

A photograph of a sun-dappled forest path. The path is covered in fallen leaves and branches, leading through a dense forest of tall, thin trees with vibrant green foliage. Sunlight filters through the canopy, creating a pattern of light and shadow on the ground. A semi-transparent white rectangular box is overlaid in the center of the image, containing the title and sponsor information.

Ridgefield Wildlife Awareness Seminar

Sponsored by: Ridgefield Library, Woodcock Nature
Center & Ridgefield Police Department

Connecticut State Animal Response Team CTSART

- ***Friends Don't Leave Friends Behind***
 - ***Public Awareness: Bring Your Pet's with you***
 - ***Plan and Prepare for Emergencies***
 - ***Recruit Volunteers to help animals in times of disaster***
-
- Donna A Cobelli DVM CTSART State Coordinator
 - Region5 Team Leader ESF 11 region 5 Chair
 - CTSARTR5@GMAIL.COM



A photograph of a sun-dappled forest path. The path is covered in fallen leaves and branches, leading through a dense forest of tall, thin trees with vibrant green foliage. Sunlight filters through the canopy, creating a pattern of light and shadow on the ground. A semi-transparent grey rectangular box is overlaid in the center of the image, containing the title and sponsor information.

Ridgefield Wildlife Awareness Seminar

Sponsored by: Ridgefield Library, Woodcock Nature
Center & Ridgefield Police Department

Who are we?

Woodcock Nature Center

Since 1972

- 501c3 Organization
- 149 acres of state-protected land
- 3 miles of publicly accessible woodland trails
- Public outreach, school field trips/visits & wildly popular summer camp!

Who are we?

Woodcock Nature Center



Jennifer Bradshaw
Birds of Prey Handler &
Animal Care Manger

Who are we?

Ridgefield Police Department Animal Control Office

- Animal Education
 - Animal related investigations
- Control abandoned and unattended animals
 - Injured/sick wildlife
 - Licensing of dogs
 - Lost animals
- Animal complaints
 - Shelter strays

Who are we?

RPD's Animal Control Officer



Kris Zulkeski

ACO Officer & Licensed NWCO

Common Wildlife in CT

Mammals

- Bats
- Beaver
- Black Bear
- Bobcat
- Opossum
- Raccoon
- Red Fox
- Gray Fox
- Coyote
- Striped Skunk
- White-tailed Deer
- Woodchuck

Birds of Prey

- American Kestrel
- Bald Eagle **threatened*
- Barn Owl **endangered*
- Barred Owl
- Eastern Screech Owl
- Great Horned Owl
- Kestrel
- Red-tailed Hawk
- Sharp-shinned Hawk
**endangered*

Reptiles

- Box Turtle **species of special concern*
- Common Snapping Turtle
- Common Gartersnake
- Northern Copperhead
- Northern Watersnake
- Eastern Milksnake
- Timber Rattlesnake
**endangered*



Red Fox

Scientific Name: *Vulpes Vulpes*

Weight: 10-15 average, up to 31 lbs.

Height: 14-20 inches

Lifespan: 2-5 years

Trophic Level: Omnivorous

Significant Predators: Humans

Mating Season: January – March

Offspring: March- May

Litter: 6 (average)



MYTH vs. FACT

Foxes are Nocturnal?

Foxes are Nocturnal?

MYTH

Foxes are actually Crepuscular- which means they are most active at dawn and dusk. In residential neighborhoods they can be seen at night or during the day.

Red Fox



Grey Fox



Coyote

Scientific Name: *Canis latrans*

Weight: 25-50 lbs.

Height: 1.9-2.2 ft.

Lifespan: 6-8 years

Trophic Level: Carnivorous

Significant Predators: Humans (Depending on location Wolves & Mountain Lions)

Mating Season: January – March

Offspring: March- May

Litter: 7 (average in CT)



MYTH vs. **FACT**

Coyotes are easily identified?

Coyotes are easily identified?

MYTH

*Coyotes are often mistaken for
Wolves!*



Average of 15– 46 lbs.



Average of 66– 180 lbs.

