleys on Santa Catalina. Undoubtedly his heirs had less interest in the birds than did Vanderlip. It was probably after his death, that the birds started to roam. The birds' territory first appears to have expanded into Johns Canyon (circa. 1960). It is alleged that PVE Mayor Roessler wanted to have peafowl in his city; we guess that he had some peafowl physically moved to PVE in the 1960-65 period. From PVE the birds had an easy trip to Vista Grande, where they were first seen ~ 1974. Long term residents of Portuguese Bend, report that aside from the peafowl at the Vanderlips, they did not see any birds until 1978. Those birds most likely came directly down from the Vanderlip estate. Why did it take so long for the birds to make the short trip? Our only thought is that their leaving the estate might have coincided with a decrease in attention by the caretaker(s) at the Estate (possibly, a case of aging and decrease in activity). After 1988 the birds arrived in Crestridge; this was probably an expansion of the birds that had taken up residence in the Johns Canyon area. Peafowl are now in the South Shores region of San Pedro. It seems most likely that they spread from Portuguese Bend.

Communications with Staff at Adjacent Municipalities

In the late 1970s/early 1980s the City of Palos Verdes Estates (PVE) realized that they had a peafowl problem. The City Council held numerous meetings on the subject and decided to zone two areas for peafowl. Those two regions are Lunada Bay and Malaga Cove. The number of peafowl to reside in each area was set at 22 birds, with no minimum number specified. The specific document was drafted by former City Manager, Gordon Seaburg around 1982.

Originally PVE contracted with the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (SPCA) to annually canvas the populations. If an area's population exceeded the maximum number, the city would trap birds on city property. They used cage traps with cat food and relocated the birds to a hill in PV.

PVE staff eventually found a couple of reputable recipients, ranchers in Hemet and Paso Robles. They can relocate somewhere under 100 birds to these locations. One current problem for PVE is that the SPCA no longer offers field services to count animals. County Animal Control has that charge, but lacks the resources to do it. PVE is considering having the Boy Scouts count the birds. No counts have been done in four years.

PVE residents estimate that there are currently 60 birds in Lunada Bay and 40 in Malaga Cove. Staff verified 30 birds in one resident's yard. PVE police officers

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currently do the trapping, still using wire cage traps and cat food. They report that it is slow and inefficient. They are constantly trapping and trap 2-3 birds per week.

PVE police have trouble with some residents disrupting the trapping process. They let birds out of the traps or scare birds away from the traps. City reports numerous law suits over the years that have revolved around the birds (Dreiling, 2000).

Lynn Carlin with the San Pedro District Office of the City of Los Angeles, confirms that at least one resident has called to complain about peafowl in 2000. This is the first complaint received, at least in the last three years (2000).

Peninsula residents and RPV staff believe that peafowl are protected in Rolling Hills Estates (RHE). I reviewed a document provided by their Community Services Director, Andy Clark, to RPV staff. Highlighted in the RHE Municipal Code was 9.04.060 Wild birds - Protection. I am puzzled if this is actually the basis used for the "hands off" attitude with respect to the peafowl in RHE. As repeatedly stated in this report, peafowl are NOT wild birds. In my opinion, the wording of this municipal code does not apply to peafowl. I was unable to speak with Mr. Clark, as he was on holiday.

The City of Rolling Hills (RH) does not have any ordinance protecting the peafowl. However, residents are encouraged not to interact with the birds and the City circulates materials intended to help residents who do not like the birds, to discourage the birds from visiting their property. I was unable to discuss the matter with the RH City Manager, but he did communicate with RPV City Manager Evans and indicated that they do not think they have a peafowl problem.

Peafowl's Current Impact

Property damage attributed to the peafowl includes: roofs, vegetation, autos, and pavers/brick walkways. We observed countless yards where plantings were decimated and some where all landscaping had been killed. We also saw the permanent stains and discoloration on walkways and brick paths. Peafowl were frequently seen on roofs and we heard report after report of residents having to replace roofs. We were also told of damage to auto paint jobs. It is common knowledge that the birds can destroy roofs and their penchant for gazing at their reflection in a windshield is also well known. We have no reason to doubt residents' claims of roof and auto damage.

Erosion is a well known problem along the Southern California coast. We saw significant evidence in Crestridge and Portuguese Bend of erosion caused by the birds. Erosion was common in areas that they used as "trails," or in areas where they scavenged for food.

