

Living with wildlife

Warm temperatures wake wildlife

Groundhogs, geese, deer, foxes, coyotes, rabbits, reptiles, pigeons, moles and more... These and other wildlife are increasingly found in suburban neighbourhoods. Sadly, many people see these animals as pests that invade homes and gardens. As communities continue to grow, we infringe on animals' natural habitat and force them to adapt to ours.

As spring approaches, there is always an increase in wildlife sightings. Many animals are waking from hibernation, and their activity will be more noticeable at dusk, dawn and throughout the night.

Most wildlife pose no threat to humans. However, there are potential risks to family pets and structural foundations of buildings. The least distressing – and most inexpensive – approach is to animal-proof your property before wildlife tries to move in.

Making small changes to your property can help prevent problems with wildlife:

- Enclose the yard with a solid fence, 1.8 metres tall
- Keep garbage bins securely covered at all times
- Remove all food sources outside (e.g. bird feeders, pet food)
- Keep shed or garage doors closed when not in use, especially overnight
- Use motion-sensored lights around your home to discourage nocturnal wildlife from coming onto your property
- Vaccinate and keep pets in an enclosed backyard
- Teach children to respect wildlife and to never feed or touch wild animals

Brampton Animal Services strives to educate owners to live harmoniously with urban wildlife through various methods. For more tips on how to wildlife-proof your home, visit www.brampton.ca/animalservices.

The Ministry of Natural Resources (www.mnr.gov.on.ca) also has some great information about how to live with wildlife.

If a wild animal presents an immediate threat to public safety, call Brampton Animal Services at 3-1-1 or Peel Regional Police at 905-453-3311.