

Mustelids

- The *Mustelidae* are a carnivorous family of mammals
- BC mustelids are not known to carry rabies
- As Furbearer animals under the *BC Wildlife Act*, mustelids can only be trapped using devices listed in the BC Hunting & Trapping Regulations (generally only between November and February)
- Badgers (Schedule A) and sea otters (Schedule D) are protected



Stoat

Understanding Mustelids

BC mustelids include badger (*Taxidea taxus*), marten (*Martes americana*), mink (*Neovison vison*), stoat (*Mustela ermine*, or ermine), river otter (*Lutra canadensis*), sea otter (*Enhydra lutris*), and fisher (*Martes pennanti*).

Mustelids...

- have one litter of 2-8 babies in spring
- babies leave the den at 5-7 weeks old and often remain with their mother for the summer while learning to hunt



Did you know?

Mustelids eat rodents, small mammals, fish, reptiles, amphibians, insects, birds and their eggs. They perform an important role in rodent and insect control.

Common Conflicts

Mustelids may dig in yards, crop fields, or road embankments to den or in pursuit of prey. Mink and stoats sometimes prey on domestic animals such as rabbits, poultry, or ducks by digging under fences or floors. River otters can prey on fish in backyard ponds and den in sheds and boathouses.

Humane Choices

The BC SPCA does not support killing mustelids for nuisance reasons.

Relocation of adults should only be done outside the breeding season within the animal's home range, and as per the *BC Wildlife Act*. Killing is rarely necessary and control methods should be selected to cause the least harm to the animal's welfare. If attractants have not been removed, more animals may arrive, so follow-up monitoring is needed.

The BC SPCA strongly encourages non-lethal, non-contact methods. Prevention and exclusion comes first, followed by deterrence, and if necessary, eviction. Eviction should be done carefully to avoid potentially orphaning young.

Conflict Resolution

If animal is at risk, cage traps may be used for relocation within home range. Mustelids may be taken to a wildlife rehabilitator for treatment if needed. If animal is in critical distress, a veterinarian or wildlife rehabilitator may euthanize. For more information on addressing mustelid conflicts, *flip page over*.



Recommended Actions & Methods

<p>Prevention & Exclusion Before any conflict, and to prevent future issues</p>	<p>Remove potential food sources (especially meat)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Secure garbage bins and compost ✓ No pet food outside ✓ Secure animal/fish waste containers <p>Maintain farm animal housing structures</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Block access to spaces larger than 2.5cm using wood or metal ✓ Use mesh poultry netting around housing structures and ventilation or drainage openings ✓ To confirm den use – loosely cover hole with leaves, newspaper or straw; if present, animal can push it away and re-open
<p>Deterrence If babies are mobile (5-7 weeks old) or there are no babies</p>	<p>Use mild humane harassment techniques</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Place apple cider vinegar-soaked rags in plastic container with holes in lid, place containers in den or entry points ✓ Use bright lights at night to deter badgers
<p>Eviction</p>	<p>Evict the animal</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Use a one-way door to allow animal to leave den, but not re-enter, leave in place for 2-3 nights ✓ Do not use when dependent young may be in den, or if necessary, use reunion techniques ✓ Permanently seal openings after den is undisturbed for several nights ✓ Follow all prevention and exclusion steps above

These are legal, regulated methods - but they are **not recommended*** as they can cause animal suffering, may be high risk to non-targets, and/or are difficult to administer; legality must also be confirmed according to local bylaws and/or regulations

- Carbon dioxide or carbon monoxide - using pure gas cylinder into sealed chamber with regulator
- Shot to brain of trapped or free-ranging animal
- Crossbow
- Penetrating captive bolt
- Killing neck snare
- Spring trap (e.g. Conibear-style)
- Leghold or foot snare, submerged (mink and river otter only)
- Manually applied blunt trauma that induces immediate unconsciousness
- Cervical dislocation

*email wildlifecontrol@sPCA.bc.ca for information on these methods

It is **illegal** to use...

- Bait poisons or chloroform, ingested or fumigant
- Leghold or foot snare, land (mink, marten, otter, fisher)
- Leghold or foot snare, submerged (except mink and river otter)
- Drowning or suffocation
- Carbon dioxide
- Carbon monoxide by vehicle exhaust
- Electrocution of conscious animal
- Freezing (including dry ice)

