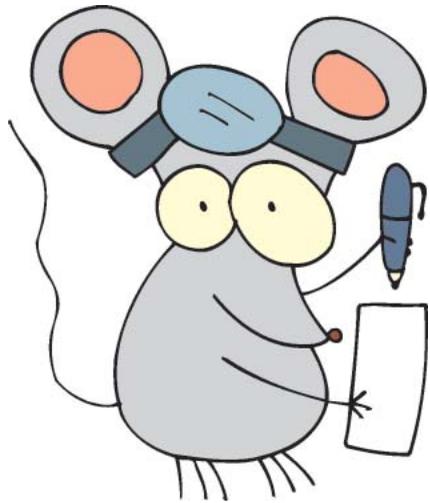


Wild Parents

Know Best



What to do if you find
an injured or
orphaned wild animal.



To help, or not to help

In the wild, about 75% of all animals do not survive their first year of life. Studies show that a young creature's chances of survival diminish even further if it falls into the hands of a well-meaning human caretaker. It is hard for us to relate to animal parenting skills, which are very different from our own.

What should I do if I find a baby mammal?

Many mammal parents will leave their scentless young alone during the day. This prevents predators from being attracted by the mother's scent. The mothers will return, under the cover of dusk, to care for their offspring. If you find a baby mammal such as a fawn, rabbit or raccoon, it is probably not orphaned. Do not remove the creature, but leave it for its mother to return.

What should I do if I find a baby bird?

If you find a baby bird with feathers, chances are that it is a fledgling, and it is beginning the process of learning how to fly. Since this can take up to ten days of trying, birds start from the ground up and are followed and fed by their parents.

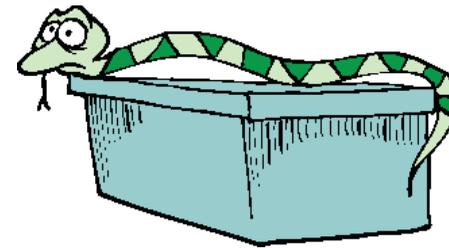
If you find a baby bird without feathers, look around carefully for its nest. Contrary to popular belief, parent birds will NOT reject their young if returned to the nest. If the nest itself has fallen, wedge a colander or sieve in the tree, and put in the nest parts and the baby birds.



Sometimes helping can hurt

For a human surrogate parent, raising wild animals is difficult and risky. The young have specific nutritional needs and rigid feeding schedules. Many harbor diseases transmittable to humans. Not only is it difficult and risky, in most cases it is illegal. **State or federal permits are required to possess wild animals.**

If you find a young wild animal, give it a fighting chance by keeping pets and children away and leaving it alone. Remember, wild parents are the best parents.



If you are certain that an
animal is orphaned or injured:

1. Call a licensed wildlife rehabilitator.
2. Do not touch the animal without gloves, towels or other barrier.
3. Place the animal in a secure, well-ventilated container.

What should I do if I find a turtle?

Late spring and early summer are times when you might see a turtle meandering across a road. Turtles, like most wild animals, have defined territories. If they are taken and placed into another "natural" habitat, they may not survive. The best way to help one of these four-legged creatures is to carefully move it across the road in the direction it was heading. It obviously has a destination in mind, and more than likely is instinctively heading toward a site to breed or lay eggs.

Numbers of Licensed Wildlife Rehabilitators

Waterfowl, Shorebirds, Turkey & Pheasants
Diane Kuhl: 574-220-4042

Songbirds
Larry Kauffman: 574-654-3652
Karen Gorbitz (*injured adults only*): 574-287-4466
Dorla Null (*babies only*): 574-255-5159

Raptors
Carol Riewe: 574-288-5549

Reptiles & Amphibians
Melissa Bishop: 574-255-4726
Lois Myers: 574-904-1185
Dennis Badke - Elkhart: 574-848-7199

Mammals
Cindy Sellers (*no bats/raccoons*): 574-291-7331
Denise Hock (*no bats/raccoons*): 574-250-0941
Shirley Needham - Rochester (*bats*): 574-223-3801
Doreen Howard: 574-255-8745
Lynn Martin - Elkhart (*rabbies*): 574-264-7656
Gretchen Warley - LaPorte: 219-324-2471

Rescue:
South Bend Animal Control: 574-235-9303
Humane Society of St. Joseph County: 574-255-4726