

Rehab Chat:

Hotline Q & A

*A Telephone Reference Guide for
Assisting Native Ohio Wildlife*



Compiled by Brukner Nature Center 2004

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Brukner Nature Center is a nonprofit, privately-funded organization promoting the appreciation and understanding of wildlife conservation through preservation, education, and rehabilitation.

How to Use this Manual...

As animal care professionals, we are frequently contacted by caring and compassionate individuals who are in search of assistance with their questions concerning domestic and exotic animals, as well as, native wildlife. We understand that many callers want answers to their questions immediately and do not always make the effort to make the second or third call to find someone that can help. This phone manual is designed to help make answering questions easier and to assure that the public receives CORRECT and efficient information.



We also recognize that resources, including time to answer questions, can be limited. To help conserve your resources and ensure that the public receives the best possible advice, we strongly encourage all animal care professionals to network together. This will allow us to better serve the public and ensure that ALL animals receive the best assistance that they can.

Native Ohio wildlife are unique since they are protected by state and federal laws and regulations. Those that care for native wildlife must possess an appropriate permit from the Ohio Department of Natural Resources (ODNR), Division of Wildlife. Ohio is fortunate to have more than 70 licensed wildlife rehabilitators across the state. A complete list of licensed wildlife rehabilitators can be found at www.owra.org. Please help us protect the welfare of wildlife and the health and safety of the public by referring callers only to those listed in the ODNR Directory of Licensed Wildlife Rehabilitators.

Wildlife calls can be difficult....

1. Use the easy to follow **flow charts** (bird and mammal) to answer your caller's questions. If the caller needs further assistance, refer them to a **licensed wildlife rehabilitator**. Note which type of animal is in need of help and the county from which they are calling, to match them with the professional that can best serve them.
2. If they have **questions regarding wildlife laws and permits, please refer them to their county wildlife officer**. A complete listing of wildlife officer and district office numbers can be found at <http://wildlife.ohiodnr.gov/species-and-habitats/nuisance-wildlife>.
3. If they **need assistance removing a problem animal from their premises**, first, suggest humane solutions as found in the wildlife brochures developed by BNC, which can be accessed via our website (www.bruknernaturecenter.com). **Convince people that the "nuisance" wildlife in their yards can actually be a joy to watch**. Animals are opportunists and will do what they can to survive, such as, eating a free meal that you put outside for your cat. Remember that it is not always the animal that creates the problem. We need to give callers that friendly reminder so that they can make changes that will alleviate the problem. If additional ideas on problem-solving are needed, reference *Wild Neighbors*, by the Humane Society of the United States for advice on "nuisance" wildlife, which is available on Amazon. As a last resort, direct the caller to contact www.wildohio.gov to receive an up-to-date listing of **licensed nuisance trappers** available in their county. Nuisance trappers will charge a fee based on their specific situation and animal.
4. Any **questions on diseases should be referred to the county health department**.

A Few Tips...

- Always remain calm and friendly on the phone. The more convincing you sound to the caller, the better the situation for the animal. Remember that no matter what they have done to the animal in the past, they have called you for help and that is a step in the right direction. Show them your appreciation of their concern for wildlife while gently explaining the correct actions.
- **First, always try to reunite parents with young.** Parents rarely abandon their young. You may not see the parents, but they are almost always close by and watching. Although tempting, young mammals **by law cannot be raised by the general public.** Even veterinarians and veterinary technicians cannot raise wildlife without a permit. Only wildlife rehabilitators listed in the ODNR Directory of Licensed Rehabilitators have permits from the state, and in some cases federal, government documenting that they have the facilities, knowledge, and expertise to handle wildlife. People are a wild animal's last chance for survival; never its best chance.
- **With injured wildlife,** it is important to keep the caller calm and thinking reasonably, **to think with their head, not with their heart.** The animal is already in a very stressful situation and by helping the caller do the right thing you can relieve much stress from the animal. Always stress the safety of the caller. Never ask anyone to do anything with which they are uncomfortable.
- It is important to note that **wild animals can carry diseases** that can be passed to humans, especially children and the elderly. Care should be taken when coming into contact with any wild animal.
- **Never** interfere with nature. **Never** attempt to “rescue” natural prey from natural predators.
- **Domestic cats kill billions of wild animals each year.** Please keep your cat indoors. Cat attacks cause an instant and often fatal infection due to the bacteria that cats carry in their mouths and claws.

