

# Fact Sheet

## Feuille de renseignements

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### NUISANCE WILDLIFE

Wildlife is an important part of Ontario's natural and cultural heritage. Wildlife is often a welcome addition to a landowner's property, but there are circumstances under which wildlife can become a nuisance.

The Ministry of Natural Resources (MNR) can help landowners by providing:

- fact sheets on typical nuisance animal biology and behaviour
- information on animal control services and recommended best practices
- appropriate agency referrals
- information required to obtain permits where required.

Landowners are responsible for managing nuisance animals on their properties including any costs.

#### **What is a nuisance animal?**

Wildlife becomes a nuisance when an animal damages, or is about to damage, your property. Just having wildlife on your property does not make it a nuisance.

The *Fish and Wildlife Conservation Act* sets out the legal actions property owners can take, when they can take those actions and the species of animals for which they can take those actions. In general, landowners, or an agent of the landowner may capture, kill, or harass nuisance wildlife to stop it from damaging the landowner's property.

There are some **exceptions**:

- Moose, caribou, elk or endangered species cannot be captured, killed or harassed in protection of property.
- White-tailed deer cannot be captured, killed or harassed unless you possess a Deer Removal Permit issued by the Ministry of Natural Resources (MNR).
- Unnecessary suffering cannot be caused to any wildlife.
- Bears killed in defence of property must be immediately reported to the local MNR office. As well, specially protected raptors and furbearing mammals killed in defence of property and that an individual wishes to keep must be reported to the MNR within two working days.

The ministry does not condone the killing of wildlife where other options may be available. Whenever possible, exclusion is the preferred option. Property owners are advised to check with their local municipality regarding discharge of firearms by-laws. Only licensed trappers may possess and use body-gripping traps.

### **Releasing captured animals**

If you live-capture a nuisance animal, within 24 hours you must:

- release it in close proximity to where it was caught (up to a maximum of one kilometre) as directed by MNR
- if it is sick, injured, or immature, turn it over to a veterinarian or an authorized wildlife custodian, or
- humanely euthanize it.

**In a raccoon rabies "high-risk area", injured, sick or orphaned rabies carrier species (raccoons, skunks, foxes) can be taken to a wildlife rehabilitator who is authorized by the Ministry to handle them. All rabies carrier species must be released within 1 km of their point of origin.**

### **Using an agent**

You may hire or ask someone to deal with nuisance animals on your land. The person you hire or ask is your agent and must have authorization from MNR. The following categories of people are authorized by the regulations to act as agents:

- a licensed trapper
- an employee or agent of the Ontario Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (OSPCA) appointed under the *OSPCA Act*
- a member of your immediate family
- a person whose main business is removing nuisance animals (animal control agents as listed in yellow pages)
- employees or agents of a municipality whose responsibilities relate to wildlife control.

Other persons may act as agents, but will require individual authorizations before acting in protection of property situations. Contact your local MNR district office regarding this.

Specific sections in the *Fish and Wildlife Conservation Act* and Regulations guide farmers who may have to deal with situations of crop depredation by deer.

### **Farmers with nuisance deer**

If you are a farmer, you may kill nuisance white-tailed deer on your property if you have a Deer Removal Permit from MNR. To get a permit you must:

- be a farmer as defined by the Ministry of Agriculture & Food (OMAF)
- have an evaluation to determine significant crop damage from deer
- have allowed licensed deer hunters on your property during the open deer season
- have tried other ways of controlling the deer
- have pre-arranged with MNR to dispose of the deer carcass to an individual aware of the fact that the deer carcass has not been inspected under the *Meat Inspection Act*. Many facilities will not accept uninspected meat.

You may use an agent to shoot nuisance deer for you. The agent must:

- be an experienced deer hunter
- have held a valid hunting licence within three years and carry that licence when hunting
- have no hunting convictions
- have a rifle or shotgun
- not charge for the service
- have liability insurance of a minimum of \$2 million.

**NOTE: Deer removal permits are also available to airports experiencing deer problems.**

For more information about dealing with nuisance animals under the Act or Deer Removal Permits, please contact your local MNR office.

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Contact :

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For more information visit [www.mnr.gov.on.ca](http://www.mnr.gov.on.ca)