

SUGGESTED GUIDELINES FOR SHELTERS
WORKING WITH A NUISANCE WILDLIFE CONTROL OPERATOR

by Laura Simon The Fund for Animals CWRA

If animal control officers choose to refer calls to nuisance wildlife control operators (NWCOs), we highly recommend the following guidelines be incorporated in a signed agreement so that the ACO has some assurance that the NWCO's strategies will be responsible and humane:

- 1) NWCO Will Do a Full Site Inspection to Identify all Wildlife Attractants & Problem Sources.** Merely trapping the animal will not solve the problem as long as the attractant remains -- other animals will quickly replace any removed.
- 2) NWCO Will Demonstrate a Commitment to Humane Capture & Handling Techniques:**
 - Traps must be checked at least once daily, covered properly, & NOT set in bad weather
 - Homeowners should be encouraged to allow on-site release so animal remains in familiar habitat and has the best survival chance.
- 3) NWCO Will Inform Homeowners about Non-lethal Options for Solving the Problem as now required by law.**
- 4) NWCO Will Use Strategies to Prevent Orphaning**
 - a) Before removing any animal, NWCO must do a thorough inspection to see if young are present.
 - b) If young are found, NWCO will encourage homeowner to give animal family a "grace period" (i.e. let mother raise young and leave on own, as long as animals not damaging house).
 - c) If a grace period is not possible, NWCO will use repellents and/or scare devices to encourage family to self-evict.
 - d) If above not possible, live-traps or "one-way-door" traps can be used as long as mother and young reunited using responsible strategies (i.e. put young in box outside entry hole for mother to retrieve, and monitor to ensure retrieval. If one-way door used, NWCO must make sure the young are mobile enough to leave with mother or put young outside door for retrieval).
 - e) NWCO must check all trapped mammals for lactation (enlarged nipples) during birthing and rearing seasons (spring-fall) to ensure that a mother is not separated from her young or that the young are NOT left behind to starve.
- 5) NWCO Will Educate Homeowner About and Use Exclusion Strategies to Permanently Solve Problem** and be equipped to do exclusion work himself (i.e. install chimney caps, repair holes). The NWCO's goal must be to handle the source of the problem (an open cavity or food source) not just the symptom (the animal).
- 6) NWCO Will Euthanize Animal Only if Mortally Injured, Sick, Or Required by Law.**

NOTE: With rabies-vector species (raccoon, skunk) the NWCO has 2 options: to release on-site or euthanize. The NWCO should make every attempt to release on-site (with homeowner's permission) and seal off animal's denning cavity rather than automatically killing healthy animals.

Acceptable methods approved by the American Veterinary Medical Association include: Carbon dioxide chamber (CO₂), proper carbon monoxide chamber (i.e. NOT car exhaust), gunshot to head, lethal injection by veterinarian.
- 7) NWCO Will Not Use Inhumane Killing Methods** such as drowning, * car exhaust, * acetone injections, * kill traps (conibear traps, neck snare devices) glue traps, and poisons.
(* prohibited by CT law)

ASSESSING NUISANCE TRAPPERS

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One way that shelters can assess nuisance trappers is by presenting the following situations over the phone and then seeing if the trapper gives an "acceptable" or "unacceptable" response. These situations were constructed so that in giving the caller a fair answer, the trapper may be turning away business. Many of these true-to-life calls either 1) do not involve an actual problem, 2) involve a situation where trapping won't solve the problem since animals will be continually attracted to an uncovered food or nesting source.

1) Opossum seen in yard

ACCEPTABLE : Not cause for alarm, part of nature, are nomadic. Harmless.

UNACCEPTABLE: Trapping recommendation.

2) Raccoon stuck in dumpster

ACCEPTABLE: Put log / branches in so raccoon can climb out, then keep dumpster lid closed to prevent recurrence

UNACCEPTABLE: Need to trap / disease scare

3) Raccoon getting into garbage, making a mess

ACCEPTABLE: Discussion of how food attracts raccoon, need to put garbage out AM or get raccoon- proof garbage can (best kind has twist-on top).

UNACCEPTABLE: Trapping recommendation only

4) Skunk in garage - autumn

ACCEPTABLE: Advise homeowner to open garage before dusk, spread flour to check for exiting footprints

UNACCEPTABLE: Trapping as only option, disease scare.

5) Raccoon with babies in chimney

ACCEPTABLE: Go through what homeowner can do (give grace period or use sound and smell repellents), followed by need to install chimney cap to prevent reoccurrence. Discuss live trapping with strategies offered to keep cubs with mother (put cubs in box outside entry hole, release mother on-site).

UNACCEPTABLE: Disease scare coupled with trapping recommendation only.
Chimney cap not mentioned.

6) Squirrels in bird feeder

ACCEPTABLE: Explain need to modify food source (bird feeder) to prevent squirrel access.

UNACCEPTABLE: Trapping recommendation (can trap 40+ squirrels to no avail).

7) Bat in attic: mid-summer

ACCEPTABLE: Exclusion device (such as netting/ one-way door) to get bats out yet *must explain how flightless babies left behind in July, must wait until young are old enough to fly out before doing exclusion work.* Also encourage putting up bat box at same time.

UNACCEPTABLE: Poisons, doing exclusion work during summer months (mid-June-Aug) when young are flightless.

8) Raccoon sleeping in tree in day: spring

ACCEPTABLE: Not cause for alarm, leave alone

UNACCEPTABLE: Trapping recommendation, disease scare information