Important Things to Consider:

- **If the wild animal truly needs our help...**
 - Show your true concern for the animal by trying to reunite it with its parents or, at best, leaving it alone in its natural environment before any other action is taken.
 - Be patient and don't hover over the animal. Just as we are wary of unfamiliar things, so are animals. Please give them time and space to reunite.
- **If an animal needs to be taken to a wildlife rehabilitator....**
 - **Never** put yourself in danger.
 - Always wear gloves or protective gear when handling a wild animal.
 - **Never** transport an animal by carrying or holding the animal in your arms.
 - Place the animal in an escape-proof container, such as a cardboard box with the top taped shut.
- **If you need to keep an animal for later transport to a wildlife rehabilitator...**
 - Place the animal in an escape-proof container, such as a cardboard box with top taped closed. Handling causes stress and stress kills. Only handle the animal if absolutely necessary.
 - Keep the animal in a warm, dark and quiet place, such as a cardboard box placed in the closet away from children and pets.
 - **Never** attempt to provide food to an animal. The wrong foods can be deadly.

MAMMALS

5 Tips to Wildlife Reunion and Rescue

1

Is the animal injured?

Injured wildlife need the assistance of trained individuals. Contact a licensed wildlife rehabilitator immediately! Signs of injury may include blood, displaced limbs, lethargy and immobility.

A list of all licensed wildlife rehabilitators can be found at www.owra.org.



Is the animal an older juvenile?

Juvenile mammals will leave the safety of their nest to explore new surroundings. This is a critical part of their development and it is normal to see them alone. Animals that appear healthy should be observed from a distance and keep pets and children away from them!

2

3

Is the animal a neonate? Reunite!

Did you find a nest of baby squirrels/raccoons while trimming trees? Disturb a nest of cottontails while mowing the lawn? Good news! Mom will return for her healthy, uninjured young if given a chance! Squirrels and raccoons should be placed inside a box with a towel and warm water bottle. Allow mom 4-6 hours to reunite with her young. Cottontails should be returned to their nest. Mark the parameter of the nest with baking flour and leave overnight. You'll know mom has returned by evidence of her tracks through the flour! Remember, human's are an animal's last chance of survival; their best chance of survival is with mom!



Unsuccessful Reunion?

Callers that are unable to reunite neonate mammals should contact a licensed wildlife rehabilitator. Category I rehabilitators assist with orphaned cottontails & squirrels. Category II rehabilitators, like Brukner Nature Center, assist with all other species of orphaned and injured wildlife.

A list of all licensed wildlife rehabilitators can be found at www.owra.org

4

5

Warm, Dark and Quiet!

This is the most life-saving advice to offer until an animal can be transferred to a licensed wildlife rehabilitator. Warmth helps neonates regulate their body temperature while a dark, quiet environment reduces stress. Supplemental heat sources include: warm water bottles, heating pads on 'low', hand warmers, etc. Never place a baby animal directly on heat.

Baby Mammals

Natural History

*Mammals have offspring from early spring to late fall. Some mammals are born naked with eyes sealed shut. Mother provides milk for the young until they are old enough to eat on their own. The composition of the mother's milk is specific for each type of animal and provides all the requirements needed for healthy growth. The species of mammal determines when they are weaned from their mother and when they will leave their home. Young mammals often stay with the females for a short period after they are weaned as they explore their surroundings, while learning of food sources, denning sites, and the dangers of their natural world. Young mammals are very cute and we humans are often swayed by our emotions to the point where we interfere when our "help" is not needed. Taking a healthy baby from a caring mother is the worst thing we could do. Our best role in saving wildlife is to be guardians of the few remaining wild places. We can help keep young mammals safe from unnatural predators such as dogs and cats (but **NEVER** natural predators such as crows or foxes!) and through our actions, insure that wild places remain undeveloped.*

What to Do?

