

Wildlife

As urban sprawl increasingly consumes more and more open space, encounters between humans and wildlife become more and more common. For most people, observing wildlife in their backyard is a thrilling experience, but when an animal causes damage or attempts to occupy the same living space, conflicts occur.

Procedures followed by DEC staff in relation to nuisance and distressed wildlife calls received at the (631)444-0310 number are outlined below. Available staff answer phone inquiries on most Mondays and Thursdays.

In light of the ongoing rabies outbreak in Nassau and Suffolk County raccoons, we would like to remind everyone that nuisance animals should not be relocated. Any raccoons suspected of having rabies, or having contact with humans or pets should be reported to the respective County health departments at the following numbers: Suffolk (631) 853-3055, Nassau (516) 571-2240.

Nuisance Wildlife

Except for those few species detailed below, 11-0523 of NYS ECL allows homeowners or their designated agents (volunteer or professional) to remove wildlife doing damage to their personal property. The DEC Wildlife Office will:

- 1) Provide advice over the phone on how to avoid the damage or remove the animal;
- 2) Send information via mail;
- 3) Provide the names and phone numbers of at least 3 Nuisance Wildlife Control Operators (NWCOS) in the general vicinity; and/or
- 4) Assist individuals in obtaining any relevant State permits to handle the species causing the problem.

Some animals have greater legal protection and require a permit from the DEC and/or the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service (USFWS).

These animals include deer, muskrat, turkey, Mute Swan, Canada Geese and all migratory birds. Pigeons, House Sparrows and starlings are not protected by the DEC. The DEC also does not regulate domestic animals, whether they are in a feral state or otherwise.

Information on common nuisance wildlife species and actions individuals can take to alleviate the nuisance situation is available online at www.nwco.net or on the DEC website (www.dec.nv.gov) at <http://www.dec.nv.gov/animals/265.html>.

NOTE: Only NWCOS can legally transport live nuisance wildlife. If a homeowner traps an animal on their property the only legal options they have is to release the animal on their own property or humanely euthanize the animal. Nuisance animals are likely to remain nuisance animals in new locations, are unlikely to survive well in natural habitats, and are possible disease transmission vectors. In light of rabies being found in both Nassau and Suffolk County, County Health Officials have asked that no rabies vector species (raccoons, bats, skunks, or fox) be transported or relocated to help curb the spread of this disease.

Distressed Wildlife

With the exception of endangered and threatened species, we render no aid to injured or orphaned wildlife.

Our office provides legal information, advice, and the names and phone numbers of licensed Wildlife Rehabilitators. Rehabilitators care for an animal until it can be released. A list of Wildlife Rehabilitators can also be found online at [http://www.nyswre.c\)rg/rehabbers.html#suffolk](http://www.nyswre.c)rg/rehabbers.html#suffolk)

People, finding distressed wildlife have three options:

- 1) Leave the animal where it is and let nature takes it course. In the case of many young animals, they may not actually be abandoned by their parent;
- 2) Relinquish the animal to the care of a licensed rehabilitator; or
- 3) Humanely end the suffering of the animal and dispose of it.

Under no circumstances is a person allowed to keep a distressed animal permanently. More information is available on the DEC website www.dec.nv.gov and <http://www.dee.nv.gov/animals/6956.html>

Dead or distressed endangered or threatened species should be reported to the regional DEC Wildlife office at (631) 444-0310.

Dead or injured marine mammals or sea turtles should be reported to the Stranding Hotline (631) 369-9829.

The DEC is interested in hearing reports of large numbers of dead animals or animals that die

under suspicious circumstances. The DEC will accept such specimens at either the Stony Brook or Ridge office with prior notice only, call (631) 444-0310 to make arrangements. Due to the occurrence of raccoon rabies on Long Island, all dead raccoons should be reported to the local county health department. Other dead wildlife can be buried on site or double bagged and placed in the trash.

Other phone numbers:

Nassau County Health Dept. 516-571-2500

Nassau County Mosquito Control 516-572-1166

DEC Wildlife 631-444-0250