

Wildlife Baby Rescue Guide

These “when to rescue” guidelines are for baby or immature wildlife only, not adult animals.

Fawns:

- *If baby has been crying (a ‘maaapp’ sound) for more than an hour.
- *If the baby is injured or has been attacked.
- *If the baby is lying on its side, stretched out, cold to the touch and cold inside the mouth.
- *If the baby is in a dangerous place (in water, on a high ledge, wandering in a road, trapped in a fenced in area, etc.).
- *If the doe is dead.

Raccoons (rabies vector species):

- *If the baby has been crying continuously.
- *If the baby remains in the same spot for 24 hours.
- *If the eyes are closed and the baby is alone.
- *If it is lying on its side, stretched out, cold.
- *If the baby is injured, or has been attacked.
- *If the mother is dead or has been removed and is relocated.

Skunks (rabies vector species):

- *If it’s crying continuously (mewing sound like a kitten).
- *If the eyes are closed and it is out of the den.
- *If it’s lying on its side, stretched out and cold.
- *If the baby has been injured or attacked.
- *If the mother is dead or has been removed or relocated.

Chipmunks:

- *If it is injured or has been attacked.
- *If the eyes are still closed and it is out of the den.
- *If the den is totally destroyed and the mother hasn’t returned to move the babies within 6 hours.
- *If the baby is lying on its side, stretched out and cold, or is overly thin.
- *If the mother is dead.

Squirrels:

- *If the baby is crying (a high pitched squeal).
- *If the eyes are still closed and it is out of the nest.
- *If the baby is injured or has been attacked.
- *If the mother has been removed or relocated.
- *If the mother is dead.

Rabbits:

- *If the baby is crying (a high pitched scream).
- *If the nest is flooded or totally destroyed, especially if there are other dead babies nearby.
- *If the baby is cold or looks very thin.
- *If the mother is dead or has abandoned the nest (cross sticks over the nest in a pattern so you can tell if it’s been disturbed, check one hour after daybreak or sundown , check baby’s belly to see if it is round (full) or flat (empty)).
- *If the baby has been attacked or is injured.
- *If the eyes are closed and it is out of the nest.

Woodchucks:

- *If the eyes are closed and it’s out of the den.
- *If the baby is injured or has been attacked.
- *If the baby is lying on its side, stretched out, and is cold.
- *If the mother is dead, or has been removed or relocated.

Fox:

- *If the eyes are closed and it is out of the den.
- *If it is injured or been attacked.
- *If the baby is lying on its side, stretched out and cold.
- *If the mother is dead or has been removed or relocated.

Birds

Featherless Birds:

If injured, call a local rehabilitator to make arrangements for the bird to receive proper care immediately. If it is cold, warm it in your hands, or a heating pad. **DO NOT GIVE FOOD OR WATER.** If the bird is not injured, find the nest and place the young back in it. Most birds are unable to detect your scent on their young and after you leave, they will quickly forget your intrusion. These birds must bin in the original nest because they cannot control their body heat. If you are unable to find the nest, the birds must come in for rehabilitation. If both the nest and the nestling are down, tie the nest back into the tree in about the same place with heavy twine. Birds can get tangled in thin string. If the nest is torn apart, a new one can be made out of a margarine tub (or something the same size as the original nest), lined with dryer lint, and the same natural ingredients as the original. Do NOT use fresh grass, mud or cotton, as the bird's feet and nails can get caught in it. Drainage holes should be placed in the bottom of the tub in case of rain. Tie the new "nest" in the tree with heavy twine and watch from a distance. If the parents have not returned after an hour of consistent watching, the birds should be brought to a local rehabilitator.

Downy or Incompletely Feathered Birds:

Find the nest and place the young back in it. If you are unable to find the nest or replace it, the bird must come in for rehabilitation. If the bird is replaced in the nest, watch from a distance to see if the parent birds return.

Partially/Mostly Feathered:

Called fledglings, these babies can hop about, and may be able to flutter or fly short distances. Leave them alone unless they are being attacked. The parents keep track of their young and feed them for some time after they leave the nest. Remember: Birds learn how to fly from the ground up! Often the parents will make their presence known by squawks or swoop attacks when you approach the young. If you have watched from a distance and after an hour of consistent watching, no parent has been seen, the bird may be brought to a local rehabilitator.

Young Precocial Birds:

These birds are mobile upon hatching like geese, killdeer, ducks, etc. If the baby is running around, leave it alone and watch from a window. Keep children and animals away. If the parents are nearby, they will direct the baby to hide when it calls. If, after an hour of consistent watching no parent has been seen, the bird may be brought to a local rehabilitator.

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