

WILDLIFE ISSUES AND PROBLEMS

Most of us moved to Cordillera Ranch from some large urban area and are still learning about the wildlife on our properties. We probably have experienced some mixed emotions about their antics and perhaps have faced issues about what is the correct response for our interaction with these long term residents of our new homes. You may have been surprised to learn that feral hogs, numerous snakes / lizards / frogs / turtles, gray & red foxes / gray & rock squirrels / cottontail & jack rabbits, four species of deer, skunks, porcupines, raccoons, opossums, armadillos, bobcats and even mountain lions. When you include the annual cycle of migrations, the number of birds who can be seen in this area is astounding.

As the relationship develops, it is likely that you will face issues like: how can I prevent them from destroying my garden, how can I keep them out of my garbage, or what do I do if they are in my attic? The answers to these and other wildlife related questions are complex and can have multiple answers depending on your view points and your priorities. There is however no doubt that many of us as “city people” can greatly improve our decision making abilities in this regard, just by learning more about the habits and characteristics of our wildlife neighbors.

Perhaps the best solution for minimizing problems with wildlife has to do with our habits and activities around the home. The basic principles have to do with managing food sources and restricting potential living areas in an around your house. Make sure you secure garbage storage, avoid leaving pet food outside, do not feed wild animals, and secure potential entries to your house chimney tops (i.e. chimney tops, window screens, dryer vents, plumbing or electrical line entry points, eaves, etc...)

One of the countries top wild animal rescue and rehabilitation centers is our next door neighbor in Kendalia, Texas. WRR, Inc was founded in 1977 and has been providing rescues, rehabilitations and releases for orphaned, injured, and displaced wildlife. Their founder, Lynn Curry, has turned her love for animals into an accredited 187 acre sanctuary for wildlife. This organization has tons of useful information about the wildlife in this area with some special sections on our interactions with wildlife and much of it can be accessed through their website: <http://www.wildlife-rescue.org> Look at the “Tips for dealing with Urban Wildlife” section of the webpage to get some great ideas for guarding your home from intrusion and what to do if you have uninvited visitors. They also provide a non-emergency e-mail: info@wildlife-rescue.org to let the public ask questions about some wildlife matter they are facing and need answers. WRR maintains a 24 hour Emergency Hotline. (830) 336-2725. Since WRR operates as a charity, there are times when they just do not have the staff available to send someone to address an issue.

Another source of support and assistance with a trapped or injured animal is available by contacting the Kendall County Sherriff (830) 249-9721, ext 538 or in emergencies call 911. (<http://kendallcountysheriff.com/divisions-departments/animal-control>)

A third option for help is a local business “Critter Control”, (210) 499-4225 managed by Russ Van Hellen to assist with problem animal situations. Russ concentrates the services of his business on helping home owners deal with pest animal situations. As a trained biologist, he provides a humane approach and methods for animal capture and release. His company website has more details about his services. (<http://sanantonio.crittercontrol.com>)

We all still have many things that we can learn about the wildlife around us that will help us to live more peacefully with one another. Hopefully you will keep these three useful contacts on hand to use for that unexpected encounter with wildlife, whether that is a problem with an animal or an animal with a problem.

We would also recommend that you take extreme caution in trying to deal with any of these wild animals on your own. The strength, speed and potential violence of a trapped or hurt wild animal is hard for us to imagine. Even if you are trying to help them, there is a risk of injury for you when dealing with one of these animals, even the small ones.

Around our houses it is likely that we will have some short term issues with rambunctious members of the wildlife community. We hope you will still see that there is a sense of wonder and beauty in these creatures. Learning about the animals and birds around your home can be very fun and will enable you to enjoy your new native neighbors at Cordillera Ranch.