

Living With Our Wild Neighbors

During the August 2008 meeting of the Conservation Corps, recent wildlife sightings were reported of a raccoon, foxes, deer, a hawk, and a family of Bard Owls. These join our many resident rabbits, chipmunks and squirrels! We welcome these harbingers of a healthy natural environment. We also recognize that some of us are more comfortable than others with the proximity of wild animals. To prevent unwanted encounters, follow these tips:

- * Keep trash cans securely covered until trash day, or pour ammonia or pepper in them to discourage foraging.
- * Keep animals out of attics by trimming tree limbs and plants away from roofs and foundation walls.
- * Fence off or seal spaces under decks and porches.
- * Keep compost piles well away from the house. Use compost containers that are closed, but vent.
- * Make sure chimney caps are tight.
- * Repair rotted-out wood under eaves promptly.
- * Repair or replace attic vents if needed.

If you have a problem with wild animals, call the State Game Warden at 540-899-4169. Emergency situations that involve sick or injured wildlife or immediate public safety risks by prime vectors of rabies (raccoons, skunks, foxes and bats) may be reported to the Fairfax County Police Department's Animal Services Division at 703-691-2131.

All wildlife belongs to the state. Citizens may not trap and relocate wild animals without the knowledge and permission of the Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries. Visit the Fairfax County website at www.fairfaxcounty.gov and navigate to Animals, then Wildlife, for more information.