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Assistance With Wildlife Damage Problems in Nebraska

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Dennis M. Ferraro, Associate Extension Educator

Nebraskans who experience damage and nuisance problems with wildlife can get assistance from several public and private organizations. This NebFact describes the most direct route to the solution of your problem. A reference guide (Table I) lists who to contact for information, materials, permits, and hands-on assistance.

Wildlife play an important role in our environment. In addition, we gain many recreational, economic, and aesthetic benefits from them. Unfortunately, the activities of wildlife occasionally conflict with human interests in personal property, agricultural production, and health and safety. The most common wildlife damage and nuisance problems in Nebraska are caused by bats, beaver, coyotes, deer, house mice, house sparrows, moles, Norway rats, pocket gophers, prairie dogs, rabbits, pigeons, starlings, snakes, and tree squirrels. Landowners often tolerate some damage by wildlife and many are able to control wildlife damage on their own. Programs are available, however, that provide information, materials, or on-site assistance to people when problems intensify.

The University of Nebraska Cooperative Extension, through its educators, specialists, and assistants can provide a wide range of information on managing wildlife damage. NebGuides are available at local extension offices or online at (http://ianrwww.unl.edu/pubs/wildlife) for many of the species of wildlife that cause problems in Nebraska. Details are provided on life histories and methods for recognizing, preventing, and controlling damage. The comprehensive reference
book, Prevention and Control of Wildlife Damage can be obtained through your local extension educator. Contact your local extension office or the Internet Center for Wildlife Damage Management (http://wildlifedamage.unl.edu) for more information. The United States Department of Agriculture-Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service-Wildlife Services (USDA-APHIS-WS) assists farmers, ranchers, residents, industries, organizations, and agencies in protecting agriculture, property, natural resources, and human health and safety from damage or threats posed by wildlife. On-site expertise or hands-on assistance are provided on request by wildlife specialists that are available in several areas across Nebraska (Figure 1). Information, equipment, and materials are also available from Wildlife Services that enable many people to resolve conflicts with wildlife on their own. Wildlife Services provides a wide range of services, and their efforts have focused on reducing predation on livestock; beaver damage to crops, timber, and roadways; bird-aircraft collisions at civilian and military airports; and the risk of wildlife-borne diseases such as rabies, West Nile virus, and plague.

The Web site for the national program is at http://www.aphis.usda.gov/ws. The primary responsibility of the Nebraska Game and Parks Commission (NGPC) is to manage and preserve wildlife and their habitat throughout the state. The NGPC provides information, limited materials, and emergency on-site assistance for damage caused by game and nongame species. Contact the district office of the NGPC nearest you for information or access them online at http://www.ngpc.state.ne.us. The NGPC can provide publications, current technical information, and a list of cooperating private trappers that can assist with wildlife damage problems. They may also provide materials to exclude some animals or, where other damage control methods fail, issue permits to trap or shoot some species.

Municipal organizations such as Animal Control or Humane Societies are available in the vicinity of Aurora, Columbus, Fremont, Hastings, Kearney, Lincoln, McCook, Norfolk, Omaha, Grand Island, North Platte, Scottsbluff, and other communities. They regularly provide advice on how to deal with problem wildlife and in some cases will provide or rent traps and assist in trapping and relocating animals such as opossum, raccoons, skunks, squirrels, or bats that are associated with dwellings. All occasions in which wild animals bite humans, pets, or livestock should be reported and offending animals tested for rabies. Contact your local office of animal control, humane society, or health and human services for more information. Animal control offices in smaller communities are usually located in local police departments.

Private pest management professionals provide products and services for managing problem wildlife. Most pest management professionals charge fees to assess and resolve wildlife damage and nuisance problems, especially with bats, house mice, house sparrows, moles, Norway rats, opossums, pigeons, raccoons, starlings and tree squirrels. They are available in Nebraska, primarily in urban areas, and may be listed in your local yellow pages under "Animal Pests" or "Pest Control Services." Finally, cooperating trappers (CTs) are willing to assist with problem furbearers. The names of these individuals can be obtained from the NGPC or the Nebraska Furharvesters Association.
Table I. A quick guide to sources of information (I), materials (M), permits (P), and hands-on assistance (A) for wildlife damage management in Nebraska.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Species</th>
<th>UNCE$^1$</th>
<th>WS$^3$</th>
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1 University of Nebraska Cooperative Extension (UNCE) Extension Educators are located throughout Nebraska, often in offices associated with county courthouses or government buildings.

Extension Specialist-Wildlife Damage (402) 472-6822

2 United States Department of Agriculture - Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service - Wildlife Services (WS):

State Director: Lincoln (402) 434-2340
Wildlife Disease Management Specialist: (402) 434-2340
Wildlife Specialists:
- Creston (402) 285-0906
- Chadron (308) 432-2799
- Culbertson (308) 286-3335
- Gordon (308) 282-0763
- Gothenburg (308) 537-4217
- Grant (308) 352-4275
- Mason City (308) 732-3217
- Nelson (402) 225-2253
- Sidney (308) 254-7168
- Wilcox (308) 478-5312
- Other areas (402) 225-7301

3 Nebraska Game and Parks Commission (NGPC)

Wildlife Division Main Office: Lincoln (402) 471-5410
District Offices:
- Alliance (308) 763-2940
- Bassett (402) 684-2921
- Kearney (308) 865-5310
- Lincoln (402) 471-5415
- Norfolk (402) 370-3374
- North Platte (308) 535-8025
- Omaha (402) 595-2144

4 Animal Control (AC) / Humane Society (HS)

Aurora HS (402) 694-2738
Columbus A (402) 562-7325
Fremont HS 402) 721-3282
Grand Island HS (308) 385-5305
Hastings AC (402) 461-2307
Kearney AC (308) 237-2104
Lincoln AC (402) 441-7900
Lincoln HS (402) 441-4488
McCook HS (308) 345-2372
Norfolk AC (402) 644-8700
Omaha area HS (402) 444-7800
Scottsbluff HS (308) 635-0922
Check your telephone directory for the animal control or humane society office nearest you.

5 Private Pest Management Professionals

Private Pest Management Professionals in Nebraska are available primarily in urban areas. Consult your local yellow pages for information. Your local animal control or humane society may provide recommendations.

6 Cooperating Trappers

Cooperating private trappers are located throughout Nebraska. Your local district office of the Nebraska Game and Parks Commission or the Nebraska Furharvesters Association may provide a list of trappers in your area.

Figure 1. Cooperating counties that receive premium and limited levels of assistance with wildlife damage problems from USDA-APHIS-Wildlife Services.
Related Publications

Internet Center for Wildlife Damage Management

University of Nebraska–Lincoln Extension Wildlife Management Publications

USDA APHIS Wildlife Services

Nebraska Game and Parks Commission

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