



# Living with Urban Wildlife

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# Coexisting With Wildlife

Wild animals explore, sniff, and climb about in a variety of places, from remote forest and desert habitats to the noisy, hard-edged confines of bustling cities. They are clever beings who may dine on such natural fare as frogs, crayfish, rats, mice, roaches, birds' eggs, and wild fruit. They are also content to enjoy a delectable dinner scrounged from the rich variety of "leftovers" found in city and suburban settings. But the city is not a Garden of Eden for wildlife. Their natural desire to dine upon what is available and to take up seemingly suitable housing can earn them the undeserved 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 the wildlife who grace our neighborhoods.



## Check and Secure:

*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 entry points.* Otherwise, the young will starve and then you will have other unpleasant problems to solve. The babies will begin to go out with mom after just a few weeks.

## 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 animal, **call Wildlife Rescue at: (830) 336-2725.**

In many cases, we will advise you to leave them near the area where they were found, preferably in a hollow tree trunk or in a cardboard box with warm bedding, safe from inclement weather, and placed six to eight feet off the ground. Observe the nest for 24 hours. When you are positive that there is no mother to care for the baby, call Wildlife Rescue again. We are here whenever there is a legitimate reason to take a baby from the wild; however **a mother wild animal is best equipped to care for her young, not a human substitute.**

## CHIMNEYS

All chimneys should be capped to prevent entry by 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.

*Raccoons and Squirrels:* If these animals become trapped in your chimney and are unable to climb back out, try using this technique: Tie several bed sheets together, or get a thick knotted rope and drop it into 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.

## ATTICS AND CRAWL SPACES

If a wild animal has gained entrance to an attic or crawl space, close all points of entry excepting one, which should be covered with a thin piece of paper. When the paper has been broken, you will know that the animal has left. Carefully check the attic or crawl space to be sure that no other animals remain and then properly seal the hole. Also check porches, decks, sheds, and garages for holes or weak areas and

securely seal them. 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 they will leave.

## WILDLIFE SEEKING SHELTER

It is natural for wildlife to seek shelter (just as humans do). Caves, hollow logs, and large abandoned birds' nests suffice in the wild, but in the city the substitutes are attics, crawl spaces, or chimneys. 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. **Don't panic.** Think rationally and remember to ask yourself:

- *Who could be trapped?*
- *Where is their den and how did they get in?*
- *Could there be a mother with babies?*
- *What hours do they keep as they go about their daily and nightly affairs?*



## SECURE GARBAGE

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.** Your garbage can should have a lid that fits tightly. If this isn't possible, try hooking a bungee cord from one side of the can to the other to secure the lid. Or place 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.

## Live trapping: Do's and Don'ts

Most species of native wildlife have their young from the early spring (March) to early fall (September - October). During this period there may be babies who are entirely dependent on their mother for food and protection. Any action that prevents a mother from caring for her young will result in suffering for her and a slow death for the babies. Therefore, we do not recommend the trapping and relocating of wildlife. Since the family will not stay forever (several weeks at most), it is better to wait until the family vacates, and then take action that will prevent a recurrence of this problem. 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.**

# Repel Techniques

## AMMONIA AND CAYENNE PEPPER

Make sure the animal has one easy to locate exit. Block all other exits. 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 or in the attic, wherever the animal has been seen or heard. Additionally, sprinkle cayenne pepper generously in areas where an animal has been 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. Animals cannot tolerate the presence of the pepper and they will vacate the area. In addition to ammonia and cayenne pepper, there are a number of non-toxic repellants available for sale online.

## SOUND

Most animals can be deterred by certain noises. Playing loud music during the day when nocturnal animals are trying to find quiet places to rest can make your home or attic less desirable. There are also sonic devices which can be placed around your house which will emit a high frequency sound that animals don't enjoy. This will generally convince animals to move on and find a quieter place to live.



All of us, at one time or another, are probably going to experience the excitement of a visit from local urban wildlife. Although such experiences are wonderful and quite memorable, they can be problematic. Wildlife Rescue & Rehabilitation has developed these **Tips for Living With Urban Wildlife** in the hope that, despite continuous urban expansion, human and non-human animals can still find ways to **peacefully coexist**.

This information has been provided free of charge by Wildlife Rescue & Rehabilitation, Inc.  
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caring individuals like you.

## DONATE TODAY

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