

## What you can do

Urban and suburban areas provide great habitat for many species of wildlife, but that doesn't mean we need to be in conflict with our wild neighbors.

Here are our top 10 tips to help you prevent potential wildlife problems before they occur.



## Our mission

Together, we tackle the root causes of animal cruelty and suffering to create permanent change.



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Formerly called the Humane Society of the United States

## Living with your wild neighbors

10 tips for preventing conflicts with wildlife







### 1. Secure garbage cans

Wild animals are attracted to the trash you discard. To reduce attractiveness, rinse containers to remove food remnants and odors before discarding or recycling. Then close and secure your garbage can so curious animals can't get inside. If your trash is still attracting visitors, either secure the container's top with rubber tarp straps or bungee cords or switch to a garbage can designed to withstand animal intrusions. If securing the container is not an option, put trash out the day of pickup and avoid leaving a plastic trash bag outside of a container.

### 2. Remove outdoor pet food

Leaving pet food outside creates a free buffet for your wild neighbors and can lead to conflicts among wildlife, people and pets. Feed your pets inside instead. If you must feed your pets outside, pick up any remaining food as soon as your pet stops eating.

### 3. Secure window wells

Cover your home's window wells with clear plastic shields made for these areas; you can find premade window well covers at home building stores. Doing so prevents small animals or poor climbers (such as skunks) from accidentally falling in and stops other animals from using the area for denning. It also keeps unwanted debris out of the wells.

### 4. Trim trees and pick up leaves

Keep branches trimmed at least 6 feet away from your roof line to prevent damage from tree limbs that come in contact with the roof during storms or windy weather. Roof damage leads to deterioration and eventual openings that animals can exploit. Trimming is best done in winter before the spring baby season begins—you don't want to injure or kill baby animals by cutting branches that hold a nest! If you don't want wildlife around, it's also a good idea to clean up leaves and brush that have collected around the house foundation or in the gutters. Left unattended, they provide good hiding spots for wildlife.

### 5. Be a hospitable neighbor

Wildlife will enjoy your backyard water feature or garden just as much as you do. So before adding either one to your yard, be sure you're willing to share it with your wild neighbors.

### 6. Think babies

Very often, the reason wild animals move into our homes is because they offer safe places to give birth and raise young. Always assume an uninvited guest has young, and never start an exclusion or harassment campaign without taking this into account. You don't want to unintentionally separate a mother from her young! This will only exacerbate the problem.

### 7. Keep cats indoors

Cats and wildlife are not a good mix. Free-roaming outdoor cats risk predation by coyotes and other wildlife, just as birds and baby rabbits risk predation by cats. Keeping cats indoors protects both cats and wildlife. Go to [humaneworld.org/indoorcats](http://humaneworld.org/indoorcats) to learn more about transitioning your cat to the indoors.



### 8. Keep wildlife out

Button up your house. Any openings in your house, such as hatches, chimneys or uncovered vents, can provide access to animals looking for a denning spot to spend the winter or raise young. Visit [humaneworld.org/keepwildlifeout](http://humaneworld.org/keepwildlifeout) to learn to seal it up correctly—without entrapping animals.



### 9. Scrap the trap!

Trapping doesn't solve wildlife conflicts. Furthermore, when not used correctly, "humane traps" can quickly become inhumane as animals struggle to escape and harm themselves in the process. More importantly, people don't realize that trapping and relocating wild animals is not kind, even if you take them to a nice green spot. Without known denning sites or food sources, relocated animals are threatened by resident animals or killed by predators as they desperately try to find their way home. Many times, they're also separated from their young, who then starve to death. Visit [humaneworld.org/wildneighbors](http://humaneworld.org/wildneighbors) to find better ways to address problems with wildlife.

### 10. Create a humane backyard

The best way to help your wild neighbors is to provide native plants, bushes and trees for their foraging and nesting needs. Go to [humaneworld.org/humanebackyard](http://humaneworld.org/humanebackyard) to learn how to create your own humane backyard.