

# TIPS For Dealing With URBAN WILDLIFE

Wildlife Rescue & Rehabilitation, Inc.

## *Cap chimneys.*

All chimneys should be capped to prevent entry by wild birds and mammals. The average cost of capping a chimney is far less than the average cost of removing trapped wildlife. Chimney caps also prevent sparks from leaving the chimney, and are therefore a safety device as well.

## *Urban wildlife have set up housekeeping. What to do.*

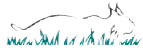
Don't panic. Try thinking and planning. Wild animals are not really smarter than we are. It just seems that way. Look to see how many raccoons, opossums, squirrels, etc there are and where their den is and where they got in. What hours do they keep as they go about their daily and nightly affairs. Is the intruder a mother with babies? Exclusion techniques should not be implemented until you are absolutely certain that ALL ANIMALS are out of the space to be blocked off. If young are present, please wait until they are old enough for their mother to walk them out and then secure the entry points. Otherwise, the young will starve and you will have other unpleasant problems to solve. The babies begin to go out with mom in a few to several weeks.

## *When not to live trap.*

Most species of native wildlife have their young from early spring (March) to early fall (September - October). During this period there may be babies who are entirely dependent upon their mother for food and protection. Any action that prevents the mother from caring for her young will result in suffering for her and a slow death for the babies. Since the family will not stay forever, or even for a very long time (a month or two, perhaps less), it is better to wait until the family vacates in the early fall, and then take action that will prevent the same thing from happening again. Be aware that live trapping and relocating any wild animal only creates a vacancy for more to move in. Exclusion methods and some degree of tolerance are ultimately more successful and lasting.

## *Attics and crawl spaces.*

If a wild animal has gained entrance to a crawl space or attic, close all but one point of entry. To determine which hole is being used as a point of entry or exit, cover all holes with a piece of plastic or stuff a rag or ball of paper into it. If it is gone the next day, the hole is being used. To encourage mammals to leave on their own, leave a repellent in the form of ammonia bags (cloth bags filled with ammonia-soaked rags) or place a radio in the space with the dial turned to a rock station at high volume. You can also try shining a bright light into their home.



### *What you can do to prevent problems from occurring.*

The two most effective and humane solutions are to secure your garbage so that you do not attract and feed wildlife and to secure your home so they cannot find convenient shelter. Garbage cans are to raccoons and opossums what bird feeders are to cardinals and doves.



### *Securing refuse: Making an animal-proof garbage can.*

When you adapt your garbage can, remember that wild animals are intelligent and agile, but they are not stronger than a human. If you cannot pull the cover away bare-handed, you will have defeated any effort made by animals to gain entry. Your garbage can should have a lid that fits tightly. If this isn't possible, you might try hooking a bungee cord from one side of the can to the other to secure the lid. Or you could try placing a large rock on top of the lid to secure it. Usually raccoons gain entry into garbage cans by tipping them over. For this reason it helps to have the cans stored in racks, or tied in an upright position. Put your garbage out the morning of pick-up instead of in the evening. Most native wildlife are nocturnal and thus usually feed at night. If you live near a restaurant, ask the manager to ensure that the refuse bin lid is closed nightly and leave them a copy of this brochure.



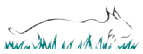
### *Exclusions techniques.*

Animal control experts have come to realize the importance of securing entry points in preventing many chronic wildlife problems. Most exclusion techniques are humane, as well as long lasting and cost effective. Make sure there are no animals living inside before using any exclusion technique. Call Wildlife Rescue at (210) 698-1709 if you have any additional questions.



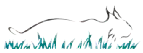
### *How to secure your home.*

It is natural for wildlife to seek shelter. Caves, hollow logs, and large abandoned bird's nests suffice in the wild, but in the city the substitutes are attics, crawl spaces or chimneys for the same purpose. Animals are intelligent, but they should not be expected to know that they are "trespassing". After securing these areas, pay close attention during the day as well as at night, for any sounds of scratching or whining. This would indicate that an animal has been trapped inside and you will need to immediately give the animal an exit.



### *Check your home.*

Check porches, decks, sheds and garages for holes or weak areas and securely seal them off. Regularly check the roof and eaves and block all holes using galvanized sheet metal. On open vents, use rustproof screening. Make sure there are no animals living inside at the time. Keep garage and shed doors shut at night. If an animal goes into a garage or shed, simply leave the door open for a few hours after dark and he or she will leave.



### *Trim branches.*

Raccoons and other wildlife may gain entry to your roof via trees or branches that extend to your roof or slightly above it, remember they can jump short distances. keep larger branches trimmed so they do not come within reach of your house.



