

Opossum

Opossums are sometimes mistaken for large rats when in fact they are not rodents. Opossums are very unique animals. They are the only marsupial (pouched animal) in North America. They carry their young in their pouch for about 2-3 months, and then the young ride on their mother's back for another 1-2 months.

Opossums are a house cat-sized mammal with moderately long white to dark gray fur. Its face is long and pointed and it has dark rounded, paper-thin, hairless ears. The opossum's tail is long, hairless, scaly and can be used for grasping. The opossum has 50 teeth that it readily shows when it is afraid; however, showing its teeth is usually the extent of its actions since in reality, they are gentle and placid. Playing "possum" is another defensive mechanism frequently used in which they fall into an involuntary shock like state. This is often misinterpreted by people who think that the animal is sick or injured.

In areas serviced by the Mission Viejo Animal Services Center, we will respond to and remove any opossum that is injured, sick or deceased. Or, involved in a bite with a human or domestic animal.

Mission Viejo Animal Services
Serving the cities of
Mission Viejo, Laguna Niguel, Aliso Viejo,
Laguna Hills and Rancho Santa Margarita

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How to discourage opossum activity around your home:

- Keep pet food indoors and do not leave food of any kind outside
- Cover trash containers
- Don't leave plastic trash bags outside
- Change automatic sprinkler settings regularly
- Eliminate garbage, debris, lumber piles, etc.
- Check fencing and eliminate access points.
- Seal house and decking foundations.
- Remove any fallen fruit.
- Scattering mothballs and ammonia-soaked cloths