MYTH vs. FACT

**Coyote injured/killed a dog,
my children are next**

**Coyote injured/killed a dog, children
are next**

MYTH

Coyotes may see a small pet (dog or cat) as prey, but not a child! Attacks on children and/or humans is rare and usually is a result of the Coyote being sick.

Black Bear

Scientific Name: *Ursus americanus*

Weight: 150-450 lbs.

Height: 3 feet

Lifespan: 18-23 years

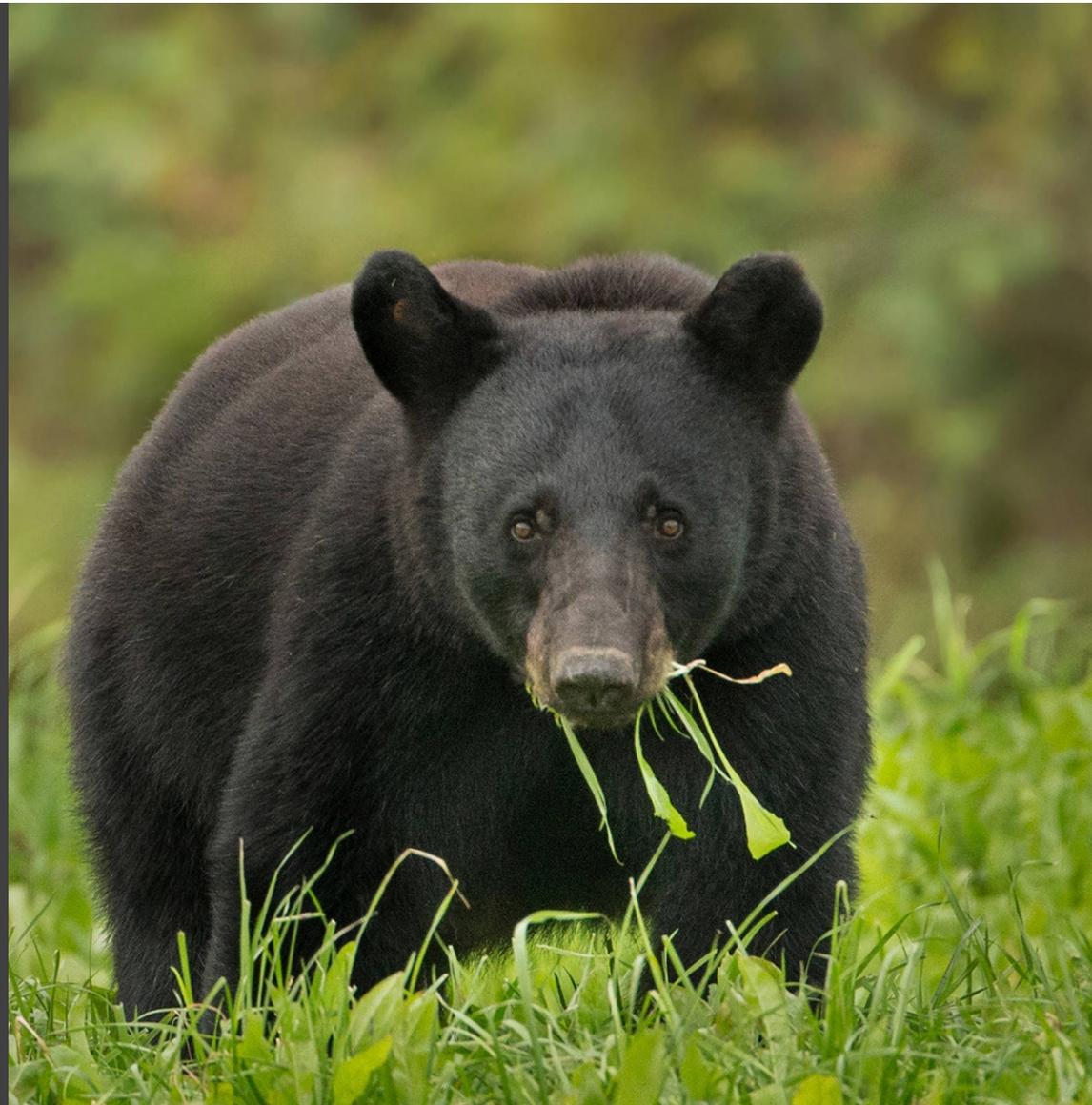
Trophic Level: Omnivorous

Significant Predators: Humans (Depending on location Wolves, Mountain Lions and Brown Bears)

