

# Wildlife management without poison

By Jim Anderson  
Correspondent

Last week *The Nugget* ran the story Susan Prince and I put together on the rash of poison stations that have popped up in Sisters Country. In that light, Kathy Deggendorfer contacted me for stating one of them was on her Pine Meadow Ranch property.

Turns out I was close, but not close enough to get the brass ring; the poison bait station in question was on the irrigated portion of Pine Meadow Village and neither Kathy, Susan, nor I have any idea how it got there.

So, what are alternatives to poison to eliminating wildlife from places they're not wanted? Unfortunately, every one of them is labor-intensive; that's what makes poison so popular.

You'll come down to live or dead trapping. The most popular instrument for dead trapping is the snap-trap or jawed trap. Victor makes several models for several sizes of victims: large traps for rats and ground squirrels and smaller ones for mice and small rodents. Peanut butter is

excellent bait, but sometimes popped popcorn works, plain old butter, cheese and some people favor cauliflower and/or even sliced bread.

Sherman makes live traps used by researchers worldwide that are ideal for mammals from mice to ground squirrels, as does Have-a-Hart. The latter has sizes for catching feral cats, skunks, and even raccoons.

If you're going to go after those pestiferous animals that do damage to your property, or leave behind droppings you'd rather not have underfoot, snap-trapping will work, but if there are fleas on the victim they'll leave as soon as they cool off; be mindful of that.

The best way to dispose of them is placing the trap and dead critter in a plastic bag. Keep the bag closed and release the victim from the trap, then take out the trap quickly, watching for fleas trying to escape. Bury the victims well away from your domicile, where your house pet can not find and dig it/ them up. This entire process should be done while wearing plastic gloves, which should

be disposed of correctly along with the plastic bag.

If you have an excess of chipmunks you can live-trap them easily and then take them to the various BLM wildlife areas and release them. I paid my grandsons to live-trap my surplus chipmunks and it worked slicker than snot-on-a-door-knob.

Now, what about a skunk? That can be very messy if you decide to go after them with a snap or jawed trap. It would be best to use a medium-sized Have-a-Hart and a nice fresh piece of Col. Sanders chicken for bait.

When the skunk is in the trap, move around it slowly and politely. Cover it with a big towel (one you don't need anymore), leaving the trap carrying handle accessible. Using caution you can move it into a box, then place said box in the back of an open-air pickup and take it a few miles away into a quiet area of no homes or people traffic.

After placing the trap out in the open, get close enough to release the animal with the aid of a long stiff wire or stick. I usually smile at the skunk as it ambles off.



Relocated western spotted skunk.

PHOTO BY JIM ANDERSON

I've been using this method for over 60 years and while doing so have never been sprayed by spotted or striped skunks.

That said, in 1957 I got the full blast from a male spotted skunk, but it was because I picked up the live trap with the skunk in it, thinking the animal was one I had descented a week or so before. You can't judge a skunk by its cover.

According to ODFW, killing Oregon squirrels is legal (all except golden mantled ground squirrels and chipmunks) because they are considered sport game. Ground

squirrels can be forced to leave by gassing or flooding the tunnels where they live. Any creatures that are not killed during this process will find their habitat undesirable and hopefully move away.

Be sure to go to: <https://squirrelsrefuge.org/law.html> and read what the law says about handling Oregon and Washington state wildlife.

If you want to talk trapping or changing the course of your role with that of your wildlife neighbor(s), drop me an email at [jimnaturalist@gmail.com](mailto:jimnaturalist@gmail.com).

But please, get rid of the blasted poison.

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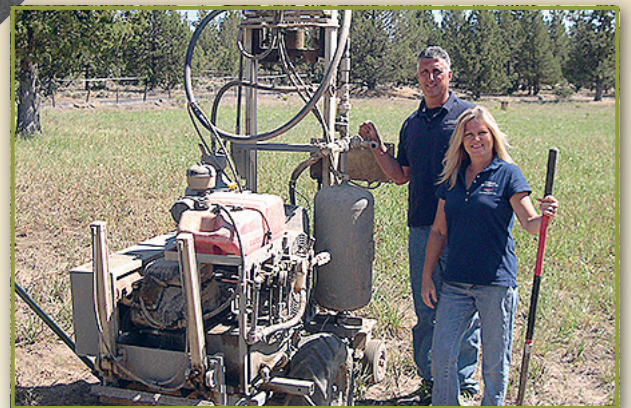
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