

Nuisance Small Mammals

Category : General Wildlife Info

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Most homeowners take it "personally" when encountering nuisance wildlife problems. They think the animal is being malicious. We already know that people/neighbors don't respect personal property or boundaries. So we put up fences, lock our doors/windows, and install expensive security alarms to keep people out. But for unknown reasons, we expect wildlife to "know" that they aren't welcome and are more reluctant to take similar measures to restrict their access to our property.

Wildlife aren't being malicious. They have merely found an element they need for survival (food, water, shelter, space, etc). Sometimes their behavior is only seasonal (defending young/territory). By identifying what is drawing the animal to the property or causing the nuisance behavior, it is easier to draw up a plan to permanently correct the problem.

In many cases, by the time a homeowner discovers a nuisance wildlife problem and begins to seek out solutions, the offending wildlife have already been conditioned that their actions can safely be repeated. The longer wildlife is allowed to continue their actions, the longer it will take to recondition them. Unfortunately, the homeowner who allowed the squirrels to nest in his attic for 2 years is usually not willing to wait 2 days to correct the problem. But they're also not particularly open to paying a pest control operator \$80-\$150 to fix a problem they can do for free (and much more humanely/effectively).

Most homeowners immediately want the animal removed and relocated, which they feel is a quick solution for them and they believe it is a humane alternative for the animal. There are 3 important elements that should be considered before trapping and relocation is attempted:

More than 50% of relocated wildlife do not survive. In an unfamiliar environment, they do not have an established shelter site, food source or territory. Most jurisdictions do not allow the relocation of wildlife and require that pest control operators destroy trapped wildlife. This is usually accomplished by shooting, drowning, suffocation or injection with commercial solvents such as acetone. Unless the situation that initially attracted the animal is corrected, then the problem will only be repeated as other wildlife are drawn to the property. Wildlife will continue to repeat a behavior such as living in a attic or raiding trash cans only when it is relatively easy to do and only while they feel it is safe. For

example, attics are an ideal source of shelter, especially when problems such as deteriorating fascia boards make it easy to get in. Attics are warm, quiet, dark and protected. Animals no longer feel hidden and safe in an attic when a radio blares for several days and lights are left on continuously. They will begin searching out a new nesting site elsewhere within a matter of days. Reconditioning the offending wildlife is much more effective than removing it from the property and much more humane than destroying it. But in order to be effective, this must be followed by correcting the situation that initially attracted the animal. By teaching one nuisance squirrel to stay out of your attic, he'll also continue to defend his territory (your yard) from invasion by new squirrels.

By identifying what is drawing the animal to the property or causing the nuisance behavior, it is easier to draw up a plan to correct the problem.

In the Attic

This is the best indicator for home maintenance problems. Improperly installed soffit vents, deteriorating fascia boards or possibly dry-rotted wood has tempted an animal to move in (It may have enlarged the original damaged area to accommodate its size). Any of the solutions below must be followed by repairing the damaged area. HarrassmentMake animal realize this is no longer a safe site; change the environment by turning on lights (or setting up a fire-proof utility light) and play a radio at a tolerable level. Most animals will relocate within 4-6 hours, but this may take up to two days. ExclusionIdentify entry site and install a one-way door so that mammal can leave but not return. Note: This should not be employed during baby season. Not only will a desperate mother possibly cause property damage trying to re-enter, but the decaying carcasses of the babies may cause extreme odor and cleanup problems (not particularly humane either). See [In the Attic with Babies](#). RemovalUse only a humane live trap. Release the animal into an area of your yard that has some cover (plant growth, bushes) and is furthest from the house. Note: This should not be employed during baby season. The decaying carcasses of the babies may cause extreme odor and cleanup problems (not particularly humane either). See [In the Attic with Babies](#). [Click Here](#) for more information on the use of traps and additional online sources. In the attic with babies

This is the best indicator for home maintenance problems. Improperly installed soffit vents, deteriorating fascia boards or possibly dry-rotted wood has tempted an animal to move in (It may have enlarged the original damaged area to accommodate its size). Any of the solutions below must be followed by repairing the damaged area. HarrassmentMake animal realize this is no longer a safe site; change the environment by turning on lights (or setting up a fire-proof utility light) and play a radio at a tolerable level. After finding a new nest site for its babies, most mammals will relocate them within 4-6 hours, but this may take up to two days. ExclusionNot recommended when babies are present. Note: Not only will a desperate mother possibly cause property damage trying to re-enter, but the decaying carcasses of the babies may cause extreme odor and cleanup problems (not particularly humane either). RemovalThis is not recommended when babies are present. If absolutely necessary (homeowner moving, heavy construction, etc), trap mom using only a humane live trap. Taking every reasonable precaution, gather up the babies and place them in a shallow open box that they can not crawl out of. Carry mom (still in trap that is partially covered with a towel) and babies to an area of your yard that has some cover (plant growth, bushes) and is furthest from the house. Sit box with babies next to mom's cage (and partially remove the towel) so that she can identify them as her own and see that they are safe. Observe from a distance. After about 20 minutes, release mom. She will immediately run away. Allow her 4-6 hours to return to collect her babies and relocate them to a new nesting site. [Click Here](#) for more information on the use of traps and additional online sources. In the garden/flowerbed

