

Managing Nuisance Animals

1) Sit down and think about the problem

- positively identify the "offending" species
- estimate number of "offenders"
- estimate loss and amount of damage
- estimate cost to "fix" problem
- are control efforts worth the trouble?
- evaluate pleasure in relation to damage

2) Learn the life history of the species

- favored habitats
- feeding habits
- typical behavior
- activity patterns
- time of mating season
- molting patterns

3) Apply control methods (use common sense!)

- habitat modification
- exclusion
- frightening
- repellents
- trapping
- toxicants
- shooting

4) Evaluate effectiveness

- Is the problem corrected?
- Which method(s) worked best?
- Was control efforts cost-effective?
- Did control efforts impact non-target species?

Timing- Begin control program before or immediately after problem is realized; do not allow habituation.

Persistence- Damage control is not easy and may take time

Use a variety of methods- Usually more effective, may require less time and may reduce problems with habituation

Moles:

3-5 per acre considered high population

Active day and night- all year

Voracious appetite (70-100% of body weight daily). Feed on earthworms, grubs and invertebrates

Trapping is the most successful and practical method (**Traps must be set properly**).

Harpoon Trap- Select active runway, excavate runway, replace soil and set trap.

Voles:

Breed year-round (3-6 young per litter; 1-5 litter per year)

Active day and night- all year

Eat Grasses, forbs, seeds, tubers, bulbs, rhizomes and bark

Burrow system has numerous entrances

Baited snap traps during fall/ winter can be very effective

Armadillos:

Active at dusk to dawn

Voracious diggers in yards, gardens and flower beds

Pre-scented armadillo boxes (no bait needed)

Raccoons/ Opossum:

Active at night

Problematic in gardens with produce and porches with dog or cat food

Live trap baited with fish-flavored cat food, stake trap down

Skunks:

Active from dusk to dawn

Mate February-March (Young are born May-June)

Do not hibernate but may den during cold periods

Skunk Traps baited with fish-flavored cat food

Table 4: Baits and Trap Sizes for Various Animals.

SPECIES	BAIT	LIVE TRAP SIZE (INCHES)	OTHER
Opossum	Vegetables, apple slices, sardines, scrap meat, canned dog food, chicken entrails, fish, table scraps	11 x 11 x 36	
Rabbit	Vegetables, cabbage, carrots, lettuce, bread, apple slices	7 x 7 x 30	Enclosed box trap does not have to be baited, lead the rabbit over the trip by placing several small pieces of bait in front of the trap and at 3" or 4" intervals on into the trap.
Raccoon	Fish (fresh or canned), scrap meat, canned dog food, sardines, chicken, whole fresh egg over sardines, bacon, table scraps, sweet corn, and fish flavored cat food	13 x 13 x 42	Fish oil or commercial raccoon lure are attractive to coons.
Skunk	Chicken heads or entrails, fish (fresh or canned), scrap meat, canned dog or cat food, sardines, dead mice, whole fresh egg over sardines, bacon, table scraps, peanut butter and honey.	7 x 7 x 30	Skunks usually do not spray if trap is covered with a burlap bag to darken it before transporting.
Squirrel	Nuts, peanut butter, whole peanuts, rolled oats, bread, shelled corn, pumpkin or sunflower seed, dried prunes	7 x 7 x 30	Set traps along paths frequently used by squirrels — tree bases, feeding stations, rooftops, etc.
Weasel	Fresh fish, liver, chicken entrails, meat scraps	5 x 5 x 18	Place trap in crannies, brushpiles, log piles, or any small covered area. Adjust pan to "hair trigger."
Groundhog	Lettuce, peas, beans, corn, cabbage, carrots, apples, other fruits	11 x 11 x 36	
Coyote	Weiners, canned dog food	30 x 30 x 70	Commercial coyote scents work well.
House Cat	Fish, meat, cat food, table scraps	11 x 11 x 36	
Fox	Chicken necks and entrails, meat or flesh from almost anything that walks, flies or swims	12 x 12 x 55	Commercially available fox urine is effective, and just a small amount on the end of a stick is enough.
Chipmunk	Nuts, peanut butter, bread, shelled corn, unroasted peanuts, rolled oats, apple cubes, sunflower seeds	5 x 5 x 18	Set traps near trails or dens.
Mouse	Cheese, bread, oatmeal, peanut butter, nuts, gumdrops, raisins, scorched bacon (most human foods are readily accepted)	3 x 3 x 10	
Mink	Chicken entrails, fresh fish, liver	7 x 7 x 30	Cubby sets are effective. Place brush or other material over the trap so animal has sensation of going into a hole to get bait.
Muskrat	Apples slices, other fruits, carrots, cabbage, lettuce	7 x 7 x 24	

SPECIES	BAIT	LIVE TRAP SIZE (INCHES)	OTHER
Rat	Blood, meat scraps, peanut butter, cheese, gumdrops, (most human foods are readily accepted)	5 x 5 x 18	Place traps along walks, behind objects, along sills, head boards and rafters.
Dog	Weiners, canned dog food, bacon, smoked ham scraps, table scraps	30 x 30 x 70	
Bobcat	Chicken necks and entrails	12 x 12 x 56	Commercial bobcat scents work well.
Voies	Peanut butter, oatmeal, apple slices		
Crawdads	Chicken and dead fish		Use minnow trap.

Additional sources of information:

The Internet Center for Wildlife Damage Management | <http://icwdm.org>

Going native: Urban landscaping for wildlife with native plants | <https://projects.ncsu.edu/goingnative>

Rid Your Home & Yard of Problem Wildlife by HomeAdvisor | <https://tiny.utk.edu/homeadvisortips>

Moorman, C., and J. Pippen, J. Conners, N. Haddad, M. Johns, J. Perry, and L.T. Bowen. 2016. Butterflies in your backyard. AG-636-02. NC State Extension. <https://tiny.utk.edu/butterflies>

Moorman, C., M. Johns, L.T. Bowen, and J. Gerwin. 2017. Managing Backyards and other urban habitats for Birds. AG-636-01. NC State Extension. <https://tiny.utk.edu/managingbackyards>

Moorman, C., M. Johns, L.T. Bowen, et. al. 2017. Landscaping for wildlife with native plants. AG-636-03. NC State Extension. <https://tiny.utk.edu/landscapeforwildlife>

Anderson, J., J. Beane, J. Hall, and C. Moorman. 2011. Reptiles and amphibians in your backyard. NAG-744. NC State Extension. <https://tiny.utk.edu/herps>