### *Install bright yard lights.*

Use a minimum of a 100-watt bulb for every 15 square yards of yard space to discourage nocturnal animals.



### *Once the animals have left.*

Once you are sure that all animals have left, douse the area with bleach, or dust with naphtha flakes (the active ingredient in mothballs) to change the smell of the area. Then close the final point of entry. A sprinkling of flour at the entry will allow you to examine traffic patterns.

Once all of the animals are out of the space, the hole through which they gained entry can be sealed with sheet metal or other durable materials. Remember that preventative measures and regular inspections of your home will eliminate most problems with wildlife.



### *How can I protect my garden?*

Protecting a garden from raccoons, skunks, and opossums can be more difficult than protecting your home. Sometimes raccoons roll up new sod in search of June bug larvae and other invertebrates. The only precaution you can take is to drive long wire pins or wooden stakes into the sod to hold it down until it takes root. However, keep in mind that a serious June bug problem may ultimately do more damage than the raccoons. June bug larvae may damage the roots of the grass and may kill the lawn. In rural areas, low voltage electric fencing may help protect gardens and crops from raccoon damage.



### *Living with urban wildlife.*

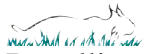
Wild animals explore, sniff, and climb about in a variety of places, from remote forest and desert habitat to the noisy, flashing, hard-edged confines of bustling cities. They are opportunists who may dine on such natural fare as frogs, crayfish, rats, mice, roaches, birds' eggs and wild fruit. But they are also content to enjoy a delectable dinner scrounged from the rich variety of garbage found in city and suburban settings. In fact, the city is not Garden of Eden for wild animals. Their natural desire to dine upon what is available and to take up housing that, at first look and sniff, may seem quite suitable, can earn them the wrath of humans who unintentionally provide the food and housing in the first place. Wildlife can't cause problems unless people allow them to do so. Instead of blaming them we should work together to find solutions satisfactory to both humans and wildlife.



### *Orphaned Wildlife.*

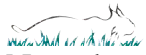
Many raccoons, squirrels, and birds are orphaned when the tree in which their nest is located is removed. Please do not cut down a tree or demolish an abandoned building in the spring or early summer, until you are sure that it contains no nesting raccoons or any other wildlife.

If you do find an orphaned baby wild animal, call Wildlife Rescue. In most cases, we will advise you to leave him outside near the area that you found him, preferably in a hollow tree trunk or in a cardboard box with warm bedding. Make sure he is safe from inclement weather. Observe him for 24 hours. When you are positive that there is no mother to care for the baby, call Wildlife Rescue again. Remember that a mother wild animal is best equipped to care for her young, not a human substitute.



### ***Additional Techniques.***

**Repelling Techniques:** For animals in the attic or under the house. Make sure the animal has one easy-to-locate exit. Block all other exits. Note: the products listed are not manufactured for the purpose of repelling wildlife, they are recommended because they have been documented as effective non-lethal methods. If you are allergic, sensitive, or if you find these products offensive; it is suggested that you use these products at your own discretion. Obtain six to twelve, one-inch strips of fabric, tie them in tight knots and soak them in household ammonia. Then, wearing rubber gloves, place these under the house where the animal has been seen or heard or in the attic where the animal has been seen or heard. Cayenne pepper at 90,000 heat units can be obtained from WholeFoods or Sunharvest. Sprinkle the pepper generously in areas that the animal has been seen coming and going such as a hole leading under the house or around trees that give the animal access to the attic. Be sure to wear rubber gloves and do not inhale the dust. The wild animals cannot tolerate the presence of the pepper and they will vacate the area. Note that pets and children should not have access to the pepper! It can be washed away with water or by the rain. Once these techniques are used for several days, tape a piece of newspaper over the hole. If it is not disturbed for several more days, cover the hole securely. The animal will not be trapped in the attic or under the house. Several other techniques can also help with animals in the attic or under the house. Lights temporarily placed in these areas can disturb the animals so they will leave. Also, playing loud music during the day will disturb skunks, raccoons, and opossums that sleep during the day.



### ***For raccoons and squirrels trapped in the chimney.***

Note that sometimes these animals are coming in and out. In that case the repelling techniques should be used. If they are trapped, several sheets tied together, or a thick knotted rope can be put down into the chimney. Weight down the sheet or rope with a heavy object so it will easily go down the chimney. Anchor the sheet or rope at the top of the chimney. The animal should be able to climb out. Be sure to get the chimney capped to prevent further occurrences. Music and ammonia-soaked rags in the Fireplace may encourage the animal to leave more quickly.



### ***For birds in the chimney.***

First, close all exits to other areas of the house. Open windows and doors that lead to the outside, and remove any window screens. Open the damper so that the bird can get out of the chimney. She can then fly outside.

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