



Nuisance Wildlife Laws in Colorado

Following are summaries of Colorado's most common regulations and statutes pertaining to nuisance wildlife questions. The laws and regulations in this handout are paraphrased for easier understanding and are intended only as a guide. Colorado's wildlife statutes and regulations can be viewed in their entirety at Colorado Parks and Wildlife (CPW) offices or online at cpw.state.co.us/aboutus/Pages/Regulations.aspx. Please keep in mind that these laws note what is restricted by state statutes and what is allowed at a certain location. It is your responsibility to determine whether it is legal to use a particular method of take in your city or county. CPW does not require nor request the removal of wildlife deemed a nuisance; the determination that a species has become a nuisance and should be removed is the prerogative of the landowner. There are many non-lethal methods for discouraging the presence of wildlife. For information about co-existing with wildlife, please contact your local CPW office or visit our website at cpw.state.co.us.

1.) WHAT CAN I DO IF WILDLIFE IS CAUSING DAMAGE ON MY PROPERTY?

Statute 33-6-107(9) and Wildlife Commission Regulations (WCR) 306(A), WCR 1000(A)(5), WCR 313(C) & WCR 327
If wildlife is causing damage to crops, real or personal property, or livestock - a person (or any employee or agent of the landowner) may hunt, trap, or take the following wildlife on lands owned or leased by the person without securing a license to do so:

- Black-billed magpies, common crows, starlings, English or house sparrows, common pigeons, coyotes, bobcats, red foxes, raccoons, jackrabbits, badgers, marmots, prairie dogs, pocket gophers, Richardson's ground squirrels, rock squirrels, thirteen-lined ground squirrel, porcupines, crayfish, tiger salamanders, muskrats, beavers, exotic wildlife, and common snapping turtles.
- Additional species include: tree squirrels, cottontail rabbits, marmots, porcupines, bats, mice (except Preble's meadow jumping mouse), opossums, skunks, voles, rats, and ground squirrels.
- Any person may kill rattlesnakes when necessary to protect life or property.
- The pelts or hides of any mammal taken under these provisions may be transferred, possessed, traded, bartered, or sold by any person who holds an appropriate small game or furbearer license. (For information on the possession and/or disposal of pelts and hides of animals NOT listed above, including bear and lion, please contact CPW for permission.)

2.) WHAT METHODS CAN I USE TO TAKE WILDLIFE WHEN THEY ARE CAUSING DAMAGE ON MY PROPERTY?

Statute 33-6-203(1), WCR 303(A)(3), WCR 303(B) & WCR 303 (E)(4)

Trapping and or shooting are the most common methods.

- If using firearms, check with your local authorities on the laws that apply to discharging a firearm.
- If trapping, the ONLY types of traps that may be used are LIVE (cage or box traps). (See #5 for exceptions.)
- Small game and furbearers captured in live traps cannot be moved from the capture site and must be killed or released on site when the trap is checked. (See #3 and #4 following for exceptions.)

3.) WHICH WILDLIFE SPECIES CAN I RELOCATE WITHOUT A PERMIT?

WCR 303(A)(3)

Tree squirrels, cottontail rabbits and raccoons can be relocated without a permit, provided that:

- CPW has been notified in advance.
- The relocation site is appropriate habitat for the species.
- Permission has been obtained from the landowner or managing agency where the animal will be released.
- The relocation must occur within 10 miles of the capture site for squirrels and rabbits and within 2 miles for raccoons.

4.) WHAT IF I WANT TO RELOCATE AN ANIMAL OTHER THAN TREE SQUIRRELS, COTTONTAIL RABBITS OR RACCOONS?

WCR 303(A)(3) & WCR 304(E)

If you want to relocate any other species, you must first obtain a Relocation Permit from CPW.

5.) WHEN CAN I USE BODY-GRIPPING/DEATH TRAPS?

