



VILLAGE OF HASTINGS-ON-HUDSON

IMPORTANT: PLEASE READ DEER IMMUNOCONTRACEPTION PROJECT TO OCCUR DURING MARCH

Fellow residents,

During the month of March, we will begin the deer immunocontraception study in Hastings. This is a study that will examine whether immunocontraception can effectively control and bring down our deer population over time. This letter describes how this will affect you and what you might see as it unfolds around the village and near your home.

This effort will consist of two trained Humane Society professionals (their names are Rick and Kayla) who will be darting deer with anesthetics in various parks in town, include Hillside. The deer will be sedated by the drugs and then be injected with the actual immunocontraceptive drug, have their ears tagged, and then released.

We are going to ask that anyone walking their dogs in the Hillside park strictly obey the leash laws during the month of March: during the duration of this study, we do not want the dogs spooking the deer or interfering in the darting. Leash laws will be immediately enforced (no warnings).

1) Feeding

The Humane Society professionals deploy a barrel-like device filled with corn that will automatically dispense the feed at certain times during the day. This device will be unmistakable should you encounter it. The feeder will quickly habituate the deer, who are quite hungry by this point in the winter, to congregate for feeding. Please do not disturb the feeders and please keep your pets away from them as their scent may discourage the deer.

2) Restricted Park access

On those days when the darting will actually happen, we will restrict access to those parts of Hillside where the darting will occur. There will be clearly marked yellow tape and signs and possibly volunteers, village employees, or police officers who will be waving off dog walkers and the curious. Please respect the tape and the restricted access. The entire park will not be off limits. This may be for a couple of hours or it may be for much of the day. It will depend upon the success we are having in that location.

3) Darting

The darting professionals will wait until they have a clean shot at a still deer when the dart will hit the flank of the deer. This typically happens at a distance of 25-35 feet. Upon impact, the dart will discharge the anesthetic into the deer and remain imbedded in the deer because of barbs in the dart needle. The deer will typically bolt at this point, and may run some distance from the site of the darting. The professionals will not pursue the deer for several minutes as

they will want to give the anesthetic five or ten minutes to take effect. If the deer is out of sight, the Humane Society professionals will use a radio receiver to home in on the radio beacon that is a part of the dart still imbedded in the deer. If you see a man or woman in an orange reflective vest walking through the woods or down the street holding such a device over their head, you will know what you are looking at. Very occasionally, the dart may become dislodged. While the Humane Society professionals will do their level best to retrieve the dart, on the off chance that they don't but that you encounter it, please do not touch it but instead, call the police (478-2344) and they will vector someone in to retrieve it.

4) Deer treatment

The deer will eventually become sedated and lie down. This may be in the woods, and it also may be (depending upon how far the deer ran) even in your front or backyard. Deer, while sedated, are not predictable animals. PLEASE DO NOT APPROACH THE ANIMAL. It may not be fully sedated, may rise up and startle. If you do not have the Humane Society professional within sight, please phone the police and report what you have found (478-2344). The Humane Society professional will be there in a matter of minutes to process the deer. The professionals will tag both ears with very large and visible tags, carry out some measurements, and then inject the deer with the immunocontraceptive. The Humane Society professional will remain near the site until the deer is conscious and ambulatory. At no point in this process should you approach the team: they are working and the deer may come to unexpectedly.

5) Deer release

The deer will amble off with its new ear-tags and hopefully not calve new fawns in the subsequent two years. It may decide to lie down a little later and sleep off the anesthetic. Do not worry about the deer: that is normal and it will be fine.

This study will progress through the full month of March. You're likely to encounter Rick or Kayla throughout the month in their orange vests, possibly carrying darting gear or their radio antennas. They'll be pleased to explain what they are up to. Remember that they have a job to do and please allow them the time to do it. Their primary concern is your safety, and they will let deer walk by if they think there is any remote risk to resident or wayward pet. But we want their effort to be successful and ask that you **respect the yellow tape and signs, respect requests to remain at a distance, keep your distance from deer (even if they look sedated) and keep your dog on a leash.**

The website (hastingsgov.org) has more information if you want to read more about the project. You may email me at the email below if you have questions or ask Rick or Kayla if you encounter them.

Sincerely,

Peter Swiderski
Mayor
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