

WHEN IT *DOES* NEED YOUR HELP:

PICK IT UP OR CATCH IT. Although babies and small birds will rarely bite you or transmit a disease, it is best to handle birds and baby mammals with a towel or lightweight jacket. Do not expose the baby to heavy human scents such as perfumes. If you are handling raccoons, beavers, skunks, bats, opossums or woodchucks (groundhogs), wear gloves if possible. *Never attempt to capture an adult mammal or large bird or reptile.* Call the wildlife hotline or animal control for assistance.

EXAMINE IT GENTLY (but don't stress it).

If a bird hit a window, check it for signs of injury such as bleeding, head tilt, broken wing, etc. If it is injured, call the wildlife hotline immediately. If it appears to only be stunned, put it in a covered box and wait for 2-3 hours. At the end of that time see if it will fly away. If not, call the hotline.

If the animal is cold: Warmth is very important, particularly if the animal is a tiny duckling, an unfeathered baby bird, or an unfurred baby mammal. Warming (or cooling an overheated animal) should always be done gradually. If it is a cold baby, warm it between your hands.

DO NOT GIVE IT FOOD OR WATER. The animal could choke, get pneumonia, die from shock, or have digestive problems.

CONTAIN IT. *Put the animal in a container slightly larger than the animal, lined with a paper towel or a towel without holes and strings.* Cover a furless mammal for warmth. If there is not plenty of air, punch air holes from the inside out. If the animal is a tiny baby bird(s), it can be placed in a lined margarine tub and then inside a box. Most birds can also be carried in a paper bag.

To maintain warmth, you can fill a small covered glass jar or plastic container filled with hot water and insulate it with a heavy sock or towel so it will not burn the animal, and place it in the box with the animal. Hold it in place with a rolled up towel if necessary. Check the water occasionally to make sure

it does not become cool. *Or* you can use a heating pad *set to low* under (not in) the box. Place it only halfway under the box; if it overheats, the animal can move away from the warmth.

Cover the box and tape the box lid on. If the container is clear, cover it with a towel.

Keep the box in a warm (not hot), dark, quiet place, not directly in the heat or air conditioning path. If the animal is very cold or hot, change its temperature gradually. Do not keep checking on it.

CALL THE WILDLIFE HOTLINE QUICKLY.

You will be referred to the nearest wildlife rehabilitator who handles injured wildlife. *Please make arrangements to transport the animal.*

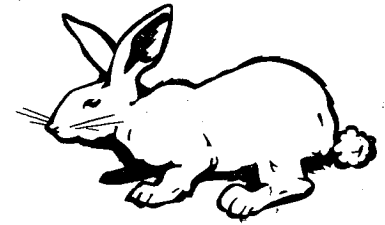
TRANSPORTING TIPS: Keep the carrier out of sun and protected from direct air conditioning or heating. Keep the car radio off. Transport as soon as possible; minutes count. Do not leave on a porch or other unattended place unless previously arranged.

CAN I RAISE IT MYSELF?

Although those babies are sweet and it's human nature to want to help, the answer is *no*. And here's why:

- * Babies need to be raised with others of their particular species and age to properly develop
- * Release of wild animals must be done carefully to make sure they will survive when released.
- * Each species has different nutritional needs; babies must be fed frequently (sometimes every 30 minutes), and formulas are very expensive.
- * Wild animals do not do well in captivity and will spend their time trying to escape, will be destructive, or will die from the stress.
- * Many wild animals carry diseases that can be transmitted to humans or domestic animals through feces or other means.
- * It is illegal to keep native wild animals unless you have a permit from the Virginia State government, and the Fish & Wildlife Service for birds.

Does
This



Animal Need Help?

A guide to:

When to leave an animal alone
When wildlife needs to be rescued
Next steps if it needs
to be rescued

For more assistance,
call the wildlife hotline
(703) 440-0800

Wildlife Rescue League
PO Box 704
Falls Church, VA 22040
(703) 391-8625
wrl@wildliferescueleague.org
web site: www.wildliferescueleague.org

The WRL is an IRS 501(c)(3) organization. A copy of the current financial statement for the Wildlife Rescue League is available by request from the Virginia Division of Consumer Affairs Office in Richmond, Virginia. Donations to the Wildlife Rescue League are tax deductible as allowed by law.
CFC/UNITED WAY # 7843

HOW DO I KNOW IF IT NEEDS HELP?

An animal *always* needs assistance if t:

- shows signs of flies, worms, mites, or maggots
- was caught by a cat or dog, *even if it seems fine*
- has an open wound, bleeding or swollen
- is a baby and the parent is known dead or separated and cannot be reunited
- suffered a severe trauma such as a fall from a high nest or impact with an automobile
- is very cold, very thin or very weak
- is on the ground, unable to move, or is not fully furred or feathered
- begs from or follows humans or domestic animals (except for adult squirrels used to getting handouts from humans).

If you are uncertain about your particular circumstances, call the wildlife hotline.

