



Hints For Homeowners

Don't Put Out The Welcome Mat For Nuisance Wildlife

(NAPSA)—When homeowners think of invading pests, they don't usually consider the perils of pests bigger than rodents. But birds, bats, squirrels, skunks, raccoons and other wildlife can also invade your home and property, especially during the fall and winter months as they search for shelter from the cooler weather.

Such wildlife can pose serious health and safety concerns when in close proximity to humans. Birds can harbor diseases such as Lyme disease, West Nile virus and histoplasmosis, a respiratory disease often spread through bird droppings. Bats, raccoons and skunks are frequent carriers of rabies, which is potentially fatal if left untreated. Raccoons and skunks, as well as other wildlife such as opossums, foxes, squirrels and deer, can also spread leptospirosis, a bacterial infection passed through infected animal urine.

Because the presence of wild animals can pose serious health and safety concerns, it is not a good idea to deal with such infestations on your own, say pest professionals.

"Homeowners should not attempt to remove an intruding critter from their home or property on their own," says Missy Henriksen, vice president of public affairs for the National Pest Management Association (NPMA). "Although they may appear cute and cuddly, these pests can display erratic



Courtesy of National Pest Management Association

Homeowners should take steps to prevent wildlife, such as birds, bats, squirrels, skunks and raccoons, from entering their homes.

behavior and can bite, peck or claw if they feel threatened. Instead, contact a wildlife or pest professional to handle the infestation."

Homeowners can, however, take steps to keep wildlife out of their homes and properties this season. The NPMA recommends that homeowners:

- Keep trash in tightly sealed, animal-proof containers and empty them frequently.
- Replace loose shingles or boards and seal off any holes that animals might use to gain access to your home.
- Fence off open areas such as under decks and porches.
- Cap or screen off your chimney.
- Trim overgrown shrubs and tree branches that can provide highways into your home.

For more information or to find a licensed pest professional, visit www.pestworld.org.