1. **Know an animal's natural history.**
2. Always try to **reunite** the young with their parents. The instinct to raise their young is very strong and mothers will often return to an area many times to retrieve all of their young.
3. **Give the parents time** to come back to their young, **leave the area and check back in approximately 4-6 hours.**
4. If not successful, contact a licensed wildlife rehabilitator.

Important Points to Remember:

- **No one** can raise a wild animal without the proper permits and training from the Division of Wildlife. If the caller has a problem with this law, they should contact their district ODNR office.
- **Parents rarely abandon their young.** You may not see the parents, but they are almost always close by and watching. Make 100% sure the parents are not caring for their young before you act.
- **Mother always knows best.** Humans are a wild animal's last chance for survival, never their best. We can provide help for the young, but cannot replace the care of mother.
- **Be patient and don't hover over the animal.** Just as humans are wary of unfamiliar things, so are animals - give them ample time and space to reunite.
- **Baby mammals should never be given food** from a concerned person. Diet composition is critical to their health and an incorrect diet can do more harm than good. **Warm, dark and quiet** is the rule until the animal can be transferred to a licensed wildlife rehabilitator.
- **Domestic cats kill billions of wild animals each year. Please keep your cat indoors.** Cat attacks can produce an instant and often fatal infection due to the bacteria present in their mouths and claws.
- **Mammals should not be captured and released elsewhere, it is often illegal and always discouraged.** Why? Primarily, the threat of introduction of a new disease into a new area. Most habitats are at carrying capacity and the introduction of more individuals causes conflict and stress.
- **Human scent will not keep the mother away from her baby.** Natural instinct is stronger than a fear of humans.

Eastern Cottontail Rabbits



Female rabbits build a nest on the ground made from grass and fur she pulls from her chest. The mother only feeds her young at dawn and dusk, to reduce the chances of her nest being found by a predator. The rest of the time she is off feeding close enough to keep an eye on her nest, but probably not visible to you.

Eastern cottontails are weaned from their mother and on their own in 2-3 weeks! Once weaned from the mother, cottontails have been known to utilize their nesting location for up to 7 weeks. At this time, people often spot these small creatures hopping around their yard, mistakenly believing they need assistance. When the young are fully furred, with ears erect, hopping around outside the nest, they are on their own and need no assistance from us. They will leave the nest when they are still smaller than the palm of your hand!

What to Do?

- **Leave the nest alone!** This is the best advice.
- **If you have a dog in your yard**, simply cover the nest with a laundry basket and sit on it while your dog is in the yard (or protect it another way – the possibilities are endless!), then remove the basket and allow the mother access. You can also advise the caller to do this when they are mowing.
- **If you are unsure if the mother is returning** to the nest, place sticks in a pattern over the nest or sprinkle baking flour around the perimeter of the nest. If the objects have not been moved by the next morning or the babies feel cold and listless, contact a licensed wildlife rehabilitator.
- **Mother only feeds at dawn and dusk.** It is not natural for you to see mother feeding her babies. You often will not see her at all!

Squirrels, Woodchucks, & Chipmunks



The female builds a nest, lives in tree cavities, or makes a den to raise her young. Young are weaned from their mother in 10 – 12 weeks. During the weaning process, the young begin to leave the nest or den and explore. This is when people start to see the young.

Each time the young venture out, they go a little further than before. Eventually, they will leave for good. It is important to know that mother is usually watching her young, even though you may not see her (*see note below regarding woodchucks*).

What to Do?