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Nuisance complaints revolved around noise, fecal material, and emotional distress. Peafowl gained popularity on estates and ranchos, not only for their plumage, but for the early warning call they gave when strangers approached. Unfortunately, their scream is made throughout the breeding season, whether or not human intruders are present. Peafowl are large birds and consequently, their droppings are large. Organic evidence of the birds was seen all over RPV - on roofs, patios, decks, lawns, and walkways. The emotional distress that the birds cause some residents is real.

Traffic disruption definitely occurs because of the birds crossing public roadways. Traffic stoppage at the Eddinghill and Trailriders intersection is not uncommon.

Several residents reported that the presence of peafowl in a neighborhood, decreases the property value in that neighborhood. We were unable to speak to any real estate agents who could confirm that for us. Certainly for a homeowner who does not like the birds, what s/he feels is the value of the property would decline if peafowl are present. We did hear of residents who sold their homes, accepting defeat in their battles with the birds. However, we also heard directly from residents who said they specifically bought in RPV because of the presence of peafowl and other animal life.

We heard numerous accounts of renters leaving RPV because they could not cope with the peafowl. We have no reason to doubt these accounts. If actual property owners sell and move because of the birds, there would be even more reason for someone without equity in the property to relocate.

The presence of the birds definitely contributes to neighborhood discord. Unfortunately, we were first hand witnesses to most acrimonious behavior when neighbors on opposite sides of the issue were in the same area. Homeowners frequently were reluctant to express their opinions, for fear of retribution from neighbors with opposing views.

Availability of Adoptive Homes

At one of the community meetings, several residents showed support for relocating trapped peafowl to the Wildlife Waystation. Located at 14831 Little Tujunga Canyon Rd. in the Angeles National Forest, Wildlife Waystation has provided homes for lions, tigers, primates, bears, foxes, exotic birds, raptors, wolves, llamas, coyotes, native wildlife, and other animals.

In researching the facility, I found out that the California Department of Fish and Game (CDF&G) temporarily closed Wildlife Waystation on April 8, 2000. Several violations were alleged and the facility was prohibited from taking in any new animals. On December 7, 2000 I visited with Lt. Marvin Ehee of CDF&G. He told me that the Waystation had numerous problems, but that the more serious problems have been corrected. Evidently, the main violation was discharging animal waste into a canyon and stream. Lt. Ehee felt that within the next 2

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weeks, that would no longer be a problem. He anticipated that the Waystation would get their Conditional Rehabilitation Permit back on January 1, 2001. When I questioned him about the Waystation's ability to provide homes for the peafowl, he replied that the Waystation did not need any special permits for the peafowl since they are domestic animals. He said the only concern would be the contribution to overall numbers and the accompanying waste production.

On December 13, 2000 I spoke with Martine Collette, the founder of Wildlife Waystation. She said they had taken birds from the Peninsula before when Los Angeles County SPCA did the trapping. She reported that the Waystation is still under a cease and desist order. When that is lifted, they would have no problem taking the birds.

In addition, we located a poultry fancier in Riverside County who currently breeds peafowl. She has empty flight pens and would be willing to provide homes for more birds. We also have entree to 4-H poultry families in Southern California who are able to provide homes for additional birds.

When working with other municipalities, we have experienced success in locating suitable adoptive homes, by running advertisements in certain publications. Those responding are interviewed to ascertain their bird experience and ability to adopt the fowl we are relocating.

Management Plan

Our actual bird counts were 67 (Portuguese Bend), plus 29 (Vista Grande), plus 38 (Crestridge), for a total of 134 peafowl. We estimate that there are probably 70-80 in Portuguese Bend. Although we did not count in Grandview or Marymount College area, to have complaints, we would estimate that there are a minimum of 5 birds in each area. Including those birds likely to exist, but not actually counted, the total increases to 157. This should still be seen as a conservative estimate. As mentioned before, the Peninsula is rich in habitat that provides excellent hiding spaces. In addition, some birds may never have emerged from private backyards during the periods of our visits and therefore, were never counted.