Amend.14, Statute 33-6-203, Statute 33-6-204, Statute 33-6-207, Statute 33-6-208, WCR 303(A)(2) & WCR 303(E)(5)

In November 1996, Amendment 14 was passed by ballot initiative. This banned the use of traps such as snares, Conibears, leghold traps, etc. for the recreational take of wildlife.

- You can use body-gripping/ death traps for mice and rats without a permit (as listed in #1).
- Landowners, and others authorized by statute, may be eligible for a 30-day trapping permit where certain body-gripping/death traps can be used in order to protect commercial livestock and/or commercial crop production.
- Specifications on traps are found under WCR 303(E).

6.) WHAT HOURS CAN I TRAP AND WHEN MUST I INSPECT THE TRAPS?

WCR 302(B), Department of Agriculture (DOA) Statutes Title 35 and DOA Regulations

The following information below applies to anyone who is trapping (whether they are permitted to use body-gripping traps or live traps):

- Small game (except game birds), game reptiles and furbearers may be trapped day or night.
- All traps and snares MUST be visually checked AT LEAST ONCE EVERY DAY.
- Under 30 day exemption-regulations could vary. Persons can consult DOA statutes and regulations.

7.) CAN I KEEP ANY OF THE WILDLIFE THAT I CAPTURE?

WCR 009(A), WCR 020(B) & WCR 1000(A)(6)

Up to four individuals of each of the following species and/or subspecies of reptiles and amphibians may be taken annually and held in captivity, provided that no more than twelve in the aggregate may be possessed at any time:

- Woodhouse's toad, plains spadefoot, boreal chorus frog, painted turtle, ornate box turtle, common sagebrush lizard, ornate tree lizard, common side-blotched lizard, prairie lizard, plateau fence lizard, gophersnake/bullsnake, terrestrial gartersnake, plains gartersnake, common lesser earless lizard, tiger whiptail, racer and plains hog-nosed snake.
- Snapping turtles may also be taken.
- If these species have not been in contact with species from other geographic areas, they may be returned to the wild but shall not be returned in a distance over 10 miles from where they were captured.
- No other live wildlife can be taken from the wild and held in captivity unless you are authorized/licensed by CPW.

8.) CAN I EVER USE TOXICANTS/POISONS ON WILDLIFE?

Statute 33-6-130, Statute 33-6-209 & WCR 303(B)

Some toxicants are legal for Richardson's ground squirrel, rock squirrel, thirteen-lined ground squirrel, pocket gopher, marmots, black-tailed, white-tailed, and Gunnison prairie dogs when causing damage on private property. Most rats and mice also fall under this category. Some poisons are available over the counter. You must follow label instructions. Poisons may only be used for species indicated on the box, and application directions must be followed in order for poison to be lawful. Regardless of whether a poison or toxicant is legal by statute, it is your responsibility to check with local authorities about restrictions on specific poisons and toxicants at your location.

9.) CAN I SHOOT A BLACK BEAR OR MOUNTAIN LION IF IT IS ATTACKING MY DOG OR MY LIVESTOCK?

Statute 33-3-106

- Black bears and mountain lions CAN NOT be destroyed when they are causing damage to personal property, including pets.
- Black bears and mountain lions CAN be killed when it is NECESSARY to prevent them from inflicting death, damage or injury to livestock, human life, real property, or a motor vehicle. Any wildlife killed shall remain the property of the state, and such killing shall be reported to the division within five days. "Real property" means land and generally whatever is erected or growing upon or affixed to land. (Note: "Personal Property" means everything that is subject to ownership, other than real estate. Personal property includes moveable and tangible things such as pets, furniture and merchandise.)

10.) DOES CPW MANAGE DOMESTIC "WILDLIFE?"

Statute 33-1-102 (51), WCR 1103(A) & WCR 1103(B)

CPW does not manage domestic species of ducks, geese, rats, mice, European ferrets, pigeons, guinea fowl or peafowl. Check with your county or city's municipal code for restrictions on domestic animals.

For more information on Colorado's wildlife, contact the Denver CPW Headquarters at (303) 297-1192 or visit our website at cpw.state.co.us.

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