

Wild animals are not pets.

It is illegal to keep wildlife as pets in New York State. When a wild animal is removed from its habitat and kept as a pet, it is no longer able to breed and contribute to the survival of its species. Wildlife belong in the wild where they contribute to biodiversity (variety of life). Many species of wildlife are difficult to care for and most do not make good pets. Pets, especially non-native species, must *never* be released in the wild.

Under certain circumstances, licensed wildlife rehabilitators may keep wild animals. These animals are not pets, however. Most often, they have been injured and will be released back into the wild when they are well enough to survive on their own. If they cannot survive on their own, they may be used for educational purposes, such as visits to schools.



Sue Strafer

Keep wild animals wild.



Sometimes we do everything we can to avoid problems with wildlife, and it's still not enough. That's when it's time to contact DEC. Go to www.dec.ny.gov/animals/7005.html for detailed information.



Wild animals that learn to approach one house will approach other houses and can become nuisances. They may be attracted to homes if they find a food source nearby. You can avoid problems from the start by storing trash securely and feeding pets indoors only. Pet food and unsecured garbage cans are attractive to bears, raccoons and skunks. To discourage problems with bears, feed birds only in winter, and take birdfeeders down around March when bears' hibernation period ends. A diet scrounged from humans is not healthy for wildlife. *It is illegal to intentionally feed bears, deer and moose in New York State.*

If you want to help wildlife, get involved in projects to improve your favorite species' natural habitat, like putting up bird houses, planting a butterfly garden, or cleaning up litter.