

## Nuisance Wildlife

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We tend to think of a nuisance animal as one that causes problems to us directly or indirectly. We aren't considering those pesky mosquitoes as wildlife. ODNR (Ohio Division of Natural Resources) has many recommendations for almost any situation you may find yourself in. All the information needed for nuisance wildlife can be found on ODNR's website (<https://ohiodnr.gov/discover-and-learn/safety-conservation/wildlife-management/nuisance-wildlife>)

Here in Ohio, we pride ourselves in our healthy deciduous forests, sizable crop production, and steadily growing cities. Alongside all of these wonderful things are the inevitable interactions of humans and animals. Oftentimes the interactions are a positive experience, however, wildlife is trying to make it by any means necessary. This can mean foraging on our crops, living in our homes, and even just disturbing the peace. Animals such as, Coyote, Skunk, Geese, Vultures, and Raccoons are very common in our area and can occasionally be a cause for action. Understanding why the animal is there is the first key.

Coyotes are found in all 88 counties in Ohio. They are typically labelled as a pest when encroaching on or near homes. The first thing to do is to make sure the animal is not a stray dog. To do your part to keep them away, make sure you keep all pet food and garbage put up at night. Coyotes mainly feed on rabbits and mice. However, other small pets and animals could be in danger of being taken. Keep your animals locked up and secure as well. Coyotes are able to be hunted and trapped in rural areas if absolutely necessary. Check our website and ODNR for a list of commercial nuisance wildlife trappers (CNWACO). Make sure you are aware of all hunting and trapping laws in your area before even considering this option!

Canadian geese are quite majestic migratory birds, often landing and nesting near any body of water available. First things first, do not feed ANY wildlife without thinking of the repercussions of doing so. Songbirds are the one exception; often with their own caveats of spilled food and fat squirrels. Wildlife is no longer 'wild' when relying on humans for food. Not to mention the negative effects feeding can have. Canadian geese are especially susceptible to the effects of human feeding. The geese will begin to not fear humans much, allowing them to nest even closer to property and set up a recipe for goose attacks. Feeding will typically attract more birds to a certain area than there would have been without humans. This can lead to increased disease among the flocks being too close to one another. The feces begin to add up as well. Obviously, not a sight you want to see at your local park. Call I-800-WILDLIFE is another great resource to utilize when in doubt of your options from ODNR. Always try to deter any nuisance animals with natural means before doing research to make sure it is safe and legal to remove any animal from your property. "Canada geese are protected under both the Federal Migratory Bird Treaty Act and Ohio state law. This protection extends to the bird's nest and eggs. It is illegal for any person, agency, or organization to take or attempt to take (pursue, hunt, shoot, wound, kill, trap, capture, or collect), any bird, nest, or egg outside of the regular hunting season without a special permit from the Ohio Division of Wildlife and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service".

We are also here to help at your SWCD! Call or visit Bobby at the office to get up to date information on what you can do for nuisance animals. To wrap everything up, Humans and animals have coexisted since the dawn of time. It is up to us to not only continue this relationship, but foster it. There is

never a better time to begin your journey as a good steward of the land than today. Come and see what programs we may be able to offer you. Keep an eye out for more articles to come pertaining to wildlife!