

HOW MUCH DO YOU KNOW ABOUT THE WILD ANIMALS IN YOUR NEIGHBORHOOD?

ARE YOU EXPERIENCING PROPERTY DAMAGE BUT YOU DON'T KNOW WHAT IS CAUSING IT? OR HOW TO STOP IT?

LET US HELP YOU PROBLEM SOLVE! SO THAT WE DON'T WASTE A VALUABLE NATURAL RESOURCE - OUR WILD NEIGHBORS

Do's & Don'ts

- ? Fence those areas you particularly want to protect.
- ? Mend all holes in your existing fences. Add chicken wire around the bottom area to keep out smaller wildlife.
- ? Cover sturdy trash cans with tight fitting lids. Add bungee cords if necessary. Secure the cans in a way they can't be tipped over.
- ? Don't leave pet food, or your pets, out after dusk. (Don't allow your pet to become part of the food chain).
- ? Poultry or rabbits should be confined in a raised, covered heavy wire mesh enclosure (not chicken wire).
- ? Keep garage doors and pet doors closed and secured after dusk.
- ? Clear away piles of rubbish and debris that may harbor rats and mice (a ready staple for most wild animals).
- ? Trim vegetation and tree branches away from the house.
- ? Remove windfall fruit from the ground and pick ripe fruit off trees frequently.
- ? Make sure compost piles are put in sturdy closed containers.
- ? Sound, water, lights, and irritating odors often keep animals from feeling at home on your property. There are many motion sensor devices on the market that are inexpensive deterrents to unwelcome four-legged visitors.
- ? Where permitted by local regulations, low voltage electrical wire can be strung on fences or around gardens.
- ? **Most important of all, do not feed wild animals!** To do so upsets the natural balance, inflates the population, creates bold, aggressive animals that can cause physical harm to unwary individuals, and eventually, eradication of the animals to solve out-of-control problems. **No one wins!**

THIS BROCHURE IS PROVIDED BY:

Wildlife Information,
Literature, Data & Education
Service
(805)687-9980 (MESSAGES)
(805)887-3574 (PAGER # FOR EMERGENCIES)

You may send donations to:
1560 N. Ontare Rd.
Santa Barbara, CA 93105

SANTA BARBARA COUNTY
ANIMAL SERVICES
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NOTE:

Live trapping is not a recommended solution to ridding property and yard of wildlife. Because wild animals are around in such numbers, trapping is only a temporary solution and not necessarily humane. It won't be long before another one or more is attracted to your home especially if you haven't dealt with those issues that attracted them in the first place. Not every animal that you see is responsible for the property damage you may be experiencing. Practicing habitat modification and exclusion promotes peaceful co-existence with your wild neighbors.



Wildlife Information Literature Data & Education Service

A non-profit organization providing literature and advice for establishing harmony between urban dwellers and their wild neighbors.

RACCOONS



The **raccoon** is probably the best known wild animal living in our neighborhoods. It is easily identified by the black mask on its face and its striped tail. It is a husky animal about the size of a Beagle.

The **raccoon** is a busy creature and it seems as if they never stop moving their hands. They love to play in water. A pet dish that is muddy in the morning is a pretty sure sign a **raccoon** has been visiting.

Raccoons live in family groups and have 3-4 young a year. It is not unusual to see more than one at a time in your yard.

Because they are coordinated, clever, and curious critters, they can get into a lot of trouble when looking for food or when entertaining themselves on our properties. They are quite bold and can be aggressive once they get used to our activities. It is important to resist getting too close. NEVER intentionally feed them!

A **raccoon's** diet is varied. They seem to prefer different things at different times of the year (from fruit, nuts, and garden vegetables to insects and lizards). They will never pass up a grub or small rodent.

OPOSSUMS

The **opossum** is the only Marsupial we have in North America. Like the Koala and the Kangaroo, it carries its babies in a pouch.

The **opossum** is usually gray and white and about the size of an adult house cat. They have a long muzzle, black paper-thin ears, pink nose and fingers, and a bare prehensile tail.

Because they carry their babies in their pouch, they do not need a nest. They are solitary creatures that live a transient life.

Opossums are one of our oldest living mammals. They have changed very little since the age of the dinosaurs.

Their diet consists of rats, mice, rattlesnakes, snails, and some fruits and vegetables.

Opossums move rather slowly. They also have poor eyesight, relying heavily on their sense of smell. When startled, they will freeze, show their impressive display of 50 teeth, and drool. If they perceive a life-threatening situation, they pretend death (playing possum). Once left alone they will revive and go about their business.



SKUNKS



Everyone recognizes a **skunk** when they see one. Nature has marked them in vivid black and white colors to signal to other animals that **skunks** should be avoided. Many unwary cats and dogs have come home wearing a perfume that is most unwelcome. In spite of this unpleasant defense mechanism, **skunks** are far more beneficial than harmful and do not indiscriminately spray unless startled or molested. They stomp their feet and raise their tail to give warning before spraying.

Their diet consists of those garden pests that ruin landscapes and gardens. Normally **skunks** eat rats, mice, gophers, harmful insects (including snails and slugs), etc., unless they find access to pet food or loose garbage.

Seldom seen during the day, **skunks** forage after dusk and throughout the night. They are usually nomadic unless they find a suitable place to den that has a dependable food and water supply.

Common complaints about **skunks** occur during winter when it is breeding season. They tend to squabble and spray each other during mating. Unfortunately, they often do this under occupied houses. This benign animal can become an unwelcome guest unless preventive measures are taken before they become a problem.

COYOTES

Coyotes are intelligent, adaptable mammals that belong to the dog family. The size of a small shepherd dog, **coyotes** are gray, brown or tan with a reddish, heavily furred tail.

A true scavenger, a **coyote** will eat almost anything it can catch. It will take advantage of whatever type animal or vegetable that is available including rodents, rabbits, birds, insects, and fruit and carrion. Hunting in pairs or packs, they communicate by howling. They also have a well developed sense of smell.

Coyotes mate for life and very prolific. Attempts at eradication have been unsuccessful. They breed once a year with an average size litter of six.

Due to extensive urban development, their natural habitat has decreased. This has brought about some undesirable encounters with this animal. One of the most reported incidents concerns sightings of **coyotes** in urban neighborhoods. Their natural hunting pattern has also been disrupted causing the **coyote** to adapt its diet to it's environment by including, among other things, uncovered garbage, unattended small pets, and any other opportune item it may encounter. To be sure, not every pet that disappears has fallen prey to the **coyote** though it is often blamed.

