

For More Information Contact

wildlifecontrol@spca.bc.ca
BC SPCA Provincial Call Centre
1.855.622.7722

BCSPCA
SPEAKING FOR ANIMALS

MOLES & VOLES

WILDLIFE CONTROL BEST PRACTICES

Species

Coast mole (*Scapanus orarius*),
Townsend's mole (*Scapanus townsendii*), voles (family *Arvicolinae*)

Legal Designation

Coast mole, voles, Schedule B;
Townsend's mole red-listed *Species at Risk*

Seasonal Considerations

Moles and voles remain active underground in the winter, main activity is during spring and fall

Did you know?

Moles and voles mix and aerate soil, creating better conditions for plants, and are valuable sources of food for birds like owls and hawks.

Common Conflicts

Moles and voles are attracted to moist, nutrient-rich garden soil and can create conflict with people with their shallow tunneling and the molehills that build up at tunnel entrances. Vole populations fluctuate substantially, so conflicts often resolve themselves without intervention. Voles are often confused for mice, but voles have very small eyes and ears and a relatively short tail. Moles and voles will not damage fruit - voles can damage plants by tunnelling and chewing on roots, and moles eat primarily earthworms and insects.

Conflict Prevention

Block underground access to flower beds by burying hardware cloth (0.5 cm mesh) or installing a concrete edge 20-30 cm underground. To prevent further damage, flatten tunnels by hand or using a lawn roller prior to mowing. To check if a tunnel is in use, loosely cover holes with leaves, newspaper or straw; if a mole is present, it can easily push away the material and re-open the tunnel.

Townsend's vole

Townsend's mole



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Townsend's mole



RECOMMENDED Actions & methods for control

Secure garbage bins and compost, and collect fallen fruit from the ground. Ensure bird feeders are not overflowing and no pet food is left outside. Using non-toxic diatomaceous earth can help prevent soil insects that attract moles and voles. Use mild humane harassment techniques like: castor bean or castor-oil plants, or other plant extract repellents; soaking flower bulbs in capsaicin repellent to deter voles; and providing barn owl boxes to encourage natural predation.

Don't Trap and Relocate

Trapping and relocating wildlife away from their home is generally not a permanent or humane solution. Animals often injure themselves and may die trying to escape a trap. Relocated animals have to set up a new home, may starve trying to find food or get into fights with other animals over territory, and may spend vital energy trying to return home.

When you trap animals, you also risk separating a mother from her babies. Even if you move an entire family, a mother may abandon her young due to the pressure to find food in a new area and care for the babies.



NOT RECOMMENDED Actions & methods for control

The BC SPCA does not recommend killing moles and voles. However, legal regulated methods may be used for euthanasia to relieve suffering when animals are injured. They may also be used legally for control, but are not recommended as they can cause suffering, may be high risk to non-target animals, and/or are difficult to administer. Check local bylaws and/or regulations to confirm whether the method is legal in a municipality.

- Trapping and relocating (in accordance with the *BC Wildlife Act* – can only relocate within 1 km on Vancouver Island & Gulf Islands, within 10 km in the rest of the province)
- Blunt force trauma
- Carbon dioxide or carbon monoxide
- Cervical dislocation
- Glue traps
- Penetrating captive bolt
- Rodenticides (outdoor use only)
- Shot to brain
- Snap trap
- Spring trap (e.g. Scissor or claw-style)



ILLEGAL Actions & methods for control

- Bait or fumigant poisons (except registered rodenticide products for voles)
- Drowning
- Suffocation
- Chloroform
- Electrocution
- Freezing (including dry ice)
- Killing neck snare
- Leghold or foot snare
- Vehicle exhaust