

The Urban Wildlife Institute: Exploring Chicago's Wildlife

Dr. Seth Magle

Director, Urban Wildlife Institute, Lincoln Park Zoo

The Lincoln Park Zoo founded the Urban Wildlife Institute (UWI) in 2008, with the goal of conducting science to minimize conflict between humans and wildlife in cities around the world. UWI has since created a massive and unprecedented urban wildlife biodiversity monitoring network throughout the Chicagoland region. We will briefly summarize some of our findings on Chicago's mammal, bat, arthropod, and bird populations, with special emphasis on our database of over 200,000 images of urban wildlife captured using motion-triggered cameras. Our research has not only uncovered new information about how urban animals select habitat and persist within urban landscapes, but has also helped connect the people of Chicago to the natural world through educational outreach and citizen science initiatives such as Partners in Fieldwork, and Chicago Wildlife Watch. UWI is working to ensure humans and wildlife can coexist in cities around the world, and also to remind growing urban populations that urban areas are ecosystems that are just as capable of inspiring wonder as the wildest jungles.