

Groundhogs and why trapping and relocating isn't a good solution:

- **First of all know the law: in VA, it's illegal to trap and remove wildlife UNLESS you release them on your OWN PROPERTY. It IS legal to hire a licensed trapper, but for groundhogs and some other species, law dictates that they be humanely euthanized by the trapper, even if they tell you they won't, rest assured, they DO.**
- Groundhogs (woodchucks) have likely been residing on your property a long time. They are part of the ecosystem.
- Their babies will disperse in late summer (in VA, anywhere from mid-July through August), so rest assured, you should not have a group that just outgrows and floods their territory.
- Speaking of territory; think of their territory like you think of your own: you live in your house (they live in their den), you have a yard maybe (they have a yard for grazing), you have running water (they know where to find water and other resources, too). If someone snatched you out of your house or yard, flew you to say, remote Africa and dropped you out of the plane with no provisions, you'd have a really hard time. You might not be able to find shelter or food or water. The natives might be offended at your requests and drive you off. You might be more prone to being eaten by a crocodile as you look for water; or trampled by elephants.

You would just want to be back in your home, wouldn't you? Because you might die in Africa all alone, scared, hungry and thirsty. Why would you assume that groundhogs (or any wildlife, for that matter) are any different? They feel pain, hunger, terror, love, defensiveness, and they know their OWN territory, and don't adapt well to a new territory, either. That's why it's illegal in VA to trap and remove wildlife. You cause pain and suffering for those trapped and dumped and for their young left behind to starve to death in a den.

- ALSO: an empty burrow? It doesn't stay empty for long. Guess who LOVES an empty groundhog burrow? SKUNKS! Snakes, possums, and OTHER groundhogs. So you may just be creating a revolving door of problems by removing the original occupants.

So, what to do????

- You can try to scare them off... encourage them to MOVE on with hazing: post helium balloons or whirly gigs (or other things that create unexpected movement) around their dens (and move them around frequently). You can partially dig out the entrance to their dens. Put down dog poop near the opening, which will make them feel threatened as though a large predator were targeting them.
- BUT, you can't leave that burrow open without more animals moving in, so you must take measures to dig up the burrows or fill them in; but ONLY after you are 100% certain the entire

burrow is vacant. So you'll need to locate the entrance and exit holes and loosely stuff them with crumpled up newspaper. If the newspaper is removed when you check again, then there's an occupant.

- It's NOT EASY to fill in a groundhog burrow. Not easy at all. You might need to dig it out and lay down heavy-gauge, small-opening wire to discourage re-digging.

Reasons to just leave them alone and allow them to stay:

- It's NOT EASY to fill in a groundhog burrow. Not easy at all.
- The babies will disperse in late summer and are cute, rolling and squealing like puppies.
- They won't overpopulate the area because they are heavily preyed upon.
- By the way, if you have pets, groundhogs are the FIRST line of defense in a coyote population. The coyote would MUCH rather snatch a groundhog or other wild animal before snatching your pet.
- Groundhogs who make their dens under structures do it because they structure is sturdy and the ground is solid. They don't WANT THE STRUCTURE TO COLLAPSE and know how to make their den without collapsing your structure.
- Did you read the part about skunks loving an abandoned groundhog burrow???? Which would you rather have? And we love skunks, too, don't get us wrong.
- They are super fun to watch. The very rarely are a danger, and are more scared of you, your pets, your kids, etc than you know.

Want to know more about discouraging groundhogs and protecting your property? Get this book, follow it to a T and your problems will be solved. It's not cheap, but it's proven SOLID advice:

