

# Wildlife Rescue Guide

These guidelines are for baby or immature wildlife only, not adult animals. Animals should be rescued when:

## Fawns

- The baby has been crying (a “maaapp” sound) for more than 1 hour
- The baby is injured or has been attacked by another animal
- The baby is lying on its side, stretched out, cold to the touch, and cold inside the mouth
- The baby walks directly up to humans
- The edges of the ears are curled (indicates dehydration)
- The baby is in a dangerous place (e.g., in water, on a high ledge) trapped in a fenced in area or parking lot)
- The doe is dead

## Raccoons

- The baby has been crying continuously
- The baby remains in the same spot for 24 hours
- The eyes are closed and the baby is alone
- The baby is lying on its side, stretched out, and cold to the touch
- The baby is injured or has been attacked by another animal
- The mother is dead or has been removed and relocated more than 24 hours previously
- The baby walks non-aggressively up to humans

## Skunks

- The baby is crying continually (making a mewling sound like a kitten)
- The eyes are closed and it is out of the den
- The baby is lying on its side, stretched out, and cold to the touch
- The baby is injured or has been attacked by another animal
- The mother is dead or has been removed or relocated more than 24 hours previously

## Chipmunks

- The baby is injured or has been attacked by another animal
- The eyes are still closed and the baby is out of its den
- The den or nest is totally destroyed and the mother has not returned to move the babies within 12 hours
- The baby is lying on its side, stretched out, and cold or is overly thin (indicates dehydration)
- The mother is dead

## Squirrels

- The baby is crying (making a high, almost continuously pitched squeal sound) for any length of time
- The eyes are still closed and the baby is out of its nest
- The baby walks directly up to humans
- The baby is injured or has been attacked by another animal
- The mother is dead or has been removed or relocated more than 24 hours previously

## Rabbits

- The baby is crying (making a high-pitched scream)
- The nest is flooded or totally destroyed, especially if other babies nearby are dead
- The baby is cold or looks overly thin (indicates dehydration)
- The mother is dead or has abandoned the nest (cross sticks over the nest in a pattern; wait 12 to 24 hours before checking the nest again to see if it has been disturbed)
- The baby has been attacked or is injured
- The eyes are closed and the baby is out of its nest

## Woodchucks

- The eyes are closed and the baby is out of its den
- The baby is injured or has been attacked by another animal
- The baby is lying on its side, stretched out, and is cold to the touch
- The mother is dead or has been removed or relocated more than 24 hours previously

## Foxes

- The eyes are closed and the baby is out of its den
- The baby is injured or has been attacked by another animal
- The baby is lying on its side, stretched out, and cold to the touch
- The mother is dead or has been removed or relocated more than 24 hours previously

## Bear Cubs

- DO NOT ATTEMPT TO RESCUE BEAR CUBS Contact the state division of Fish, Game, and Wildlife for professional assistance

Source: Wildlife Rescue Guide, Wild & Free, Inc., Layton, NJ

## **Birds**

**The statement, “if you handle baby birds, the mother will reject them” is NOT TRUE!**

### **Feathered song birds or fledglings**

- Baby birds are often seen fully feathered but trying to fly, with the parents nearby. These are fledglings. If they look bright and alert, it is best to leave them alone. If possible, keep cats and dogs away from the area for a few days in which time the birds will learn to fly. The parents will continue to care for them even though they are on the ground. If you are not sure the parents are nearby and you are concerned, you may put the bird in a nearby bush or on a tree branch and observe from inside the house for a few hours. If the mother sees you in the yard she will not come near.

### **Nestling song birds (partially feathered)**

- If the baby bird is bright, alert, and opening it's mouth for food, you can put it back in the nest. If it is not gaping (opening it's mouth for food) or is cold, it may need special attention. In addition, if a bird is injured, it needs help and cannot be placed back in the nest. Birds that are cat caught are assumed to be injured although they may not appear to be. If a bird is featherless, it needs heat.
- Since some baby birds need to eat every 1/2 hour or so, it is important to contact a rehabilitator as soon as possible for instructions if it cannot be put back in the nest or the mother is gone.

### **Pigeons and Doves**

- If baby doves are found on the ground, it is usually difficult to find the nest to put them back. Doves make very poor nests which get blown down easily. Pigeons usually don't make nests. Juvenile pigeons are fully feathered and very docile, and rely on their parents for a long time. If you're not sure the bird needs attention, call a rehabilitator.

### **Adult birds**

- If an adult bird can be caught, probably something is wrong and it needs help.