

Opossums

The opossum is the only marsupial native to North America. It is active at night, and is known to "play dead" when startled or confronted. It generally is not aggressive or destructive, but may try to bluff its attacker by hissing, salivating and opening its mouth wide to show its 50 teeth. Opossums will be less likely to linger if garbage cans are well sealed and pet food is not left out.



Snakes

The Bay Area is home to many different species of snakes, including the gopher snake, kingsnake and rattlesnake. The only venomous snake in the Bay Area is the Northern Pacific rattlesnake and the Night Snake, although the latter species is about the size of a pencil and is generally not harmful to humans. Gopher snakes are more common than rattlesnakes in the Bay Area, and are often mistaken for rattlesnakes. A gopher snake has a pointed tail. A rattlesnake will have rattles on its tail, or if it is young, it may have a rounded tail, but will never have a pointed tail. Snakes are beneficial because they eat many animals we consider to be pests, such as mice and rats. To reduce the attractiveness of your yard to snakes, clear or thin dense brush and weeds from around your house to make it less attractive to rodents (a favored food for snakes). In particular, discouraging ground squirrels will also reduce the attractiveness of an area to rattlesnakes.