



Wildlife-Proofing Your Property

The Ontario SPCA strongly encourages property owners to "wildlife-proof" buildings and property so that wildlife does not become a "nuisance." Invasion of wildlife into residences can cause damage to property, as well as harm animals.

Generally, the fall is a good time to make building repairs that prohibit wildlife from gaining access. Also, wildlife who entered your home in the spring to have young will often leave willingly in the fall.

BEFORE SECURING AND REPAIRING ENTRANCE POINTS, PLEASE ENSURE THAT ANIMALS ARE NOT TRAPPED.

Do You Have Wildlife Accessing Your Home?

Carefully check possible entry points by watching for wildlife (particularly in the evening for some species), and listening for noises. It is also possible to hang a light plastic barrier for a few days over the location where the animals are suspected of gaining access, or to use food tests (place food in accessible locations) to monitor the presence of animals.

Do You Have Many Hiding Places That Attract Wildlife?

Piles of debris, wood, and manure attract and provide homes for wildlife. Fencing your garden and protecting fruit shrubs and trees with nets will discourage unwanted guests. Long, uncut grass encourages rodents, snakes, and skunks.

Raccoons and skunks eat grubs, such as June bug larvae, in the spring and fall. At these times of year grubs are near the surface of the grass. During a vigorous search for such food, extensive damage can be done to a lawn. Harmless deterrents, such as cayenne pepper or soap flakes sprinkled on the lawn, are environmentally sound and may dissuade some raccoons and skunks. Spring and fall are good times to use these deterrents. An electric fence can deter some wildlife. A nine-volt charge does not harm domestic or wild animals. The fence can be set on a timer to operate only at night.

Where Do You Store Your Garbage?

Garbage attracts both domestic and wild creatures. If possible, keep it in a garage or use a heavy garbage can with a tight-fitting lid. Pour ammonia over the garbage bags each time you add to them and fasten the lid with heavy rubber bungee cords. A heavy rock placed on top of a garbage container may also stop

wild animals from getting inside. Compost piles should also be stored in insect and animal-proof containers.

Do You Have Bird Feeders?

The Ontario SPCA strongly recommends that birds only be fed while snow is on the ground. It is not only healthier for a bird to consume a natural diet, but it also helps control insect populations. Animals can be enticed onto a property by food put out for birds or squirrels, especially if it accumulates under the feeder. This "spill off" may attract mice and rats. Spill trays are available to prevent this.

Have You Capped Your Chimneys?

Birds and squirrels can easily trap themselves inside chimneys and, if not removed quickly, may die. To keep birds and small mammals out, chimneys should be equipped with a good quality cap. The cap should fit tightly and have no opening that a small animal or bird could enter.

Have You Protected Your Roof and Attic?

To prevent access by wildlife, curled or missing shingles should be replaced promptly, and heavy screening placed on all vents and attic spaces. Remove eavestrough debris to prevent overflow and wood rot. Also trim trees and bushes at least 15 feet back from roof edges and remove creeping vines.

What About Your Soffits and Window Wells?

Replace existing lightweight soffit vents with a heavier type when located near a downspout, tree branches or any other structure providing easy access to the vent. Screen or cover existing window wells.

Do You Have an Antenna?

If you have an antenna attached to your house, wrap four feet of aluminium around the base (so it cannot be climbed by animals) making sure it is buried at least six inches into the ground. If the antenna isn't being used, consider removing it.

Have You Checked Your Porches and Outbuildings?

Holes under porches, sheds or garages encourage rodents, snakes and skunks and should be filled in. To prevent wildlife from denning under a structure, dig an eight-inch deep trench around the perimeter of the structure and line the trench with galvanized steel screen, bent in an "L" configuration.

Do You Have Unwanted Birds?

Roosting - Roosting birds, such as pigeons and doves, can be discouraged by placing non-harmful sticky substances (such as double-sided carpet tape) or mechanical barriers such as wire or small gauge mesh over their roosting areas. Decoy dummies of birds of prey (hawks, owls, etc.) may help repel birds as do windmills, whirligigs, scarecrows, etc.

Exhaust Vents - To prevent birds from building nests in exterior kitchen and bathroom exhaust vents, ensure the vent cover is intact. The vent cover should have three or more shutter-type doors, as opposed to one larger one. Before installing the vent cover, friction fit a piece of wire mesh a couple of inches inside the vent pipe, then attach the cover with good quality caulking.

Pigeons - Pigeons are often considered a problem for urban dwellers, especially because of the mess they can create. Pigeons are effectively discouraged from areas, such as ledges and other potential nesting sites, covered in porcupine wire.

If eggs are laid, however, it will be 35-37 days before the birds reach maturity and can fly. Homeowners are encouraged to have patience and allow the babies to mature and fly off; then take measures to prevent nesting from happening again.

What About Mice?

Mice can enter buildings through openings about the size of a dime, and can climb interior walls, making exclusion sometimes very difficult.

Coarse steel wool or quick-drying cement can be used to plug cracks around drainpipes and small openings. Hardware cloth ($\frac{1}{2}$ inch mesh or less) is effective in larger areas.

Holes or cracks in exterior walls should be sealed. In order to eliminate protective covering, remove weeds and trim around the base of shrubs that are next to buildings. Pets should be fed indoors and uneaten food picked up where mice may be a problem. Household food that is accessible to mice should be stored in metal or plastic containers.

Do You Have Ponds or Pools?

Ponds and pools will breed mosquitoes and encourage the presence of bats. Ducks are instinctively attracted to all types of water, including pools. Keep pools securely covered before nesting begins in early spring. Do not allow puddles to accumulate on top of the pool cover.

Have You Protected Your Trees and Gardens?

Plastic bird netting can be used to prevent birds and deer from eating the fruit on your trees or the vegetables in your garden. To prevent some animals, such as gophers, beavers or woodchucks, from eating the bark off your trees, place rocks and screening around tree trunks. Commercial products, such as "Skoot" or "Ro-Pel", are non-toxic and effective in protecting trees. Skoot only needs to be applied to the bottom 3" of the tree trunk once each fall.

Deer will be kept away from shrubbery and vegetables by regular dusting of humane repellents and dried blood powder. Bars of soap tied to stakes that are level with the top of shrubs, also effectively deter deer, as do sacks of soap flakes. Humane repellents can be purchased at nurseries. Before purchasing any commercial product, ensure it is non-poisonous and safe for the environment.

To keep critters, such as rabbits, groundhogs and deer away from your vegetable garden, try erecting a structure that creates noise (if the area is far enough away from your home).

Insert a 4-5 foot high stake about 2 feet into the ground. Attach a rope to the top and secure a metal garbage can lid to it. The wind will cause a light banging, keeping animals away.

IN THE CASE WHERE INJURED OR TRAPPED WILDLIFE IS FOUND, PLEASE CONTACT YOUR LOCAL HUMANE SOCIETY AS SOON AS POSSIBLE. THEY MAY BE ABLE TO PROVIDE FURTHER ADVICE. THANK YOU!

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