Mating Season: June-July

Offspring: January-February

Litter: 1-4, 2-3 is the average



MYTH vs. FACT

There were bear sightings in my neighborhood. Now, it isn't safe to take a walk or allow my child to play in the backyard?

There were bear sightings in my neighborhood. Now, it isn't safe to take a walk or allow my child to play in the backyard?

MYTH

It is safe to enjoy the outdoors and you should always be aware of your surroundings. Dog's should be leashed at all times and children within view. Bear attacks are
EXCEPTIONALLY RARE!

Bobcat

Scientific Name: *Lynx rufus*

Weight: 18-35 lbs.

Height: 21 inches

Lifespan: 7-9 years

Trophic Level: Omnivorous

Significant Predators: Coyotes, Fox
and large Owls

Mating Season: February-March

Offspring: April

Litter: 1-4, 2 is average



MYTH vs. FACT

**I just saw a Mountain Lion
in my yard!**

**I just saw a Mountain Lion
in my yard!**

MYTH

Although there are numerous reported sightings of mountain lions in Connecticut every year, these animals have actually been extinct in this state for more than a century! So what are people actually seeing??

BOBCATS!!

Proof??



Then in June 2011, there were reports of a mountain lion in Greenwich and, for the first time, a photo. Based on this blurry photo and pawprints, DEEP confirmed it was likely a mountain lion. The next week, on June 11, the cat was hit and killed by an SUV on the Wilbur Cross Parkway in Milford. It was a 140-pound male mountain lion, the first confirmed in Connecticut in more than 100 years.

Initially, officials believed it had been released from a private handler. As unlikely as it sounds, it was a more believable theory than some of the alternatives, among them that the cat was evidence of a breeding population in the state that was being kept secret by DEEP. However, the captive lion theory was also wrong. A month after the cat was struck and killed, researchers confirmed it had traveled more than 1,500 miles from the Black Hills of South Dakota. Genetic testing placed the animal in Wisconsin and Minnesota, and the cat had been sighted at several different points during its long journey east. The journey is chronicled in the 2016 book *Heart of a Lion: A Lone Cat's Walk Across America* by William Stolzenburg.

- Erik Ofgang, CT Magazine October 24, 2019

Bobcat



Mountain Lion



Opossum

Scientific Name: *Didelphis virginianus*

Weight: 4-12 lbs.

Height: 9-20 inches (long)

Lifespan: 4 years

Trophic Level: Omnivorous

Significant Predators: Large Owls,
Eagles, Foxes, Dogs & Cats

Mating Season: March

Offspring: March-April

Litter: 9



MYTH vs. FACT

Opossums are aggressive!

Opossums are aggressive!

MYTH

*This animal is non-aggressive and nondestructive.
They won't dig up your yards, attack or threaten pets
or dig burrows.*

Raccoon

Scientific Name: *Procyon lotor*

Weight: 10-20 lbs.

Height: 23-38 inches (long)

Lifespan: 2-3 years

Trophic Level: Omnivorous

Significant Predators: Coyotes,
Bobcats and large Owls & Hawks

Mating Season: January-March

Offspring: April-May

Litter: 4



MYTH vs. **FACT**

I saw a Raccoon during the day so it must have rabies.

**I saw a Raccoon during the day
so it must have rabies.**

MYTH

Raccoons are primarily crepuscular/nocturnal but they sometimes venture out during the day. This does NOT always mean they are sick.

