Living With Wildlife

Deterring Wildlife From Entering Your Property

- To keep squirrels and other rodents out of buildings, consider sealing openings to the outside of the building that are less than 1/2" wide with concrete mortar, steel or copper wool or metal flashing.
- Close off openings under buildings, decks and sheds.
- Cover attic and foundation vents with 1/4" wire mesh or heavy wire screen.
- If a bat or small bird flies into your home, open as many doors and windows as possible. Bats and birds will typically fly out on their own.

Create Positive Wildlife Interactions

- Skunks are generally calm animals, but will spray when startled or threatened. If you suspect a visiting skunk, turn on outside lights (if it is dark) and make noise before entering the yard to alert the skunk to your presence.
- Turkeys rarely make aggressive physical contact with humans. However, if confronted by a wild turkey that has lost its fear of humans, an open umbrella or walking stick may help steer it out of your path.
- Avoid sudden stops or swerves in your vehicle when encountering wildlife in the roadway. If safe to do so, slow down to 10 mph and proceed. The animals will move out of the way.
- Pick up small pets if you see a coyote nearby and don't let pets roam, especially at night. Always walk dogs on leashes (as required by local law), especially during pup rearing season (April-August).
- If approached by a coyote, don't run. Wave your arms, make noise and walk toward the coyote until it retreats. Be "Big, Bad and Loud."

Keeping Chickens Safe from Predators

- Secure chickens in a predator proof coop every night and use a spring loaded clasp to secure the coop door.
- Use ¼" hardware cloth in your coop design. "Chicken wire" does not stop predators. Line the bottom of the coop with plywood or hardware cloth.
- Prevent predators from digging under the coop walls by elevating the coop or burying 12" of hardware cloth around the base of the coop.

Injured/Sick Wildlife

Sick or injured wildlife should always be approached with caution. Animals that are sick or injured are particularly defensive and likely to bite if handled. Bites from wildlife are painful and may transmit harmful diseases. Visit CityofDavis.org/UrbanWildlife for whom to contact for different wildlife species.

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Wildlife: Help Keep Them "Wild"

Why Shouldn't I Feed Wildlife?

Feeding wildlife (including raccoons, skunks, squirrels, geese and turkeys) may not seem like a big deal, but it is the primary cause for conflict between humans and wildlife. Even in urban settings, wild animals are capable of finding their own food.

Supplemental feeding of wildlife also:

- Encourages nuisance wildlife to stay closer to your home
- Causes wildlife to become less fearful of all humans
- May negatively impact their health

Keep Wildlife, Well…Wild:

- Do not attract wildlife by feeding or leaving food for them.
- Do not allow bird food from outdoor feeders to accumulate on the ground.
- Do not place food scraps in gardens or outdoor compost bins and use a closed compost bin.
- Keep pet food and water containers indoors, especially at night.
- Secure pet doors during late evening and night hours. Nocturnal species such as raccoons will readily enter cat doors in search of food.
- Enjoy viewing wildlife at a distance. Respect their space and remember they are wild animals that should stay wild.

How Do I Avoid Unintentional Feeding?

- If squirrels, rats or turkeys begin feeding under bird feeders, temporarily remove the feeders until they stop visiting. This may take several days to several weeks.
- If wild animals are causing problems in your yard, consider installing motion-detecting sprinklers to chase them away.
- Raccoon-proof a garbage can by fastening the lid securely with rope, bungee cords, chains or a heavy object.
- If you have fruit trees, harvest fruit when it is ripe. Clean up any fallen fruit and nuts. Place them in your organics cart if they are not consumable.
- To protect fruit and nut trees from squirrels, place squirrel guards made from sheet metal (18-24 inches wide) around the trunk to prevent squirrels from climbing up trees.
- Prevent ground squirrels from tunneling into your garden by installing wire mesh 1-2 feet below plant beds.

Find more tips on Living with Urban Wildlife at CityofDavis.org/UrbanWildlife