



Raccoons and Squirrels

Occasionally raccoons and squirrels build nests in garages, attics and chimneys. Before you call a commercial company to remove these unwelcome guests—try a simple home remedy. Place a radio near the area of habitation and turn it to a talk radio station (not music). Leave the radio on 24 hours a day (as loud as your family and neighbors can tolerate) for at least 72 hours. The pests will find this offensive and want to relocate their nest, but it will take them a few days to find a new home.

Squirrels will also be deterred by bright lights, fumes from rags stuffed into cans and soaked with ammonia, or commercial rodent repellants.

If it is apparent young squirrels or raccoons have been abandoned by their mother, contact a wildlife rehabilitator.

Wildlife Rehabilitation Center of MN	651-486-9453
Animal Humane Soc. Wildlife Rescue	763-522-4325
MN DNR Officer – Rice County	507-789-6361
U of MN Raptor Ctr. (birds of prey)	612-624-4745
Falls Creek Animal & Pest Control	507-838-8250
MN Critter Getter	952-873-6611

The resources listed above are informational only and are not necessarily endorsed by the City of Northfield.

Wildlife Babies – Bunnies, Birds, Ducks and Geese

It is often assumed that baby bunnies found alone have been abandoned by their mother. Usually mother rabbits leave their nests during the day and only return to feed their babies at dawn and dusk. Contrary to popular belief, mother rabbits will return to a nest that humans have touched. If you suspect the mother will not return, conduct a test by laying sticks over the nest in criss-cross fashion. After a day or two, if the sticks are undisturbed, it is likely the bunnies are orphaned and should be taken to a wildlife rehabilitator.

If you find a baby bird hopping around on the ground and it has feathers, it is probably a fledgling that is not ready to fly. Leave it alone for several hours—the mother is likely to return. On the other hand, a baby bird on the ground with no feathers has probably fallen out of a nest and should be placed back in the nest, if possible. If the nest cannot be located or reached, create a temporary nest using a plastic margarine container. Punch some holes in the bottom of the container, fill it with grass or leaves, nail it to the tree as far up as possible, and place the bird inside to await discovery by its mother.

All migratory birds, such as ducks and geese, are protected by federal law. A duck or goose nest should not be disturbed, as the mother will not roost if the nest has been relocated.



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Encountering Wildlife in Suburban Habitats



The information in this brochure is meant to provide helpful tips to homeowners to co-exist with wildlife, take preventative measures to minimize contact and provide guidelines for when to call for assistance, either from law enforcement or wildlife professionals.

The Northfield Police Department only responds to calls regarding wildlife when public safety is threatened, ex., a bite has occurred or an animal shows obvious signs of injury or disease.

Coyotes and Foxes



During the past couple of decades coyotes and foxes have become acclimated to suburban surroundings. Citizens are often concerned when there is a coyote or fox sighting. **In most cases, there is no need for alarm and the city does not need to be notified. Generally, these animals are wary of humans and try to avoid them. Only contact the police if they are acting aggressively or appear to be injured.**

Although humans, including small children, are typically not in danger — small domestic animals are. Cats and small dogs will be at risk from coyotes; small cats and kittens may be at risk from foxes. Cases where human contact with coyotes has occurred, such as a bite, have been attributed to pet owners defending their pets from an attack. In the event this situation occurs call 911 immediately for assistance.

In addition to rodents, squirrels, and rabbits, coyotes and foxes feed on vegetation such as fruits and vegetables—and are also be drawn to pet food. Consider the following tips to minimize the appeal of your property to pesky predators:

- **Do not leave pet food outside**
- **Never feed wildlife—even if an animal appears tame**
- **Secure unprotected garbage**
- **Fruit that falls off of trees should be picked up**
- **Small animals should not be unattended outdoors—this is especially important at night as many wild animals are nocturnal**
- **Cats should not be allowed to roam at night**
- **Keep bird seed in feeders and hang the feeders above ground**
- **Clear brush and weeds from around your home**

The best ways to scare off coyotes or foxes if they wander on your property are: making loud noises—such as banging pots and pans, spraying them with a garden hose or throwing something toward them.

Occasionally foxes make dens under porches, decks or sheds. Wildlife professionals suggest leaving a fox nest alone until the kits are old enough to begin hunting, about 9 weeks of age. When the kits are old enough, the best thing to do is leave smelly sweat socks or old sneakers outside by the nest. They will most likely feel threatened by the smell of humans and relocate on their own.

Rabies Concerns

In Minnesota, rabies vectors—animals that carry and spread rabies—are recognized as bats and skunks. Coyotes and foxes can carry the rabies virus; however, both of these animals are much more likely to be suffering from canine distemper virus. This is the same disease for which your dog is vaccinated. The canine distemper virus destroys the central nervous system, but

does not cause the animal to become aggressive. This distemper virus is not communicable to humans. In any event, any animal acting strangely should be avoided and the police department should be contacted.

Live Trapping

Live trapping is an option to remove unwanted wildlife, **but** it can be problematic. If you live trap an animal, you are responsible for relocating the animal and emptying the trap. Due to the evasive nature of coyotes and foxes, one is much more likely to capture the neighbor's cat, a raccoon or a skunk with a live trap. By law, you are liable for the physical welfare of any animal caught. One can imagine the problems that may be involved with catching a skunk or the neighbor's pet!

The DNR discourages live trapping of animals.

If a particular habitat was suitable for one pest, another of the same species may quickly come along to replace it. Also, studies have shown that once there are less animals competing for food, females in a given species will begin breeding for the first time at an earlier age and producing larger litters, thus improving litter survival rates and increasing wildlife population.

If you conclude live trapping is necessary, it is best to contract with commercial companies for the capture and removal of unwanted animals. These companies are listed in the Yellow Pages under “Pest Control”.

In Northfield, the police department does not remove wildlife from the city. Go to www.ci.northfield.mn.us/cityservices/police for more information.

