

To include or exclude?

Our wild neighbors don't speak our language, but we can still communicate to them where they are safe and welcome, and where they're not, by considering their resources and behavior. Combining inclusive and exclusive measures cohesively within your community can be effective for deterring, redirecting, and respecting wildlife.

Examples:

- Human-crafted raptor perches and owl boxes INCLUDE birds of prey, and can help keep rodent populations to a level which is reasonable for a property owner to EXCLUDE with modest effort.
- Replacing a lawn with native plants INCLUDES songbirds and native pollinators, and diverts the foraging habits of raccoons and skunks which are attracted to the grubs common in lawns making EXCLUSION efforts more effective.
- Supporting local land conservation efforts INCLUDES wildlife in community planning, creating desirable habitat for animals to use in a balanced manner. EXCLUSION can then be employed to discourage wildlife from trying to take make use of resources located in unsafe areas of human habitation.

When interacting with wildlife, remember that just like us they are driven to take advantage of available resources in order to survive. Food, water, and shelter can all be considered "attractants," which will draw animals in closer to your home. Consider where in your life it is reasonable for you to include wild animals, and where they must be excluded for your mutual safety and comfort.

Coexistence practices are most effective when employed on a community level. If one neighbor is including wildlife (intentionally or accidentally), while another wishes to exclude the same species, strategies and goals may need to be adjusted.

Exclusion first steps:

Remove or secure food sources: remember that some animals, like raccoons, can open unlocked containers! Food sources commonly overlooked include:

- Pet food
- Fallen fruit (even fruits not edible to humans)
- Household trash
- Compost
- Edible plants (including those not edible to humans but attractive to species such as rabbits and deer)
- Bird feeders

Remove or enclose habitat for the target species and any of their potential prey

- Trim grasses low to the ground, and bushes at least 2 ft up off the ground
- Remove brush piles or other gardening waste
- Trim trees, especially palm tree fronds, between November and February
- Cover crawl space openings (after ensuring no animals will be trapped inside)
- Ensure domestic animals outdoors are supervised, in secure enclosures and/or on leash, especially at night

Identify the animal if not already known. Attractants and deterrents differ between species. To identify an animal, take photos with a ruler next to...

- Dens or nests
- Tracks
- Scat
- Home or garden damage

OR consider purchasing an affordable trail camera/camera trap which may be useful in multiple stages of exclusion and wildlife observation.

Once the species has been identified, reevaluate whether any potential food sources have been missed. You can then consult a wildlife exclusion service or use information from reputable resources like California Department of Fish and Wildlife, the UC Integrated Pest Managment program, or other experts to guide your own exclusion efforts.

Some resources, even from experts, may include options lethal to wildlife. CWC strongly recommends humane exclusion efforts over lethal methods of control when possible. Thorough exclusion can provide better long-term results by eliminating the attractants that cause reoccurring conflict.