



For More Information Contact

wildlifecontrol@spca.bc.ca
BC SPCA Animal Helpline
1.855.622.7722

BCSPCA
SPEAKING FOR ANIMALS

RIVER OTTERS & MINK

WILDLIFE CONTROL BEST PRACTICES

Species

River otter (*Lontra canadensis*),
Mink (*Mustela vison*)

Legal Designation

Furbearers, *BC Wildlife Act*

Seasonal Considerations

One litter of babies in early spring, river
otters have 3-4 pups, mink 4-8 kits



Did you know?

Mink and river otters are adept at hunting in water. They can eat fish, invertebrates, rodents, small mammals, reptiles, amphibians, insects, birds and their eggs. Their habitat is at risk from climate change.

Mink, Photo Credit: Martin Smart

Common Conflicts

River otters and mink are carnivorous mammals from the family Mustelidae. They may dig in yards, crop fields, or road embankments to den or in pursuit of prey. Mink and otters sometimes prey on domestic animals like rabbits, chickens, turkeys, or ducks, by digging under fences or floors to enter their enclosures. River otters can prey on fish in backyard ponds and den in sheds and boathouses.



River otter, Photo Credit: Marnee Pearce

Conflict Prevention

To prevent attracting otters and mink, remove potential food sources (especially meat and fish) and maintain farm animal housing structures. Secure garbage bins, compost, and animal/fish waste containers. Ensure pet food is not left outside. Block access to spaces larger than 2.5 cm using wood or metal, and use mesh poultry netting around house structures and ventilation or drainage openings. To be effective, mesh poultry netting should be installed by digging a trench around the perimeter and installing the mesh in a L-shape. The trench should be approximately 30 cm deep and 60 cm wide, and then back-filled once fencing is installed.

Call an **AnimalKind** accredited company if you need help managing mink or river otters

Visit www.animalkind.ca for more information



AnimalKind
BCSPCA Accredited

spca.bc.ca/urban-wildlife





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River otter, Photo Credit: Colin Klassen



RECOMMENDED

Actions & methods for control

Use mild humane harassment techniques to encourage animals to leave. Place apple cider vinegar-soaked rags in plastic containers with holes in the lid, and place the containers near den entry points (without blocking access). If babies are present, it is best to wait until they are old enough to leave the den. Injured or orphaned mink and otters should be taken to a wildlife rehabilitator for treatment.

To evict an animal from a house or structure, use a one-way door to allow the animal to leave the den, but not re-enter. Leave the door in place for two to three nights and permanently seal the openings after the den is undisturbed for several nights. If a one-way door can't be used, or has been ineffective, animals should be live-trapped and then release immediately outside the home. If necessary, use reuniting techniques for any babies present.

Don't Trap and Relocate

Trapping and relocating wildlife away from their home is generally not a permanent or humane solution. Animals often injure themselves and may die trying to escape a trap. Relocated animals have to set up a new home, may starve trying to find food or get into fights with other animals over territory, and may spend vital energy trying to return home.

When you trap animals, you also risk separating a mother from her babies. Even if you move an entire family, a mother may abandon her young due to the pressure of caring for the babies while trying to find food in a new area.



NOT RECOMMENDED

Actions & methods for control

The BC SPCA does not recommend killing river otters and mink. However, legal regulated methods may be used for euthanasia to relieve suffering when animals are injured. They may also be used legally for control, but are not recommended as they can cause suffering, may be high risk to non-target animals, and/or are difficult to administer. Check local bylaws and/or regulations to confirm whether the method is legal in a municipality.

- Trapping and relocating (in accordance with the **BC Wildlife Act**)
- Blunt force trauma
- Carbon dioxide or carbon monoxide
- Cervical dislocation
- Crossbow
- Killing neck snare
- Leghold or foot snare, submerged
- Penetrating captive bolt
- Shot to brain
- Spring trap (e.g. Conibear-style)



ILLEGAL

Actions & methods for control

- Bait poisons
- Drowning (excluding legal traps outlined in **BC Hunting & Trapping Regulations**)
- Suffocation
- Chloroform
- Electrocution
- Freezing (including dry ice)
- Leghold or foot snare, land
- Vehicle exhaust