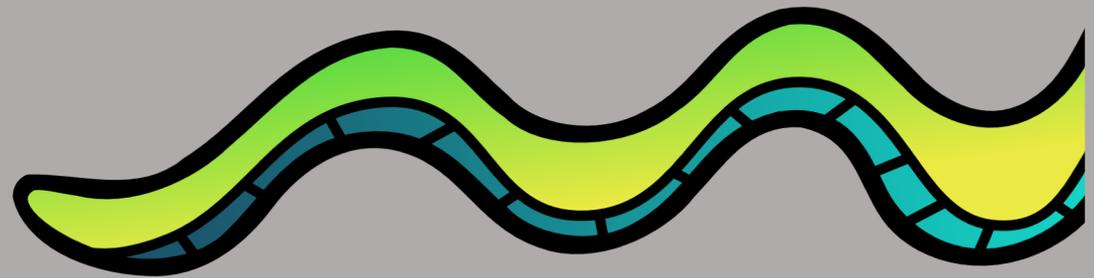
Raccoon rabies

Symptoms to look for:

- Unprovoked aggression
- Impaired movement
- Excessive salivation
- Paralysis or lack of coordination
- Unusually friendly behavior
- Disorientation



**LET'S SSSLITHER OVER TO A
DIFFERENT CLASS OF
ANIMAL...**





**Eastern
Milksnake**

Case of mistaken identity?

**Northern
Copperhead**



**Northern
Water
Snake**

CASES OF MISTAKEN IDENTITY

A comparison of commonly confused Northeastern venomous and non-venomous snakes

VENOMOUS

NON-VENOMOUS



Timber Rattlesnake

- Crotalus horridus*
- Recognized by a tall rattle, a shovel head, facial pits (see picture), and vertical pupils.
 - Adult length: 36-54 inches
 - Typically a yellowish color with brown or black bands down its back.
 - Found in deciduous forests on rugged terrain.
 - Hibernates in rocky crevices and dens.
 - Endangered in several Northeastern states: NJ, VT, MA, and NH.



Facial Pit



Eastern Hognose

- Heterodon platirhinos*
- Distinguished by an upturned snout (see picture), lack of facial pits, and round pupils.
 - Adult length: 18-45 inches
 - Variable coloration; can be spotted yellow or all black.
 - Found in woodlands with dry sandy areas.
 - When threatened the hognose will flatten its neck and bring its head up off the ground.
 - It may also play dead.



Copperhead

- Agkistrodon contortrix*
- Recognized by a copper/brown/red shovel head, facial pits (see picture), and vertical pupils.
 - Adult length: 24-36 inches
 - Juveniles have tails with yellow tips.
 - Found in forests, rocky outcrops, and farmland/fields.
 - Endangered in MA.



Facial Pit



Eastern Milk Snake

- Lampropeltis triangulum*
- Distinguished by a Y or V on the top of its head, tapered tail, a lack of facial pits, and rounded pupils.
 - Adult length: 24-36 inches
 - Typically has bands of red-brown/black down its body. Its underbelly is checkered white and black.
 - Found in fields, forests, or rocky outcrops.
 - Has a broad range across the Northeast.



Cottonmouth

- Agkistrodon piscivorus*
- Recognized by black "hourglass" bands on its back, a flattened head, facial pits (see picture), and vertical pupils.
 - Adult length: 30-48 inches
 - When threatened the cottonmouth will expose a white mouth.
 - Found near freshwater.
 - Range does not extend further north than Virginia.



Facial Pit



Northern Water Snake

- Nerodia sipedon*
- Distinguished by dark bands down its body, a narrow head, a slender body, a lack of facial pits, and round pupils.
 - Adult length: 24-42 inches
 - Coloration can be brown, redish, gray, or black.
 - Found near freshwater.
 - Has a broad range across the Northeast.

Quick Tips:

- Venomous snakes are very rare in the Northeast.
- Snakes are shy creatures and will typically not attack unless disturbed.
- Venom is meant for prey, not protection.
- Non-venomous snakes will also vibrate their tails when agitated.
- All Northeastern species of venomous snakes have heat sensing facial pits and vertical pupils.

Why Are Snakes Important?

