



## COMMUNITY RESOURCES

### Wildlife FAQ



235 Jersey City Blvd

Jersey City, NJ 07305

[www.libertyhumane.org](http://www.libertyhumane.org)

[lhs@libertyhumane.org](mailto:lhs@libertyhumane.org)

201.547.4147

**Wild animals are protected per NJ State law. They are present even in the densest of cities, and they serve an important purpose.** From falcons to herons to groundhogs and opossums and snakes, Jersey City, Bayonne, and Hoboken are home to thousands of different types of beneficial creatures, many of whom make a sudden (and dramatic) appearance during the spring and summer months, both during the day and at night. Everyone is out and about finding food, building nests, having babies, and teaching their young to survive--so the chances are pretty good you'll have a wild encounter. And that's really cool!

#### **Common Backyard Wildlife:**

Skunks  
Opossums  
Groundhogs (AKA: Woodchucks)  
Raccoons  
Squirrels  
Mice/rats  
Pigeons Crows/Seagulls  
Finches/Robins

#### **Less Common, but present in Hudson County:**

Turtles  
Snakes  
Hawks/Falcons  
Herons/Egrets  
Deer  
Turkeys  
Pheasants  
Rabbits

**These creatures are our neighbors, but they're the kind of neighbors who prefer to be left alone.** As cities further expand into undeveloped areas, wild animals are forced into closer contact with humans. In order to keep a healthy distance between us and allow these urban animals to do their jobs, we need to avoid drawing them to our property. Leaving out garbage, pet food, or other leftovers provides wildlife with an easy buffet and encourages them to get closer to humans. That's not good!

**It is normal for wildlife to seek out food, water, and shelter wherever they can find it. If you have these elements in your yard, alley, or home, you will attract wild animals to your doorstep.** To keep wildlife away from your property you *must remove* the items that are attracting them. This is the only way to ensure the wildlife will stay away.

- Cover garbage cans with tight lids (raccoons have little hands!)
- Take in dog or cat food
- Cover compost piles
- Make sure garages and outbuildings are closed and secured
- Repair holes or openings in porches/foundations/attics
- Hang birdfeeders out of reach of other animals
- Install a light or make noise in areas where wild animals may nest

**Call the Animal Response Team if a wild animal is sick, injured, or appears to be dangerous.**

If you think you see a wild animal in distress, take a deep breath, wait 20 minutes and go look again. Baby birds learning to fly sometimes (often) fall down! That's ok. Unless they show signs of physical injury they are often best left to figure things out for themselves. If they are still where you left them after 20 minutes call the Animal Response Team; they will walk you through next steps.



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You should not assume that wild animals out during the day or who are seen in public spaces (like playgrounds) are dangerous. Wild animals often look for food during daylight hours, even if they are generally more active at night. If you see a wild animal who is drooling, not moving, appears physically injured, or is showing signs of aggression- this is grounds for concern. Keep your distance and call the Animal Response Team.

#### **Ok. That's all well and good, but there is a (skunk/groundhog/raccoon/opossum) in my yard and I don't like it (or I'm afraid of it). Will you come and take it away?**

No. Wild animals are protected per NJ State law. They have a right to live in our cities. If a wild animal is routinely visiting your yard or home it is because there are resources there that support them. These animals should be avoided and their food or shelter source should be taken away. Then they will leave. If that animal is causing damage to your home or property you may call a private "pest removal" company who may trap and euthanize the animal for a fee. This is not a service the City will provide for you.

#### **Who sets these rules about wildlife?**

The New Jersey Division of Fish & Wildlife oversees wildlife management in the state. Their mission is to **preserve** New Jersey's rich variety of fish and wildlife at healthy levels, **protect** the habitats on which they depend, and **educate** residents so as to foster a positive human/wildlife co-existence. The Division also investigates and prosecutes those who violate wildlife regulations.

#### **I think I found an injured baby bird!**

Breathe. Have a cup of coffee. Come back and look for the bird again. If it is still there, check for a few things: 1. Does it have feathers? 2. Is it hopping or trying to fly? 3. Is there another bird nearby who is making noise or flying around the baby? If so, this bird is most likely a fledgling, an adolescent bird whose parents are teaching it to fly. They don't always get it right away; let them be and keep predators (cats and dogs) away. If the bird has a visible injury (bleeding or dragging its feet or wings), call the Animal Response Team.

If the bird does not have feathers or they are just appearing to "sprout", the baby has likely fallen from a nest. Look up. Can you see the nest? It may be in a tree or on a house. Can you see the parents flying back and forth from the nest to the baby on the ground? If you can find the nest, put the baby back. If you can't or the baby appears to be physically injured, call the Animal Response Team.

Please do not attempt to feed or care for injured baby birds. If they cannot be placed back in the nest they need to be transported to a licensed wildlife rehabilitator for specialized care.

#### **There is a Wild Animal in My Shed/Garage/Attic/Basement!**

It happens. These spaces are dark, quiet, and warm—ideal living quarters for wildlife. The simplest way to get them to leave is to open all doors and windows to the outside, turn on a light and/or a radio, and leave the space. When you return they should be gone and you can fix the opening they used to get inside. If there is no clear opening to the outdoors you will need to set a humane trap and let the animal go outside. Your property manager or building owner is usually responsible for and can facilitate this.



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#### **There is a Wild Animal in My House!**

Ok. Don't panic! Both of you just want to be left alone, so let's make that happen. **First**, identify what the animal is. Close all doors and windows leading to other parts of the house, open all doors and windows that lead outside, and turn the lights on. This will tell the animal it's time to leave. If the animal is a raccoon, call the Animal Response Team. **Second**, re-enter the room after about 20 minutes. The animal should be gone. Close all exterior doors and windows and check for any babies or nests that may have been left behind. If babies are present, call the Animal Response Team. **Third**, fix the opening the animal used to get inside. If they got in once, they will get in again!

If the animal is inside a wall or a space where it cannot leave on its own it will need to be humanely trapped and moved back outside. This is usually handled by your property manager or building owner. Call them and explain the situation.

#### **Raccoons (or other animals) Are in My Garbage!**

Raccoons love garbage! So do opossums and rats. It's a feast for them! Do not approach them when they are eating. Turn on an outdoor light if you have one; this will discourage them from staying long. When they are finished and have left, collect and re-bag all garbage, and make sure you place it in a can with a secure lid. If you don't have a secure garbage can keep your garbage inside until trash day. Remember, raccoons are smart, determined, and have little hands! This does not make them dangerous, but it does make them persistent. It is essential that you seal your garbage in covered cans to avoid attracting raccoons and other scavengers.

If an animal gets stuck inside your garbage can while eating (it happens!), stand behind the can and tip it over so the animal can get out. Make sure you tip it *away* from you and *towards* where you want the animal to go. You can also use an object to push the can over.

#### **My Dog Keeps Getting Sprayed By Skunks!**

Yes. Dogs are nosy and curious. They will naturally approach skunks or other wild animals to investigate (or hunt) them. A skunk cornered in this way will spray to protect itself. This is not the skunk's fault. The skunk is just trying to do its thing.

The best way to avoid surprising a skunk and being sprayed is to keep your distance and make noise. Bang on your back door before letting your dog out into the yard to give skunks or other wildlife a chance to run away. If you're walking your dog on a leash don't let them approach skunks or other unknown animals (this is an important safety precaution as well!). Most wildlife is most active around dusk and dawn, so pay particular attention if you are out with your dog during these times. You WILL see skunks, but if you pay attention you and your dog won't get sprayed.

#### **Animal Response Team Contact Information (Report law violations and animal bites here)**

201.547.4888