BABY MAMMALS

COTTONTAILS: Cottontails mature and are on their own very young. A bunny that is fully furred, has its eyes open and tail up, and is at least the size of a tennis ball should be left alone. If it is where it shouldn't be, like a porch, move it under shrubs.

A cottontail mother visits her nest at dawn and dusk, avoiding it during the day when predators might be attracted. To check whether the mother is coming, lightly cross-hatch twigs on top of the nest and leave it overnight. In the morning, if the nest is intact but the twigs have been disturbed, the mother was there.

OPOSSUMS: If you find a baby opossum less than 10 inches long (don't include the tail!), it has become separated from its mother. She will *not* come back.

FAWNS: A doe may leave its fawn unattended all day, joining it at dawn and dusk. The fawn only needs your help if there is a known dead doe close by, or if the fawn is crying, following, begging, or otherwise showing signs of distress, sickness, or injury.

SQUIRRELS, RACCOONS, OTHER MAMMALS: If a squirrel is furred, has a tail that curves up, and can sit up and walk, leave it alone unless it approaches you for help or seems very weak. Foxes play while mom watches from a distance.

If the baby has no fur, is very cold, injured, or appears ill, it should be rescued. Mothers will not take back a cold or unhealthy baby. If the baby

appears to be healthy, stay back and keep animals and children away so that the mother will return for the baby (raccoon mothers will return after dark). You may warm a cool baby (see reverse) and put it in an uncovered box in a shady area. Check after an hour and rewarm if necessary. If the mother does not return in 2 hours, take the baby in. Never leave a baby out overnight. You can also look for the nest yourself and try to return the baby to it.

Squirrel nests, often high in trees, may be difficult to reach. Leave the baby in a shallow open box, one that the mother can get into but the baby can't climb out of, and leave the box at the base of the tree that has the nest, or hang it from a branch. Warm if necessary (see reverse). Check after an hour; retrieve after 2 hours if mom has not returned.

Keep a distance of at least 200 feet when attempting renesting.

TURTLES

Female turtles dig a hole in the ground, lay their eggs, and move on. The turtles will hatch fully able to survive on their own. Leave them alone.

BABY BIRDS

ON THE GROUND: A fledgling is an adolescent bird that is on the ground for a few days while it learns to feed itself and recognize predators, and builds the strength to fly. You can recognize a fledgling by a short tail (1/4 - 1/2 inches) on a well-feathered body. *As long as it is energetic and healthy and the parents are watching over it, leave it alone.* In many species, the mother or father will dive at anyone that gets close to the baby. Back off! However, if the birds seem to be attacking the baby, something is wrong. If no parent is seen, and the fledgling seems lively, back away and watch for at least 2 hours. Keep cats and dogs indoors and ask children to also stay away. You may put it on the branch of a shrub, as long as it is within hearing range of its parents (up to a block).

IN THE NEST: As baby birds get older, the parents spend less time there. Babies keep their heads down when the parent is not there. If the babies seem healthy, watch the nest for a parent for at least 30 minutes without taking your eyes off it. In many species the babies deposit fecal sacs that the parents carry out throughout the day. If the nest is clean, a parent has been there recently.

IN YOUR CHIMNEY OR FIREPLACE: If a baby chimney swift falls into your fireplace, please warm it and renest it. If the baby can cling to the side of the chimney, stick the baby back up, close the damper, and the baby will work its way back up. If the whole nest falls, or the baby is too young to cling to the side, make a nest from a basket and place it back up on the ledge above the flue, closing the damper.

DUCKLINGS & GOSLINGS: Sometimes the mother duck or goose must take her hatched babies to water before all the eggs have hatched. Baby ducklings found wandering alone can be reunited with their mothers if it is done quickly (24 hours). Most Canada geese will foster parent other goslings, however they must be the proper age. Call the wildlife hotline for advice first on whether a baby can be safely reunited with its mother. Never put a small baby in water; it may not be waterproof yet.

KILLDEER: build nests on the ground in a parking lot or on gravel. Babies can walk as soon as they hatch. Leave them alone unless the mother is dead.

HAWKS AND OWLS: Call the wildlife hotline.

RENESTING BABY BIRDS

Warm and attempt to renest a *healthy* baby bird(s) that has fallen out of the nest, unless it is a cold, rainy day. Watch from a distance, returning in an hour to warm the baby.

To repair a damaged nest, carefully retie the nest with string or wire. Do not leave loops, tangles, or sharp points that could injure parents or nestlings. To make a substitute nest, use a berry basket, plastic plant pot with drainage holes, wooden or straw basket. For starlings or sparrows that came from vents or gutters, you can also use a clean plastic milk jug with a hole in the side large enough for an adult to get through. Make sure there is drainage or the nest will fill with water. Line it with nest debris or clean straw (not grass or paper). Place in original spot or as close as possible. Hang or use duct tape to attach. Make sure it is out of direct sun, wind, rain, and is out of reach of cats and children.

Monitor the nest closely in both cases. If the parents do not return in two hours (or by dusk), retrieve the babies, contain them, and call the wildlife hotline.