- Snakes are an essential part of ecosystems because they act as both predator and prey. Their absence can alter the balance of a food web.
- Snakes control populations of smaller animals. This directly impacts humans because smaller mammals can spread disease, for example the deer mouse that spreads Lyme disease.

Poster Design by Erin Capra
Illustrations by Brittany LeBold



Venomous vs. Nonvenomous*

Venomous

- Pits present on head
- Elliptical (vertical) pupils
- Undivided anal plate
- Triangular-shaped head, neck much skinnier than head

Nonvenomous

- No pits on head
- Round pupils
- Divided anal plate
- Head more continuous with body

*This is true for Indiana's native snakes, NOT all snakes



Venomous



Nonvenomous

Elliptical pupil

Nostril

Pit



Nostril

Round pupil



**Let's take a break and meet
some animals!**

(The crowd goes wild)



Distressed Wildlife

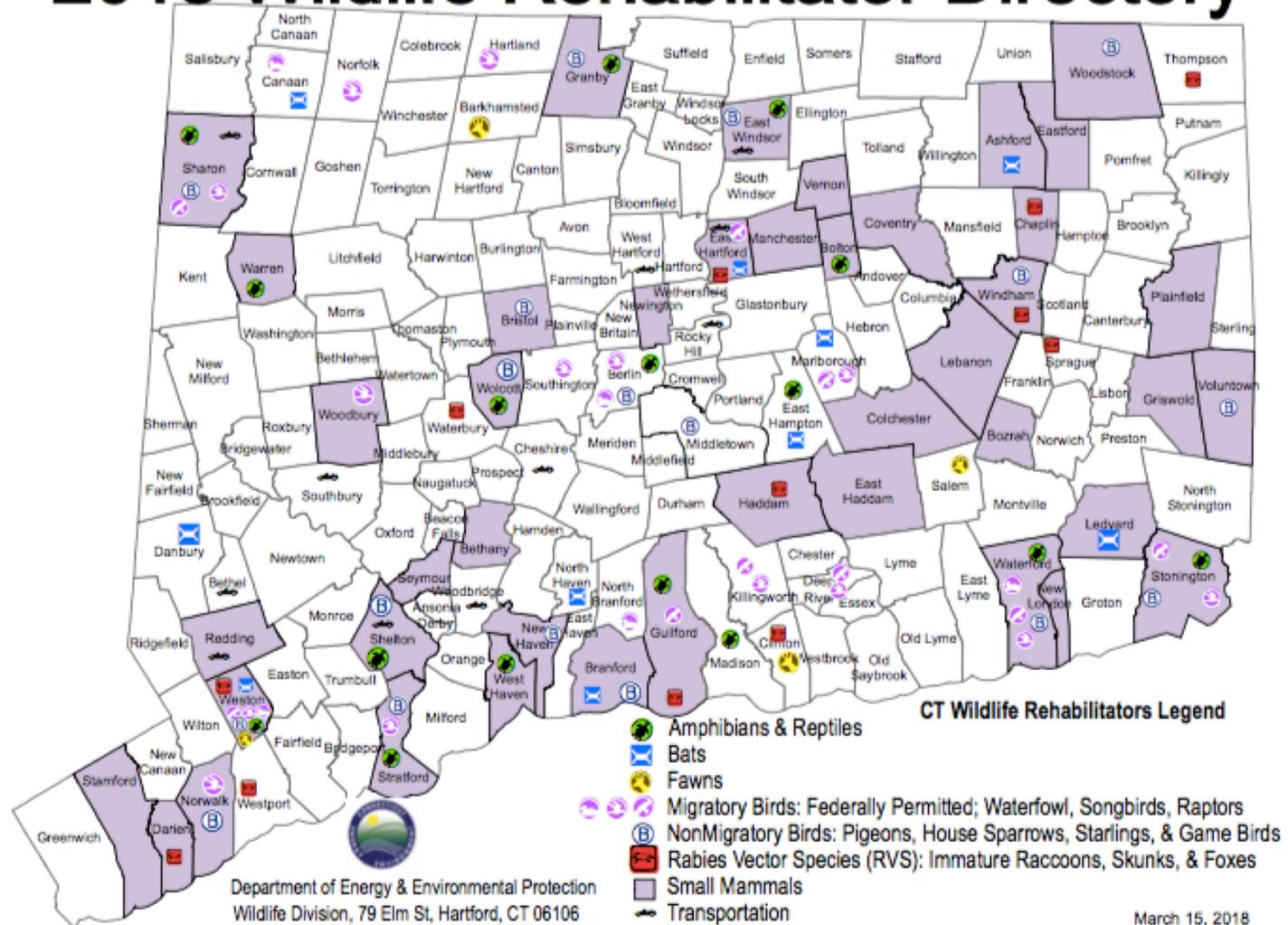
RVS Species

Rabies vector species (**RVS**) are those wild animals that are at greater risk to contract the rabies virus. Those species are: bats, coyotes, fox, groundhog, raccoon and skunk.

- **DO NOT TOUCH THE ANIMAL DIRECTLY**- even babies should NEVER be handled
- If the animal needs to be secured, wear heavy gloves and/or use a shovel or other implement to push it into a secure container, shelter or cardboard box. A clean, soft piece of material may be placed in the bottom of the box to keep the animal warm.
- Keep the animal in a quiet, warm place away from children and pets.
- **Don't feed the animal or give it water.**
- Refer the person to the nearest RVS Wildlife Rehabilitator.

2018 Wildlife Rehabilitator Directory

Who to call about sick, injured or orphaned wildlife



Nuisance Wildlife





Common calls

“I hear animals in my attic”.

“I have skunks under my deck”.

“I need groundhogs trapped”.

“I have a dead animal in my yard”

Unless an animal is sick or injured, the ACO is going to refer you to a private nuisance wildlife control company. You will be referred to a **licensed** and **insured** company.

