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Handling Conflicts with Wildlife

Wildlife is an important part of Ontario's natural and cultural heritage. Wild animals can be fun to observe from a safe distance, but there are times when wildlife can become a problem.

How can I prevent conflicts with wildlife?

Wildlife have the same basic needs as humans — food, water and shelter. Sometimes, humans and wildlife come into conflict when animals are trying to meet their basic needs. Often, conflicts can be prevented if we're willing to make small changes, such as storing garbage so animals can't get to it.

The best first step for dealing with unwelcome wildlife is to remove the food or shelter attracting them to your property. For more information about preventing and handling conflicts with different animals, visit ontario.ca/livingwithwildlife or contact your Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry local district office at ontario.ca/mnroffices.

Who's responsible for managing problem wildlife on properties?

People are responsible for managing problem wildlife on their property. The Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry helps people and municipalities by providing information on steps they can take to address problems with wildlife.

Using an agent

You may hire or ask someone to deal with problem wildlife on your property. This person is your agent. The following individuals are designated by the ministry to act as agents:

- Hunters with an H1 Outdoors Card
- Licensed trappers
- Employees or agents of the Ontario Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (OSPCA)
- Members of a landowner's immediate family acting on behalf of the landowner
- A person whose main business is removing problem wildlife
- Municipal employees with specific responsibilities for wildlife control (animal services).

Other people may act as agents. Contact your local Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry office at ontario.ca/mnroffices for more information.

What actions can a property owner take?

The Fish and Wildlife Conservation Act sets out the legal actions property owners can take to deal with problem wildlife. Generally, property owners or their agents may capture, harass or kill problem wildlife to prevent damage to their property. There are important exceptions and requirements:

- White-tailed deer, elk and species on the Species at Risk in Ontario List cannot be captured, harassed or killed in protection of property without prior authorization of the ministry. Moose and woodland caribou may not be captured, harassed or killed at all.
 - For more information regarding authorizations for species at risk, contact your local ministry office at ontario.ca/mnroffices.
- You may not cause unnecessary suffering to any wildlife.
- Only people specifically authorized by the ministry can live-trap a black bear.
- A person who kills a black bear in protection of property anywhere in Ontario must immediately report it at <https://www.ontario.ca/page/keep-dead-wild-animal>, if keeping the bear, or call the local ministry office, if not keeping the bear.