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“Nuisance” wildlife removal – buyer beware **Animal advocates warn residents to investigate businesses before contract**

TORONTO - A national animal advocacy group is warning residents that they need to investigate companies before signing on for wildlife removal services.

After a spate of incidents in which wild animals were caught in cruel leg-hold and Conibear-type traps in Oakville, The Association for the Protection of Fur-Bearing Animals (APFA) is reminding Southern Ontario residents that it's buyer beware when it comes to wildlife removal.

“The lack of regulation for pest control and wildlife removal companies in Ontario can result in unsafe work, incomplete jobs and cruel trapping of animals,” explains Michael Howie of APFA. “Not all wildlife removal companies are created equal and it is unfortunately the responsibility of homeowners to separate the good from the bad.”

There are some simple steps homeowners can take prior to signing on with a wildlife removal company that will protect them – and the wildlife in their neighbourhoods:

- **Check references:** a good removal company will have success stories and references to prove they are truly humane and effective
- **Cheap isn't always better:** you may need to spend a little more, but cash-for-services businesses aren't always going to provide the best results
- **Insurance assurance:** a proper company will have insurance for themselves and their workers; otherwise, you may be responsible for financial issues
- **Wild animals aren't pests:** social, family-oriented animals are not the same as cockroaches. Truly humane and reputable companies don't look at them as pests and don't use the same tools
- **Check with your SPCA:** humane societies and SPCA offices typically know who may be best suited for the job of wildlife removal; consult with them prior to making a decision.

“Too often, wild animals are separated from their young, injured, or cruelly killed at the hands of an amateur or improperly trained wildlife removal operators,” says Howie. “Do the homework and make sure you get a company that will treat you, your home and the wildlife with the respect they all deserve.”

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Photos of wildlife and animals caught in traps are available upon request.