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Wildlife and Protection of Property – What's Legal in Ontario?

People and wild animals live side by side in Ontario. We all share responsibility for preventing and handling human-wildlife conflicts. If you must take action against wildlife, please consider all your options and follow all relevant laws and regulations.

Ontario's *Fish and Wildlife Conservation Act* sets out the legal actions property owners can take to deal with problem wildlife. Problem wildlife are animals on your land that you believe are damaging or are about to damage your property. For protection of property provisions to apply, more than the mere presence of wildlife is required.

When and how can I protect my property?

As a landowner, it is your responsibility to manage problem wildlife on your property. If you believe, on reasonable grounds, that wildlife is damaging or is about to damage your property, you may harass, capture or kill most wildlife to prevent it from causing damage. You may not harass, capture or kill more wildlife than is necessary to protect your property, or cause unnecessary suffering to the animals.

You must also comply with all municipal by-laws (e.g., no discharge of firearm by-laws).

What animals cannot be harassed, captured or killed?

The above rule does not apply to:

- moose and woodland caribou
- white-tailed deer and elk (unless you have authorization from the ministry – related to damage to agricultural crops)
- endangered and threatened species protected by the *Endangered Species Act* unless landowners enter into an agreement with the ministry describing what action may be taken to protect the property from that animal. For more information, contact your [local ministry office](#).



Using an agent

You may use an agent to act on your behalf to carry out or assist with wildlife removal. The agent must have authorization from the Minister or belong to a regulated class of agents. An agent may charge for their services.

See the other side of this fact sheet for more information about different kinds of agents.

Using poisons and adhesives

Poisons or adhesives may not be used to kill, capture or injure wildlife, including in protection of property. An exemption applies to licensed poisons (pesticides) which are authorized under the *Pesticides Act* for the removal of pests such as mice and rats.

If you capture wildlife

If you capture wildlife but don't kill it, no later than 24 hours after capture you must:

- release it as close as possible and less than a kilometer from the capture site and in similar habitat wherever possible, unless otherwise directed by the ministry. See the MNR's [Relocating Wildlife fact sheet](#) for more information
- if injured, sick or orphaned, deliver it to an authorized wildlife custodian

Injured or sick wildlife can be taken to a veterinarian for temporary treatment if you are prepared to cover the cost. [Get information on what to do if you find a sick, injured or orphaned wild animal.](#)

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Hiring a Wildlife Control Agent – Tips for Property Owners

Who Is Considered An 'Agent' ?

According to the *Fish and Wildlife Conservation Act*, “agents” are:

- Licensed trappers (with a current licence)
- Employees or agents of the Ontario Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals
- Members of a landowner’s immediate family acting on behalf of the landowner
- A person whose business is primarily removing problem wildlife if they capture and release it (if it is capable of being released), unless also authorized by the ministry to destroy problem wildlife
- Municipal employees with specific responsibilities for wildlife control (Animal Services)
- Agents that trap animals, use firearms or use pesticides must be licensed by the Ontario government. However, there is no specific licence required for being designated a wildlife control agent.

Who Do You Hire?

When landowners do not have the ability to manage problem wildlife on their property, they may turn to agents for assistance. There are many agents that provide wildlife control services, however, you should always ensure that the agent you hire has the appropriate knowledge, skills and training to perform the specific job. Always ask what the agent will do with the wildlife to ensure you are fully aware of and support the methods that will be used. Agents shall not cause any unnecessary suffering while harassing, capturing or killing in protection of property.

The agents should be knowledgeable about wildlife behaviour, the pertinent laws and regulations, and safety procedures. Experience with the specific situation and animal that you’re having a problem with is helpful.



Checklist for Hiring a Wildlife Control Agent

What to do first

- ✓ Determine the service you require
- ✓ Understand what you/the agent can legally do

Finding an Agent

- ✓ Ask friends, family or neighbours for recommendations
- ✓ Check local yellow pages, internet websites or speak with your ministry district office (search Animal Control or Pest Control Services)
- ✓ Set up a building inspection
- ✓ Ask a lot of questions to get to know the agent and the type of services they provide

Getting Estimates and Proposals

- ✓ Obtain various estimates; they should include a detailed description of the work to be done
- ✓ Ask for references from past customers

Contract Details

- ✓ Your name, address and telephone
- ✓ Agent’s name, address and telephone
- ✓ Description of the work being performed
- ✓ Costs
- ✓ Warranty information
- ✓ Start and completion date
- ✓ Signatures – after you have carefully reviewed the details