

OPOSSUMS

BENEFITS OF OPOSSUMS

Opossums are useful in keeping neighborhoods free of unwanted pests such as cockroaches, ticks, rats, and mice. They possess a resistance to snake venom and are capable of consuming venomous species. Moreover, opossums are helpful in gardens, as they feed on snails, slugs, and fallen, overripe fruit.

Through these activities, opossums provide valuable ecological benefits that contribute to the health and balance of their environment.

NATURAL HISTORY

- Opossums, the only marsupial found north of Mexico, are from the Didelphidae family, and the Virginia opossum is the only species found in the United States and Canada.
- Opossums are strictly nocturnal and solitary animals.
- Their diet is eclectic and includes both plants and animals such as rodents, young rabbits, birds, insects, crustaceans, frogs, fruits and berries, and vegetables.
- Females typically have two litters per year, with babies being born after just 11-12 days. At birth, they are the size of a honeybee, blind, furless, and do not resemble adult opossums.
- Many opossums die during their first year of life, and adults usually have a lifespan of only about two years in the wild.

TIPS FOR REDUCING HUMAN-OPOSSUM CONFLICTS:

- **Keep your trash secure.** Use closed bins to prevent opossums from raiding your trash and compost.
- **Do not trap opossums.** These animals are transient and typically only stay in an area for a few days before moving on. Eliminating opossums can lead to an increase in pest populations.
- **Lock up pet food and water at night.** Opossums are attracted to easy food and water sources, so it's important to keep these items secured to prevent them from sticking around.
- **Seal potential denning locations.** Make your home less attractive to opossums by keeping doors and windows closed, and checking for access points into your walls and attics. Use wire mesh or spray foam to seal any holes or gaps.



City of

Saginaw