

Grenelefe Condominium Association Wildlife Removal Procedures

Removing wildlife from the interior walls of the building is a challenging job and dependant on many factors. The Association has to take all of these factors into consideration before it can take action. Keep in mind that entry of animals into the walls of the condominium buildings is an act of nature. The Association has no way to control this. When we receive notice that tenants or owners are hearing animal noises in the walls, we will follow our protocol for removal.

We will first determine what kind of animal has entered the building. Understanding the kind of animal will determine the method and process of removal. Here is a list of the most common animals that occasionally get into the condominiums, their tendencies and how and when we remove them.

Rodents

Reason for accessing building: Looking for a food source or drawn to a food source. Sloppy housekeeping is the main factor when there is a rodent infestation.

How to Detect: Evidence of them chewing through things to get to a food source. There is no food source on the interior walls of the condominiums so they generally do not live inside the walls. Usually, they show up in the units because they are drawn to food. They will climb up the outside of the building to get to a balcony if there is a food source stored there.

Removal Process: Rodents are eliminated from the inside of the unit via traps and this is handled by pest control if the resident has the service, or the residents themselves if they decline it. In rare instances, (depending on the level of infestation), traps and poison are used on the exterior of the building. All of these measures can be taken from the inception of the issue.

Bats

Reason for accessing building: They decide to establish a colony in your building because it provides a safe environment with stable temperatures for them to live, mate and raise their young.

How to Detect: Bats will find a very small entrance hole into the attics of the condominiums. The entry hole can be detected and identified by the black, greasy film around the entrance.

Removal Process: Bats are protected under Florida wildlife laws and it is illegal to willfully kill bats in Florida. It is also illegal to disturb bats during the maternity season, which in Florida is defined as April 16 through August 14. Outside of the maternity season, the Association will construct an exclusion curtain that will allow the bats to leave the building at night to feed and not re-enter. After a few days, when the bats have vacated the building, the exclusion curtain will be taken down and the entry hole will be sealed.

Woodpeckers

Reason for accessing building: Woodpeckers that drill access holes in the side of a building are doing this because they are nesting. They prefer to drill into dead trees because of the insects and the soft wood, but since our buildings are made of cedar (a soft wood), they make ideal nesting opportunities.

How to Detect: Woodpecker holes are round and up high, usually in the eaves of the building. The size of the hole depends on the species of woodpecker. The nests are usually close to the hole.

Removal Process: Woodpeckers are protected Federally, and certain species are protected by state law. Woodpeckers lay their eggs between April and July and the incubation period is 12 to 14 days before they hatch. Since their nests are close to the holes, we can access the holes with a ladder and use a flex camera (designed to look inside of plumbing pipes) to check for babies. If the nest is empty, then we can fill in the holes. Woodpeckers do look for abandoned holes or return to an area where they had previously nested. If we are made aware of woodpeckers making new holes and it is before the maternity season, we will take measures to discourage them from establishing a nesting hole.

Squirrels

Reason for accessing building: Attics and soffit areas make ideal nesting locations for squirrels. Their height provides protection from predators and humans and allows squirrels to remain warm and dry through inclement cold weather.

How to Detect: Scratching noises in the walls, as well as visible holes in the soffit and fascia, are signs that it is squirrels in the walls. Squirrel holes differ from woodpecker holes in that they are not symmetrical.

Deterring Squirrels from seeking shelter in the buildings is difficult. However, the Association does its best to keep the trees trimmed back from touching or being close to the roofs. By doing this, it prevents an easy bridge from the trees for the squirrels to get on the roof. We are also using a product called Hardie board on the fascia when we are replacing it during restoration work. This is more difficult for squirrels to chew through and it may serve as a deterrent to entering the buildings from these areas. One major issue we have with removing squirrels from the buildings is that our attic spaces are not accessible, they are sealed off and we are unable to get into these areas to inspect or trap invasive animals. Also, of all of the pests we have encountered, squirrels do not go for traps and bait like raccoons.

Removal Process: Although squirrels are not a protected species, you do not want to seal them in or poison them because if they die in the walls or ceiling, it takes about 2 weeks for them to start to develop an odor and then tracing the odor to its origin can be very difficult if not impossible. The Association does not condone cutting open the sheetrock to search for dead squirrels. Also, if you seal them in the walls, they can chew into the living areas at which point the problem of removal becomes that of the owner because they are no longer in the common element and it does not fall under the responsibility of pest control. Squirrel birthing and mating season occurs twice a year. Female squirrels will give birth in early spring (February through April) or late summer (August and September). After the

birth, it is a six-week maturation period before the squirrels leave the nest. The Association will not seal off holes or attempt removal during these months. If you seal off a hole that is being used by squirrels while the adult female is outside foraging for food, you then separate her from her young. This will cause more damage to the outside of the building while the female squirrel chews through the wood to get to her young. Even if successful in keeping the mother out, you will end up with dead babies and the odor issue as previously mentioned.

During the months of November, December, January, June and July, the Association will attempt to evict squirrels from the buildings. The first thing that we will do is identify the squirrel holes. (This can be done year round regardless of the maternity season.) Then, if it is during the above months (the eviction months), we will seal up all of the holes on the outside of the building with the exception of the main entrance hole. On the main entrance hole we will install an exclusion cage that will allow the squirrel to exit the building, but not be able to re-enter. After a few days, the squirrels will vacate the building and not be able to get back in. The Association will go back and remove the exclusion door and permanently seal up the main entrance hole.

Raccoons

Reason for accessing the buildings: The primary reason a raccoon enters an attic in the first place is so that she can give birth to and raise her young pups. Thus, most incidents of raccoons in attics are in spring, from February through May.

How to Detect: Sounds more like thumping or walking, not scurrying noises from smaller animals. They usually access roof tops from trees and chew holes in the roof to gain access to the attic area.

Removal Process: As with the squirrels, you do not want to kill the raccoons or have them die in the walls or attic areas. Also, they have a maternity period that runs from February through May. When not in maternity season, they are easily trapped using a cage trap on the roof top. After we are sure they are out of the attic area, the roof hole is repaired.