Living in Harmony with...

OPOSSUMS

*Didelphis virginiana*

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**Fast Facts**

**General Appearance**
about the size of a cat with long, naked tail, light gray fur, white face, black ears, pink nose, and paws with opposable thumbs.

**Territory**
suburban/urban areas near water.

**Diet**
ticks, snails, slugs, worms, snakes, fallen fruit, rodents.

**Lifestyle**
mostly nocturnal.

**Lifespan**
1-5 years.

**Size**
14-24 inches, up to 14lbs.

**Rabies Vector Species**
no.

**SBWCN cares for approximately**
300 per year.

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**Reasons why opossums come into our care:**

- Car strikes
- Cat/dog attacks
- Orphaned
- Emaciation
- Traps
- Poison

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**Living in Harmony**

- Do not leave pet food outside.
- Keep cats indoors.
- Do not let your pets out unsupervised after dark.
- Make sure your trash cans have tight lids and that the cans are secured in some way as not to be toppled.
- Pick up fallen fruit. Try to pick ripe fruit off trees.
- Put heavy gauge mesh on vents and openings to prevent denning.
- Do not leave windows or sliding doors without screens open and unattended. Close garage doors.
- Never intentionally feed a wild animal! Feeding wildlife increases human encounters, which endangers animals and harms the ecosystem.

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**FLIP OVER FOR MORE**
Live-trapping and relocation is inhumane

Trapping is only a temporary solution

Traps often do not catch the intended targets

Animals are introduced into areas that are unfamiliar to them so they do not know where food or water sources are. Other animals in the area may have diseases to which the introduced animal has never been exposed, and the introduced animal may be encroaching on another's territory.

The reasons animals are visiting your property must be addressed before they stop visiting.

Other animals are just as likely to enter traps set for opossums. Animals caught in traps often injure themselves trying to escape.

**Opossum Fun Facts:**
1. Ticks are opossums' favorite snacks!
2. Opossums are the only marsupials native to North America.
3. Opossums are immune to snake venom.

**If you encounter an opossum:**
Opossums don't want any trouble. When approached, they may:
- hiss
- show their teeth, drool
- defecate on themselves
- play dead

**An opossum may need help if:**
- it is alone and it's body is less than 7 inches long (not including tail)
- it is injured
- it is stuck or appears sick

**To rescue and transport an opossum:**
1. Get a box large enough to safely hold the animal
2. Make sure the box has plenty of small air holes
3. Place something soft at the bottom of the box
4. Gently place the animal in the box (Wear leather gloves) or shepherd the opossum into the box with a broom.
5. Keep the box warm, dark, quiet, and away from children and pets.
6. Do not place any food or water in the box.
7. Do not peek! The animal is very stressed
8. Bring the animal in the box to our center at 1460 N. Fairview Ave, Goleta CA 93117.

**Why not trap and relocate?**
- Live-trapping and relocation is inhumane
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- Trapping is only a temporary solution
  The reasons animals are visiting your property must be addressed before they stop visiting.
- Traps often do not catch the intended targets
  Other animals are just as likely to enter traps set for opossums. Animals caught in traps often injure themselves trying to escape.

**Helpline:** (805) 681-1080  **Office line:** (805) 681-1019  **contact@sbwcn.org**
**Website:** www.sbwcn.org
**Address:** 1460 N. Fairview Ave, Goleta, CA 93117
**Mailing Address:** P.O. Box 6594 Santa Barbara, CA 93160
**Tax ID:** 77-0201505
Santa Barbara Wildlife Care Network is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization
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