Usually a much stronger term than "nuisance" is used to describe the peafowl. However, the legal definition of nuisance, an activity causing unreasonable and substantial interference with another's quiet use and enjoyment of property (Hamilton, 1992), seems to describe the birds' relationship with many residents of RPV. It should be noted that according to the Los Angeles County Code - Animals, it is a misdemeanor for the owner of an animal to fail to control his/her animal. That includes allowing the animal to run at large on any street, public place, etc. and allowing the animal to enter in and remain on the private property of another (see Title 10.32.040). Therefore, if anyone claimed ownership of the peafowl on the Peninsula, that individual would be in violation of the County Code and would be required to properly control the birds on his/her property. It is

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peculiar, that just because no one claims ownership of the birds, RPV property owners have inflicted upon their property damages that they would normally be protected against.

Why is there a problem? There are several answers. The first is that no one is responsible for the birds and no one can nor attempts to control their movements. In addition, most of the areas where complaints are common, are neighborhoods where all property is either private homes or public thoroughfares. Therefore, since the birds belong to no one, they are constantly trespassing. As mentioned in the Historical Background section of this report, peafowl have traditionally been maintained by the wealthy with large estates upon which the birds can wander. In their native lands, overpopulation of the birds has been addressed by hunting.

Residents' suggestions to control the population by use of the following methods would be ill advised and/or illegal. Caponization of the peacocks would involve a surgical procedure to remove the testes of each male. In addition to being labor intensive, this would result in males that no longer have male plumage. Addition of a male sterilant to feed should not be considered. It would be impossible to control what creatures consumed the feed and what predators consumed the subsequently feminized peacocks. This tactic could have disastrous consequences relative to other animals in the food chain. At least one resident has offered to have the peafowl relocated to her/his property. Due to the birds' penchant for wandering, this would not be an appropriate plan, unless that individual has vast, completely confined flight pens.

What is an appropriate number of birds for RPV? In terms of bird welfare and private property rights, the peafowl should not be wandering at will. It is recognized that a good number of RPV residents view the birds as a community attribute and would be adamantly opposed to their removal. If complete removal were approved, could it be achieved? It would take a tremendous outlay of funds and people power to attempt complete removal of the birds. Given that most complaints come from Portuguese Bend, Vista Grande, and Crestridge, reduction in flock size in all three areas should be pursued. Specifically the largest flocks at Clovete Place/Cinnamon Lane (34 birds) and Sweetbay (19) in Portuguese Bend, the flock at Eddinghill and Trailriders (24 birds) in Vista Grande, and the Middlecrest flock (28 birds) in Crestridge should be targeted (Appendix B). Recognizing that 1 unwanted peafowl in a private yard is a legitimate nuisance, removal of as many birds as can be trapped and relocated is advised. Preference should be given to removal of the peahens. Since one peahen can lay 30 eggs per season, the potential for one pair of peafowl to quickly repopulate an area is great.

Some residents expressed concerns about the legality of trapping the birds. Again, these are not native birds. They are domestic fowl. The appropriate authorities have been contacted and there are no statutes that would apply. We have successfully trapped and relocated numerous peafowl in the past, with no

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harm to the birds. Any having concerns relative to this issue should be referred to California Penal Code, Sec. 597b - General Animal Cruelty.

Excellent trapping sites have been located in all three areas with large peafowl populations. Residents have volunteered their yards as trapping sites. Trapping should begin as soon as possible, preferably before the spring breeding season.

Prior to trapping any birds, adoptive homes would need to be confirmed. Any new adoptive homes would need to be investigated. It is suggested that all those accepting birds, fill out an "adoption form" that the City can keep on file. This will help address the concerns of residents who feel the birds will be trapped and killed.

A long term management plan for the Palos Verdes Peninsula peafowl must include several components. All residents need to cooperate in terms of removing items that will attract the birds. These include, but are not limited to, pet food left outside, bird feeders, and exposed livestock feed. Any efforts to locate nests and render eggs unhatchable would have positive population control results. Eggs should not merely be removed from the nests, as this will only encourage the peahen to lay additional eggs. Rather, the hatchability of the eggs should be reduced to zero. This can be achieved by inserting a long nail into the egg, adding contents, removing nail and returning egg to the nest.

There is no question that routine trapping will be required. We suggest that the city sponsor the construction of the first traps and trapping. Neighbors can observe the proper way to humanely trap and catch birds. Birds should be relocated to approved adoptive homes. Residents whose neighborhoods are not selected for initial trapping, may construct their own traps. This demonstration model technique is the typical training method used by University of California Cooperative Extension to introduce new practices.

Finally, all municipalities on the Peninsula must work together. It is futile for one city to attempt to reduce bird numbers, if an adjacent municipality does not also have a complementary plan.

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