

## **Living With Wildlife- Mice**

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It doesn't seem right that something that weighs less than an ounce can so often outwit us humans. Whether we live in the city or in the country, many of us have non-paying tenants in the form of mice each winter. They seek out warm spots to spend the winter. Just as predictably they move out in the spring.

There is something about mice that seems to make most people shudder. I too used to feel this way about mice. But, when they are not moving at mach speed, they are actually kind of cute. Caring for mice at the Centre changed my view. Yes, I know you can't believe we helped mice, but if someone cared enough to bring in an animal, we cared enough to help it. The babies would happily lap up formula from a syringe with their little tongue. When full they would fastidiously clean their faces!

We would get lots of calls in the fall about mice as most people thought they were trying to invade their house. Normally, they don't live in the house proper, but rather live between the walls or in the attic. They simply like to stop by from time-to-time for dinner, it's like eating out. Two of their favourite restaurants are the McGarbage and the Chez Pet Food. Sometimes they eat-in but most of the time they like to get take out.

Given their size it is almost impossible to prevent mice from entering your attic, but you can prevent them from entering your living space. Check for access points such as under kitchen and bathroom sinks where the pipes pass through the drywall; where other services enter through the wall; under doors leading from the garage or basement, where you can weather strip.

Animal proof access points using metal lath, which can easily be bent and forced into holes and nailed to flat surfaces. In spaces too small for metal lath, waterproof stainless steel or copper scouring pads can be used. Never use steel wool as it rusts and disintegrates quickly.

Food will attract mice into kitchens so be sure all food, including garbage is secured.

Lethal control methods are never suggested for obvious humane reasons but also because you risk the likelihood of killing a mother leaving dependent young dying and smelling in your walls. For more information, including pictures of the animal proofing check out [www.wildlifeinfo.ca](http://www.wildlifeinfo.ca).