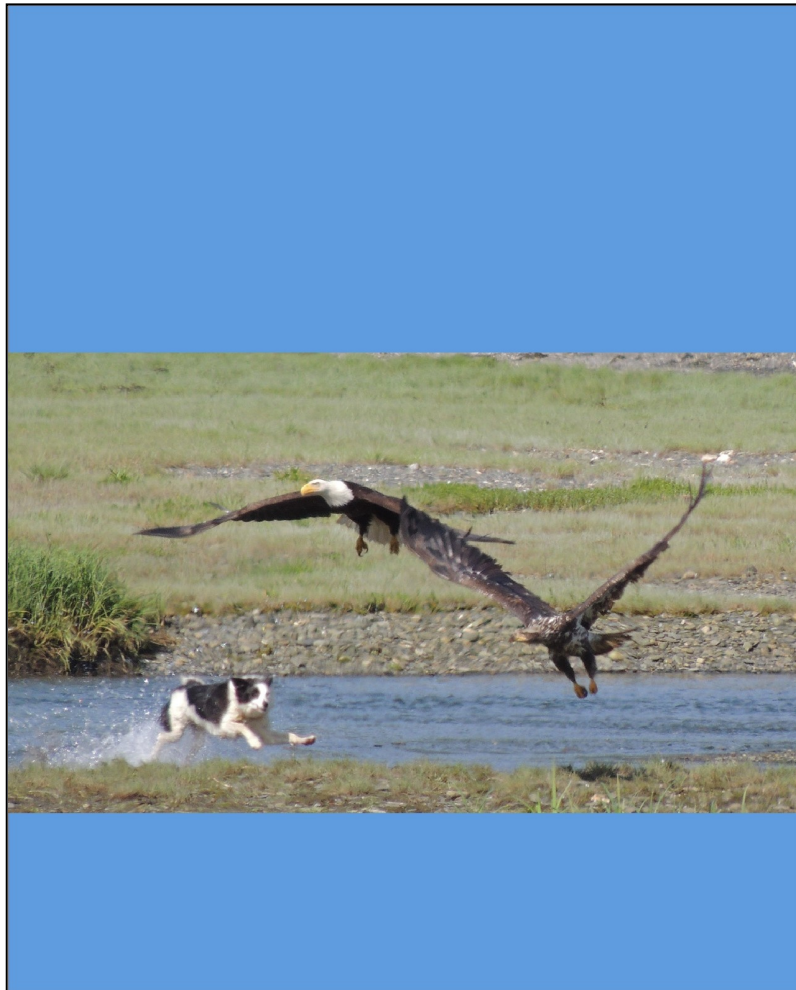


# Dogs, Wildlife and Trails



Juneau Audubon Society (JAS) advocates responsible dog ownership and adherence to local, state and federal laws relating to wildlife, pets and environmental quality.

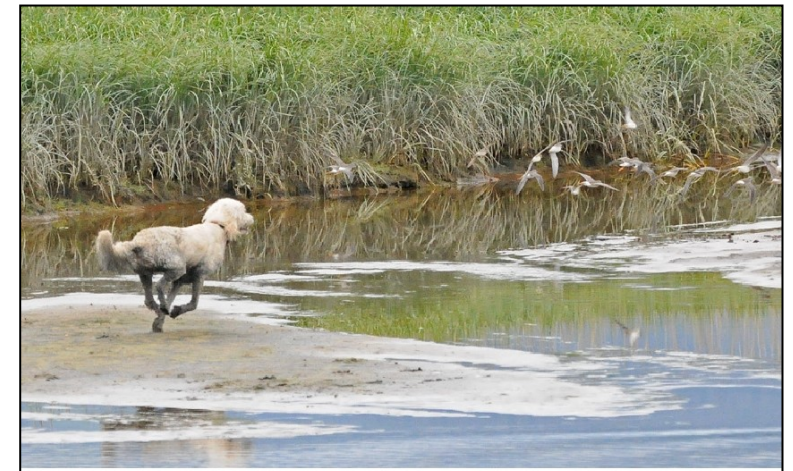
## Local Issues

- Dogs running off-trail disrupt birds feeding on the Mendenhall Wetlands (including Fish Creek). The Mendenhall Wetlands complex is a globally recognized Important Bird area. Thousands of waterfowl and shorebirds depend on this migratory stopover to refuel for their journeys.
- Loose dogs harass birds on Eagle Beach, a heavily used feeding area for shorebirds and gulls.
- Mendenhall Lake shore (summer only) is a nesting area for Arctic terns and 5 other species of ground-nesting birds. Loose dogs are often observed. There is the potential to flush sitting birds from nests, causing eggs or nestlings to chill and be vulnerable to predation, and some dogs could attack flightless young birds.
- Birdwatchers often are unable to fully enjoy trails, recreational areas and refuges when loose dogs scare the wildlife they are trying to watch. Most public trails are multi-use; groups should be considerate of one another.
- Excessive dog waste may contaminate the local environment, including sports fields, children's play areas and salmon streams. Diseases from dogs can spread to both humans and wild mammals.

## Be Part of The Solution

### Please

- ♦ Never let your pet approach wild animals.
- ♦ Don't let your dog bark at, growl at, shake water on, sniff or jump up on other trail users.
- ♦ Clean up what your dog leaves behind, *every time*.



## For More Information

City and Borough of Juneau ordinances prohibit wildlife harassment and require handlers to clean up after their dogs in specified areas. See web page :

[www.juneau.org/clerk/notices/documents/Ord2009-12-d-Final\\_Animal\\_Control\\_Protection.pdf](http://www.juneau.org/clerk/notices/documents/Ord2009-12-d-Final_Animal_Control_Protection.pdf)

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## Questions and Answers

My dog doesn't catch the birds she chases. What's the problem?

If there was only one dog a day in an area it might be a minor energy loss for a bird. But popular local trails are used by hundreds of people, many with dogs, daily. The additive affect is the concern. The line between survival and starvation is thin for wild animals. Most shorebirds for example, have stopped here after flying thousands of miles. They will leave and fly hundreds more to their nesting grounds. If they have not sufficiently refueled and added fat reserves here, they may perish on the next leg of their migratory journey. They already face habitat loss, pollution, why add another hardship?

What about other areas and times of the year?

Any natural area is going to be habitat for wildlife species year round. Wetlands are particularly important; but that does not mean that other places are *not* important. Trail users should think about their impact on wildlife. Bringing a dog that leaves the trail to chase animals increases your "disturbance footprint." Canines' keen senses help them find wildlife that you may not have noticed when you chose to let the dog go off-leash. Ground nesting birds are particularly vulnerable, as are fawns and juvenile animals in general. Winter may seem safer, but animals that winter in Alaska have an increased need to save their energy to fight off cold and hunger.

Doesn't dog waste just break down and improve the soil?

No. Run off of nitrogen rich waste can be bad for waterways, including salmon streams. Feces contain bacteria that can cause water contamination. Parasites, such as *giardia* and hookworm, and diseases can stay in the environment and infect both wildlife and people.

Why does my dog growl at people carrying tripods?

Dogs naturally want to protect their owners, and key in on anyone who behaves a little differently. Carrying equipment, or even dressing in heavy clothes, can set a normally friendly dog off. But it is still the responsibility of the owners, not the other trail users, to control their dogs.

What is so special about the Mendenhall Wetlands?

Large salt marshes coastal meadows are a rare habitat in Southeast Alaska, and the world for that matter. This type of habitat provides the richest source of food production of plants, insects, and small fish that is important to many species of local sea life including salmon. Shorebirds heading to the arctic target this special type of habitat to refuel on their epic journeys. (See more information at <http://iba.audubon.org/iba/profileReport.do?siteld=1090> )

What is Juneau Audubon Society's position on dogs?

JAS encourages education and enforcement by local, state and federal entities to address pet-related issues.

JAS recognizes that dog owners need to exercise their pets, and supports the concept of a dog park and other designated areas for unleashed dogs. Many of our members own and love dogs.

**JAS is not campaigning for any change of law or policy, rather compliance to current laws, and increased consideration for our wild neighbors and the people who watch wildlife.**

