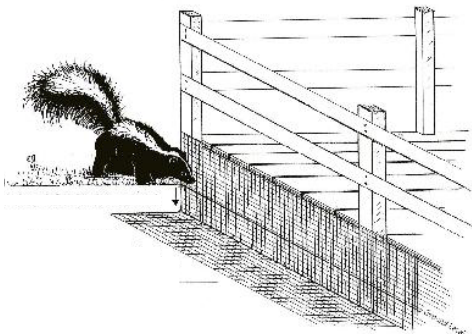


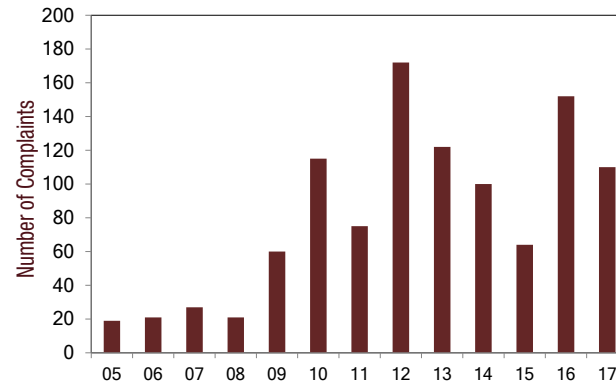


A well-designed coop and pen will protect poultry by preventing predators from gaining access. Hardware cloth with ¼-inch mesh provides a very effective fence material because it prevents access by even the smallest predators (e.g., weasels, small hawks). The best design, which would stop all predators, incorporates a pen enclosed with ¼-inch wire mesh (or similar) with a perimeter of electric fence (below).



Hardware cloth extends underground next to foundation to deter digging predators.

**Reported Bear/Poultry Complaints in NH
2005-2017**



Annual conflicts between bears and poultry owners have increased steadily over time, and notably during the past five years. Many coops and pens are not designed to adequately block access by predators such as bears. A properly designed and installed electric fence will help prevent predator damage to chickens and other poultry.



Electric poultry net fences are an ideal barrier to most predators, however, poultry would still be vulnerable to an avian attack.

**For more information, please contact the
USDA Wildlife Services office at 603-223-6832.**

RAISING POULTRY IN NEW HAMPSHIRE

PREVENTING LOSS BY PREDATORS



WS Wildlife Services

Protecting People | Protecting Agriculture | Protecting Wildlife

RECOMMENDED PRACTICES FOR PROTECTING POULTRY

The popularity of raising backyard poultry, namely chickens and waterfowl, has grown significantly in recent years due to people's interest in providing their own meat and fresh eggs. While this is a great concept, many of the state's wildlife species are paying the price as an increasing number of landowners choose to kill wildlife as a means of defense against predation. Given the increased popularity of backyard farming, many species of animals and birds recognize chickens, ducks, and associated poultry feed as an easily accessible food source.

Most coops, pens, and runs are constructed with the intent of keeping poultry in and typically fail at keeping wildlife out. Proper knowledge and awareness of good husbandry practices is essential to minimize the risk of loss to wildlife. If poultry is not adequately contained and protected, loss to wildlife should be expected.

While it may be possible to build coops strong enough to keep smaller species, such as weasels, foxes, raccoons, and bobcats out, larger animals such as bears require a different approach because of their strength and agility. **The most effective way to protect poultry from predation is to establish a perimeter that cannot be penetrated. This typically is best accomplished by utilizing electric fence.** Animals honor electricity, and the use of electric fencing represents the most viable, long-term solution for protecting your investment from predatory loss.

- Keep poultry contained – it is impossible to protect free-ranging birds.
- Enclose coops and pens with welded-wire mesh fence with sufficiently small openings to keep your birds in and predators out. Use of ¼-inch hardware cloth is ideal for blocking small predators. Remember, animals such as raccoons can reach through larger mesh fencing to grab poultry.
- Use electric fence as an additional protective barrier for coops and pens. While wire mesh fence may be adequate for keeping smaller predators out, larger predators such as bears require an electric barrier. There are various electric fence options available, depending on your needs. Electric net fencing is portable and can easily be used with chicken tractors and other moveable pens.
- Fences should be at least 5 feet tall. Species such as coyotes and bobcats are good jumpers, therefore an enclosure needs to be appropriately high.
- Raising coop enclosures off the ground can discourage animals from sneaking underneath to steal eggs and young. Make sure the bottom of the coop is structurally sound.
- Cover the tops of the pens with welded-wire fencing or plastic netting to guard against attacks from above, including climbing and avian predators.
- Bury galvanized hardware cloth or similar welded-wire 12 inches deep around the perimeter of the pen to prevent access by predators that may dig.
- Latch and lock all doors and windows in pen and coop. Use a mechanism that can't be opened by clever animals such as raccoons. Carabiner clips are effective because they require opposable thumbs to use.
- Provide a night light (motion activated) that will illuminate the pen and coop after dark to help deter nocturnal predators. Motion-activated alarms (e.g., Critter Gitter™) and radios can also be effective and create a more “risky” setting for a predator.
- Maintain open space with minimal cover around coops and pens – predators tend to avoid areas where cover is absent.
- Properly store poultry feed – securely store feed indoors or in airtight, odor-free containers where animals cannot gain access.
- Only feed poultry the amount that can be consumed during a typical feeding – don't let spilled feed accumulate in a coop or pen.
- The use of livestock guardian animals, such as chicken-friendly dogs, can be highly effective at deterring predatory wildlife.



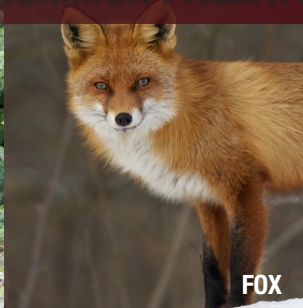
COMMON PREDATORS OF POULTRY IN NEW HAMPSHIRE



COYOTE



BLACK BEAR



FOX



BOBCAT



HAWK



RACCOON



SKUNK

PROTECT YOUR POULTRY INVESTMENT - GO ELECTRIC!