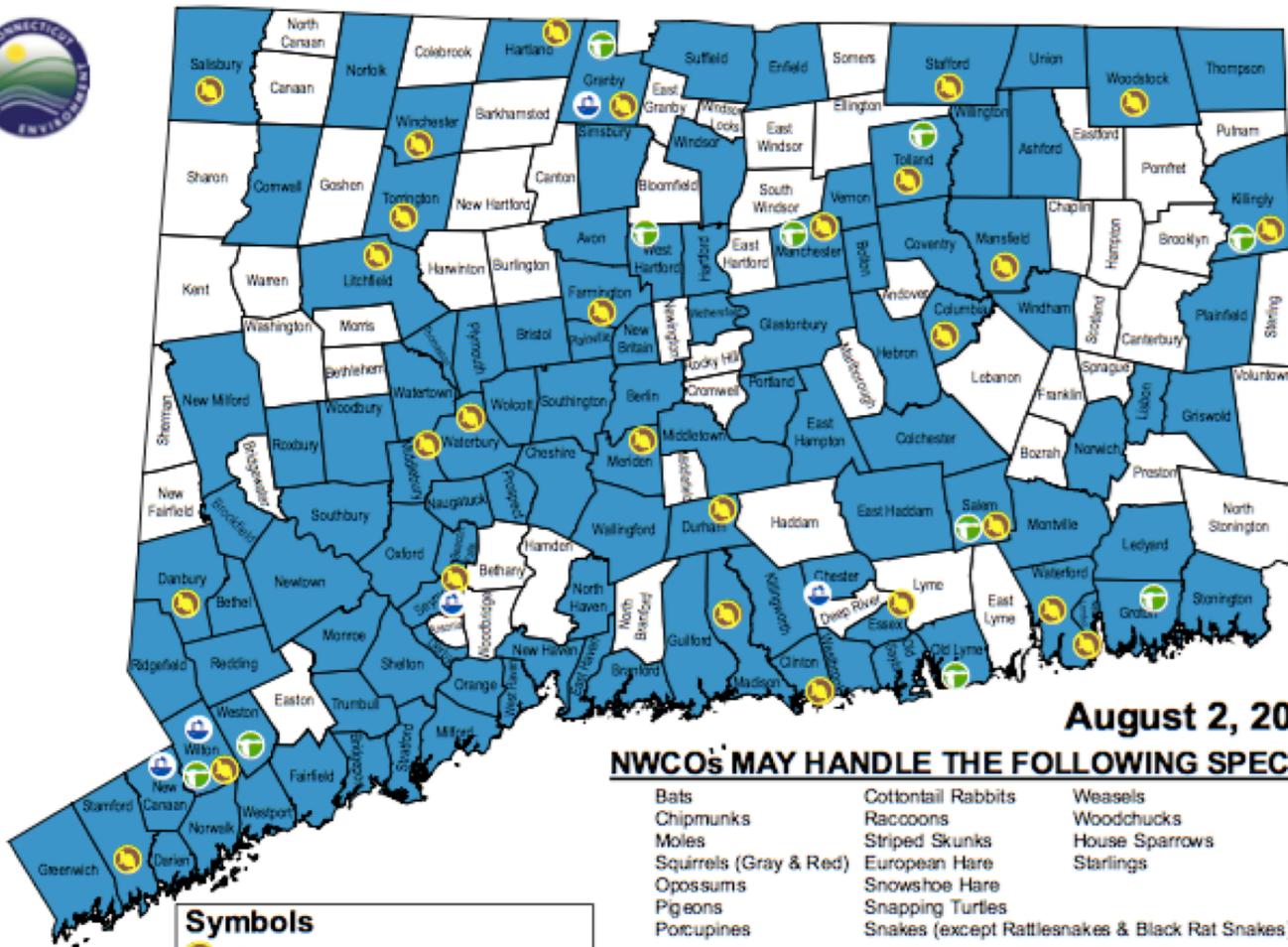


”I found a bat in my house”!!!



If the bat is easily obtainable, animal control will remove the bat the residence. Depending on the situation and where it was found, either the ACO will release the bat or send the bat to the State Department of Health for rabies testing.

2019 Nuisance Wildlife Control Operator Directory



Symbols

- NWCO certified to Trap Beaver
- NWCO certified to Round-up Geese
- Beaver Water Level Control

August 2, 2019

NWCO'S MAY HANDLE THE FOLLOWING SPECIES

- | | | |
|------------------------|---|----------------|
| Bats | Cottontail Rabbits | Weasels |
| Chipmunks | Raccoons | Woodchucks |
| Moles | Striped Skunks | House Sparrows |
| Squirrels (Gray & Red) | European Hare | Starlings |
| Opossums | Snowshoe Hare | |
| Pigeons | Snapping Turtles | |
| Porcupines | Snakes (except Rattlesnakes & Black Rat Snakes) | |

NWCOs may take the following species only with a NWCO special permit:

Flying Squirrels, Muskrat, Beaver, Coyote, Fox (Gray & Red), Mink, Canada Geese, Woodpeckers, Turkey Vultures, Gulls, Fisher

**Who to
call about
nuisance
wildlife**

Department of ENERGY & ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

ct.gov State of Connecticut

Governor Ned Lamont |

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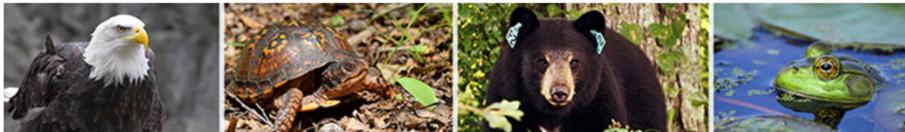
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Advancing the conservation, use, and appreciation of Connecticut's wildlife resources.



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Fact Sheets, Wildlife
rehab/Nuisance wildlife
directories and all other
wildlife information can
be found at the CT DEEP
Website:

www.ct.gov/deep

A background of rich red, vertically pleated curtains. Two gold tassels are attached to the curtains, one on the left and one on the right, hanging from a thin gold cord. The tassels are cylindrical with a fringed top and a smooth bottom. The lighting is soft, highlighting the texture of the fabric.

Special Thank You to the
Ridgefield Library for co-
sponsoring this event and to
all of **YOU** for coming to learn
more about our wildlife!