



# MassWildlife

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## MOVING WILD ANIMALS IS AGAINST THE LAW!

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Capturing a wild animal and releasing it in another area is prohibited by Massachusetts law. Rabies in raccoons is spreading throughout the eastern United States. Moving animals from one area to another may spread this or other diseases to new areas.

To protect people and wildlife, **DO NOT RELOCATE PROBLEM WILDLIFE!** Wild animals sometimes damage homes, gardens and lawns. Often people want to catch the problem animals and release them someplace else. Massachusetts law prohibits moving any live wild animal from one area to another. This law has been in effect for many years, protecting both people and wildlife.

### HERE ARE SOME REASONS WILD ANIMALS SHOULD NOT BE RELOCATED:

- **Capturing a wild animal and releasing it somewhere else may spread disease(s)** into populations of animals (including pets) that did not have the disease(s) previously. Diseases such as Rabies and Canine Distemper have been spread by people who captured an animal in one area and released it somewhere else.
- **Wild animals already live where you release your problem animal.** Wherever you plan to release a problem animal, there are already resident animals with established territories competing among themselves for food and denning sites. When a new animal is introduced, competition for these limited resources is intensified, causing increased stress and conflict within the resident population, as well as hardship or death for the relocated animal.
- **Relocated animals often return to where you caught them.** Squirrels, raccoons and other wildlife can return from translocations of 5, 10, or even 15 miles. Such animals are more likely to be killed by automobiles or succumb to other accidents as they cross unfamiliar areas while attempting to return to their original territories.
- **Relocation only transfers your problem to someone else.** In an unfamiliar territory, an animal accustomed to living near people is likely to seek out human habitations and damage someone else's property.
- **Moving an animal does not solve the problem.** Within a short period of time, other individuals of the same or another species will move in, unless food (garbage, pet food, grain) is removed, and access to gardens, chimneys and attics is blocked.

Information on methods or techniques to control damage caused by wildlife is available in the [Wildlife Program](#) area of our website or by contacting the [MassWildlife District office](#) which serves your community.

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Questions? Comments? Contact: **MassWildlife** at [Mass.Wildlife@state.ma.us](mailto:Mass.Wildlife@state.ma.us)

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