

## Opossums

Opossums are the only marsupial found in North Carolina and are not considered a rabies vector species. They are resistant to the venom of most venomous snakes in NC and feed on copperheads, rattlesnakes and cottonmouths with minimal risk of injury or death. Opossums also eat a substantial amount of ticks and a wide variety of critters (cockroaches, slugs, mice, etc.).

**What kind of damage is caused is by opossums?** Opossums can eat chicken eggs and young chicks. They will occasionally get into houses and outdoor structures through small holes or openings.

**Can a WCA write a depredation permit?** Yes, if property damage has occurred, a depredation permit can be issued by a WCA.

**Can bears be relocated?** Yes, opossums can be relocated onto property with landowner permission. They can also be released on site, euthanized at the capture site, or taken to a facility designed to humanely handle the euthanasia.

**What can I do with a sick or injured opossum?** Opossums can be rehabilitated. There are licensed [rehabilitators](#) across the state that can take in injured or orphaned opossums. An opossum with a life-threatening injury or illness should be humanly euthanized and disposed of in a safe and sanitary manner.

**Are there safety concerns?** No, however it is good practice to wear gloves when handling any animal.

### Non-lethal Options:

- Education
  - See the [General Considerations for Handling Wildlife](#) document for general ways to prevent damage from wildlife.
- Exclusion
  - Fencing can be effective at excluding opossums. Poultry needs to be placed in a completely enclosed pen with 1-inch chicken wire over a sturdy wooden framework. Electric wire can be added to the enclosure for additional protection.

### Lethal Options:

- Opossums can be hunted during the open hunting season with a state hunting license. A landowner does not need a hunting license to hunt on his/her own property during the season.
- Opossums may be trapped during the regulated trapping season with a trapping license. A landowner does not need a trapping license to trap on their property during the season.
- Opossums caught in the act of causing property damage may be shot by the landowner without a depredation permit (where permitted by local ordinance). If property damage has occurred, opossums can be taken with a depredation permit.