

Animal emergency info

The best chance for survival for a baby animal is for it to be raised by its own parent(s). Parents can teach their young things we cannot. Should you find an animal that appears to need to be rescued:

- Place it in a box (with air holes) lined with paper towels.
- Keep the box in a warm, quiet, dark place (this helps to reduce stress). If you have a heating pad, turn it to the lowest setting. Place a towel on the pad and then place the box on top. Make sure that only a portion of the box rests on the heating pad to give the animal the opportunity to move off the pad to prevent overheating.
- Do NOT feed it anything! The wrong diet could have fatal results.
- Do NOT feed water or fluids
- Call a licensed rehabilitator. Many orphans rescued by well-meaning individuals do not need to be rescued at all, but are displaying natural behavior that may look unnatural to us.

Here are some tips for determining whether an animal needs your help.

Birds

- If you find a baby bird in a nest, it is probably fine. You may not see the adults, but they are almost always nearby.
- A baby bird that is found on the ground with little or no feathers and no apparent injury and has a parent nearby can be placed back in its nest or, if the nest has been destroyed, in a manmade nest as far up the tree as possible. The mother bird will continue to feed it even after being handled by humans. A manmade nest can be built by filling a berry basket, Easter basket (no handles) or straw hat, with twigs, dry grasses and crushed leaves (the container must be one that allows for water to drain out of the bottom).
- Contrary to popular belief, songbirds don't fly from the nest; they hop. For days, young fledgling songbirds hop around the nest area hiding in tall grasses and bushes while they learn to fly. During this time, the parents continue to protect and feed them.
- You should rescue a baby bird if it is sick or injured or if the parents have been killed.

Mammals

- Baby opossums that are over 7 inches long, not including the tail, are already eating on their own and do not require assistance unless sick or injured.
- Many mammals, such as deer and raccoons, leave their babies for long periods while searching for food. If you observe a fawn or baby raccoon alone, it does not necessarily need to be rescued. If the mother does not return after 8 hours, it needs to be rescued.
- Observe a baby mammal that is found on the ground with its eyes closed to see if the mother returns. If she does not, the baby needs to be rescued.

- If handled improperly, orphaned mammals can cause injury to the rescuer and possibly expose them to one of several diseases, the most deadly one being the rabies virus. Don't take chances. Call a wildlife rehabilitator for help or your local Game and Freshwater Fish Commission.