Deterrents A dog is one of the most effective deterrents available. Why not adopt one today? (mammals only) Most deterrents are effective up to a month and are safe to use on plants intended

for food (mammals only) The presence of replica predators is an effective deterrent, however wildlife will gradually become accustomed to them. Remember to frequently move them to different locations. Can also be combined with holographic tape to attract attention. (birds and small mammals) HarrassmentMake animal realize this is no longer a safe site. For smaller species, simply using iridescent Mylar gift wrap ribbon works well (birds only). Changes in the environment and unanticipated sudden events are effective (birds and mammals). ExclusionNetting is very effective and economical for dealing with larger species of mammals, or for use in protecting berries from birds. When dealing with smaller mammal species, a galvanized wire fence with openings no larger than 1-1/2 inches is best. When planting bulbs, set just below ground level to prevent access by wildlife. Removallneffective as a long term solution. [Click Here](#) for more information on the use of traps and additional online sources. In the yard

Nocturnal Mammals: Most people become alarmed when a wild animal appears in their yard, especially when it is know to be nocturnal. However, it is not uncommon for raccoons or opossums to be wandering around during daylight hours especially when they have babies to feed. The Action of Others: Often, it's not an element on the homeowner's property that draws the wildlife, but the actions of one or more neighbors. Are neighbors purposely feeding the wildlife? Leaving food out for pets? Not securing their trashcans? Sometimes an overabundance of wildlife should be addressed on a community/neighborhood level. The Choices Made: As development increases, so will dilemmas involving interactions with wildlife. However, expect waterfowl on your lawn if you move to a lake; expect deer, fox, etc if you move to a rural or semi-rural area. And expect to go take action early to exclude these wildlife from your property if you do not want them there. Deterrents A dog is one of the most effective deterrents available. Why not adopt one today? (mammals and waterfowl) The presence of replica predators is an effective deterrent, however wildlife will gradually become accustomed to them. Remember to frequently move them to different locations. Can also be combined with holographic tape to attract attention. (birds and small mammals) HarrassmentMake animals realize this is no longer a safe site. Spraying them with a garden hose whenever they appear is extremely effective. Tossing cans with pennies inside in their direction (not at them) can also alarm them. From the comfort of your deck, drive a remote control car through the yard when wildlife arrive. Attach a bright red flag to it one day, and a helium balloon the next. Changes in the environment and unanticipated sudden events are effective (birds, waterfowl and mammals). A motion activated sprinkler works great for 'round the clock deterrence. ExclusionNetting is very effective and economical for dealing with larger species of mammals and waterfowl, or for use in protecting berries from birds. When dealing with smaller mammal species, a galvanized wire fence with openings no larger than 1-1/2 inches is best. When planting bulbs, set chicken wire just below ground level to prevent access by wildlife. Removallneffective as a long term solution. [Click Here](#) for more information on the use of traps and additional online sources. In the crawlspaceExcept for baby season, use a one-way door so that the mammal can exit but not re-enter. [Click Here](#) for more information on the use of traps and additional online sources. Babies in the yard

Many homeowners are uncomfortable with or inconvenienced by the presence of babies on their property, and for this reason take these babies to wildlife rehabilitators for reasons other than the baby's long-term best interest. Here are some proven suggestions to keep babies were they should be. Pets/children in the yardPlace a temporary wire fence with 2 inch by 4 inch openings 3-4 feet around the nest site. Need to mow lawnPlace a laundry basket over the nest site to prevent the babies from bolting when lawn mower passes by. Let the babies settle before removing. Construction WorkPlace a laundry basket over the nest site to prevent accidental traffic or debris from injuring babies. Notify all employees of the babies' presence. Uncover just before dusk. Note:If you find any babies in your yard that are not in a nest, [contact](#) a wildlife rehabilitator for further instructions. In the chimney

Wildlife access a chimney for two reasons: by purposely seeking out shelter or by accidentally

falling in. We'll address both. Mammals nesting in chimney(up high)Fortunately, we do not use the chimney during the breeding season of most mammals. In 4-8 weeks the babies will eventually be moved to another site. Waiting it out is the easiest solution. Using harrassment techniques (noise) may speed up the eventual move, but the risk of abandonment exists. Once the babies are gone, cap the chimney. Mammals trapped in chimney (above flue)For trapped squirrels, the solution may be as easy as closing all interior doors and curtains, but leaving one window or door open as an exit. Then carefully opening the damper and observing at a distance. The squirrel will eventually be drawn to the sights and sounds of the outdoors and exit. A humane live trap can also be placed inside the fireplace window/screen. Mammals trapped for over 24 hours may be dehydrated and require treatment. Food

If you leave it unattended, they will come! If you left a \$20 bill out on the sidewalk, don't you think someone will pick it up? The same principle applies here. TrashcanUse bungees or weights to secure lids. Don't set plastic trash bags out until pick-up day. Pet FoodFeed your pets at a set time and promptly remove the leftover food. Raiding FeedersIf you feed the birds, you can also expect uninvited guests. Squirrels are extremely intelligent, so anticipate the need for a "squirrel baffle" for your feeders. Raiding PondsExclusion is the only proven method to protecting your koi. Products

Click on the products for a direct link to product details and purchasing information.



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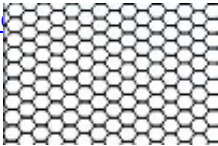
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