

General Considerations for Handling Wildlife

1. Working with wildlife puts individuals at greater risk of being exposed to certain zoonotic diseases. Considering getting the following vaccinations:
 - [Tetanus vaccine](#): protects against spores of the tetanus bacteria that is commonly found in soil. Once vaccinated, a booster is needed every 10 years.
 - [Rabies vaccine](#): protects against the rabies virus which is spread through the saliva of an infected animal. The rabies vaccine consists of a series of three doses: the initial dose, 7 days after the initial dose, and 21 or 28 days after the initial dose. Booster shots are then given as needed.
2. Carry a wallet medical card that explains to medical personnel that you work with wildlife and could have been exposed to a zoonotic disease.
3. Ensure that you have the proper personal protective equipment such as:
 - Latex or nitrile gloves
 - Facemasks/ventilators
 - Eye protection
 - First-aid kit
4. Be aware of your surroundings and ensure that you have the proper equipment to safely handle the situation prior to acting.
5. Wear gloves when handling wildlife regardless of whether the animal is alive or dead.
6. Thoroughly wash hands after coming into contact with an animal.
7. Clothes, shoes, and vehicles should be thoroughly cleaned as they may be contaminated.

General Ways to Prevent Conflicts with Wildlife

Most nuisance complaints about wildlife in urban and suburban areas stem from animals accessing a food source. Wildlife accessing a food source (unsecured garbage, pet food or birdseed) is not considered property damage and a depredation permit should not be issued. Instead recommend securing the food source.

1. Pet food:
 - Feed pets indoors whenever possible.
 - If pets must be fed outside, supervise the food to ensure that wildlife does not have access to it. Do not leave food out overnight or unattended.
 - When the pets are done eating, clean up any excess or spilled food. Bring the food bowls inside or wash the bowls before putting them back outside. Empty bowls that smell like food will still attract animals into the area.
2. Garbage:
 - Keep garbage in metal cans with tight lids.
 - If possible, keep garbage inside a shed or garage where animals will not have access to the trashcans.
 - Use bungee cords, ratchet straps, or latches to modify garbage cans and prevent animals from getting inside.

3. Birdfeeders:
 - As an alternative to using birdfeeders, consider growing native plants that will attract a variety of birds into the area. The Audubon Society created a native plant database (<https://www.audubon.org/native-plants>) that shows which birds are attracted to each plant.
 - Hang birdfeeders in trees away from houses. This will help keep animals from associating houses/porches with a food source.
 - Use baffles, trays, caging, or weight sensitive feeders to prevent non-target animals from having access to the birdseed.
 - Regularly clean birdfeeders with a 10% bleach solution to help prevent spread of diseases.
4. Do not feed any animals by leaving out food scraps.
5. Electric fencing can deter wildlife from beehives, gardens, and other food sources. Ensure that electric fences are properly built for the species you are trying to deter.
6. Maintain lawns by removing debris, structures in disuse, wood piles, or mulch piles which can make ideal shelters for wildlife.
7. Animals will often dig small holes to eat grubs that are in the ground. There are registered pesticides that can be applied to lawn to treat for grubs. Ensure that pesticides are applied properly and in accordance to the directions on the label. Licensing from the North Carolina Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services is required to apply pesticides to an individual's yard for compensation. For questions regarding these licenses call (919) 733-3556.
8. Airhorns, whistles, noisemakers, and banging pots and pans or trashcan lids can scare animals out of the area. For harassment to be effective, it should begin as soon as the animal comes into the area and persistently used every time the animal returns.
9. If animals are going underneath structures, place a radio, tuned to a talk station, near the access point to make animals feel threatened and deter them from returning. Once vacated, use chicken wire or hardware cloth to prevent future access.

Euthanizing Animals

1. The American Veterinary Medical Association (AVMA) has established guidelines on how to humanely euthanize animals. To view this document, click [here](#). Please note that use of inhumane methods of euthanasia (drowning, smothering, freezing, etc.) will result in enforcement action and potential loss of certification.
2. Be aware of local ordinances that prevent certain methods of take (ex. discharging a firearm within city limits).
3. Animals in the order Carnivora, armadillos, groundhogs, nutria, and beaver must be released on site or humanely euthanized at the capture site or taken to a facility designed to humanely handle the euthanasia. For animals that can be relocated, they may be released on private property with permission of the landowner. Written permission must be obtained from the appropriate government entity before an animal is released onto public land.

Important Contacts

[Regulated Actives and Permits Section \(RAPS\)](#) – Handles all WDCA certifications and can answer questions regarding any regulated activity outside of hunting, fishing, and trapping. RAPS can be contacted Monday- Friday 8 AM - 5 PM by calling (919) 707-0061 or emailing raps@ncwildlife.org.

Wildlife Helpline – The Wildlife Helpline is staffed by three biologists that can answer questions about identification, behavior/biology, injured/orphaned, or nuisance wildlife. Individuals can call the Helpline Monday-Friday 8AM- 5PM at (866) 318-2401 or email at wildlifehelpline@ncwildlife.org.

[Wildlife Enforcement Officers \(WEO\)](#) – There are usually 1 or 2 WEOs per county. WEOs can write depredation permits for all species except for black bears.

[District Biologists \(DB\)](#) - There are 9 DBs that each cover 9-12 counties. DBs can write state depredation permits for every species and are the only individuals that can write permits for black bear.

[United States Department of Agriculture Wildlife Services \(USDA WS\)](#) – USDA WS aids in the procurement of federal depredation permits for migratory birds through the United States Fish and Wildlife Services (US FWS) in Atlanta, Georgia. USDA WS also has assistance programs for certain species such as vultures, feral swine, Canada geese, and beavers.

[Wildlife Rehabilitators](#) – There are licensed wildlife rehabilitators across the state that can take in injured or orphaned wildlife. Always contact a rehabilitator prior to bringing them an animal to ensure they are able to take it in.

[County Health Department](#) – If removing a potentially rabid animal that a person or unvaccinated pet was exposed to contact the County Health Department to determine how to get the animal tested.