

WHAT DO I DO IF I FIND A SICK, INJURED OR ORPHANED ANIMAL?

WHY CAN'T I RAISE WILDLIFE MYSELF?

There are many reasons why you cannot raise and treat wildlife. First of all, it is illegal!! Mammals are regulated by the State Fish & Game Department and the federal law protects the birds through the Migratory Bird Act. Taking care of wildlife is a huge responsibility, with each species requiring specialized handling, diets and caging. Feeding an animal the wrong diet can be fatal and/or crippling.

First of all let's determine if it needs to be rescued!

Check for:

- Obvious signs of injury such as broken bones or bleeding.
- Visible parasites such as maggots, flies, ticks or ants.
- Unable to flee from danger such as humans, pets or traffic.
- Absence of fear or lethargic.
- Unable to stand up.
- Uncoordinated movements.

If it meets any of the above items it needs to come into care.

It is difficult sometime to determine if it is orphaned. Some ways of determining this is:

- Found near dead parent
- No parents seen in area after a period of observation from inside your house or hidden.
- Cold body temperature.
- Visible parasites.

Again if it meets any of the above criteria it needs to come into care.

Now that you have determined that it needs help, what do you do?

First, make sure that you have the appropriate gear to catch the injured animal.

- Gloves
- Eye protection
- Towel
- Have an appropriately sized box or carrier ready. Punch holes in it.

Please do not handle the animal if doing so will risk the safety of you, others or the animal. Keep in mind that if you are injured, you will NOT be able to help the animal. Whenever in doubt call for help.

Basics on how to rescue an animal:

- **Prepare the container.** Place a soft cloth, paper towels or toilet paper on the bottom of the box or carrier. For small animals like songbirds you can use a paper sack with holes punched into it.

- **Protect yourself.** Wear gloves and eye protection.
- **Cover the animal with a light sheet or towel.**
- **Gently pick up the animal and put it in the prepared container.** Do not leave towel tightly wrapped around the animal.
- **Warm the animal if it's cold or if the animal is chilled.** Put one end of the container on a heating pad set on low. Or fill a zip-lock bag, container with a screw lid or something similar with warm water and put it next to the animal. Make sure the container does not leak or the animal will get wet and chilled.
- **Tape the box shut or roll the top of the paper bag shut & staple.**
- **Note exactly where you found the animal.** This is important information for the release and the rehabbers' records.
- **Keep the animal in a warm, dark, quiet place.** Do not leave outside. Do not attempt to give it food or water. Do not attempt to handle or bother it anymore. And keep away from pets and children.
- **Contact a Wildlife Rehabilitator as soon as possible.**
- **Wash your hands after handling the animal.**

- **Transport the animal to a Wildlife Rehabilitator or Wildlife Center.**

The best first aid for an animal is to keep them in a dark, warm place until you can get them help. Do NOT attempt to give them food or water because this may worsen their condition.

Remember Wildlife Rehabilitators are not paid. They are taking in a lot of animals during the year and don't have time to go out and rescue animals on a regular bases so your help in transporting the animal is deeply appreciated.

In any State, you can call your local Game & Inland Fisheries, local Veterinarian, or animal shelter and they should have some phone numbers for local Wildlife Rehabilitators.

If you have any questions you may call Pearl Beamer, State & Federally licensed Wildlife Rehabilitator within the state of Virginia about wildlife. Pearl specializes in Raptors, Crows and Loons. 757-855-2922 (7am-7pm)

Some ways to help wildlife:

- Check your yard for rabbit nests, nestling songbirds,

snakes or turtle before mowing the grass.

- Use environmentally friendly substitutes for harmful pesticides, herbicides and fertilizers. Clean up after chemical spills such as antifreeze, quickly and safely.
- NEVER keep a wild animal as a pet.
- Birds and their nests are protected under the Migratory Bird Treaty Act.
- Attach opaque decals to the outside of windows to help prevent window collisions.
- Cut six-pack container rings so the animal's heads don't get stuck in them.
- Collect all fishing line and lures and dispose of them properly.
- Keep CATS indoors.
- Keep garbage tightly sealed so no raccoons and other nighttime creatures don't dine on leftovers.
- Share this information with neighbors and encourage them to do the same!!

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