- **Leave them alone!** Remember that young mammals are very curious and tend to find themselves in precarious situations. Just enjoy and do not interfere.
- **Place young that have fallen, back into the nest. Can't find the nest or reach it? No problem. Make your own nest.** Using a 12"x12" box, cut a 3" hole approximately 3" from the bottom of the box. Line with natural materials, as well as a warm water bottle or hand warmer. Place the nest and neonate in the tree closest to where you found it.
- **These animals have multiple nest sites!** A disrupted nest (i.e. fallen tree) with young in it should be left alone if you are not sure if the mother is still alive. If the young are bright, alert and warm to the touch (furless neonates should have pink skin) give the mother 4 – 6 hours before attempting to "help" the young. If mother is not happy with the living situations she will move her young.
- **Contact a rehabilitator immediately** if a young woodchuck(s) has emerged from the den without an adult present or a juvenile squirrel or chipmunk approaches a person without fear.

Virginia Opossums



Virginia opossums are one of the most unique mammals in Ohio and the only marsupial in North America. Females come into heat for a 24-hr period once a month. The peak of their breeding season occurs April - September, but young have been orphaned in earlier and later months. The female gives birth to embryonic "joeys" after a 12-day gestation.

No larger than a jellybean, the joeys make a short journey into their mother's pouch where they will spend the next 10 weeks. At approximately this time the young start to emerge from the pouch and explore outside. They begin to eat what their mother eats and at 12 weeks they ride on their mother's back and rarely go back into the pouch. **At 15 weeks when they measure 4 – 5 inches from nose to base of tail (approximately the length of a dollar bill) the opossums are weaned and begin to disperse.**

What to Do?

- **Dead female adult opossums can be checked for young still in the pouch.** If you find any, please contact a licensed wildlife rehabilitator.
- **To keep opossums from becoming a pest, don't feed your pets outdoors.** It's a free meal and may attract more than you care to have in your yard!

Red & Gray Foxes



Birthing occurs between March-April and will consist of one litter (2 – 7 kits). Roles of family rearing are given primarily by the mother, but the father or additional unmated females participate in the upbringing. Young are weaned in just 8-10 weeks, but will stay as a family unit through much of the summer. Kits will oftentimes be seen alone while the vixen is away hunting. Young males begin to disperse in late summer

(July/August).

What to Do?

- **Leave them alone!** Remember that young mammals are very curious and tend to find themselves in precarious situations. Just enjoy and do not interfere.
- **To keep foxes from becoming a pest, don't feed your pets outdoors.** It's a free meal and may attract more than you care to have in your yard!
- **If the mother has been killed and the kits are very young (less than 6 weeks), injured, ill or starving, they should be brought in for rehabilitation.** Older kits should be monitored as the father/unmated female will be able to continue to raise the young.

Bats



In Ohio we have 11 species of bats. **Unfortunately, bats are very misunderstood nocturnal mammals.** People are frightened by them, primarily due to their lack knowledge. Bats are actually very beneficial to the environment. Bats eat a large number of harmful insects in the spring and summer months. The bats in our area mate September to October. Through the winter, bats will either migrate to warmer areas or hibernate in caves or buildings depending on the species. From June through early August, baby bats are born and raised in a special colony called the "nursery colony". In late August the babies leave the nursery colony with their mothers to feed, roost in smaller groups and prepare to hibernate or migrate.

What to Do?

- **Never pick up a bat with your bare hands.** Use a pair of thick, leather gloves.
- **Bats that are found in houses should be given a chance to escape.** First try to open all of the windows in the room and close the doors. Turn off the lights and wait for dark. When the bat goes to forage for the evening, hopefully it will leave through the window. If this does not work, take a clean jar, like a peanut butter jar and place it over the bat. Gently slide a piece of paper across the opening of the container. Take the jar outside and place the open part against a tree. The bat will then attach itself to the tree and be able to fly away.
- **Many bats cannot take flight from the ground** and must be placed on a tree trunk or higher perch to take off.
- **Bats found on the ground have a higher chance of having a disease.** This should be taken into consideration before handling the bat.
- **A bat that has bitten someone** should be taken back to the county that it was found and given to the health department for rabies testing.
- **If you receive a call about a bat in a house, you are required to ask if anyone in the room with the bat was sleeping, mentally impaired, elderly, or a child.** If the caller answers yes to any of these questions, the bat must be euthanized and tested for rabies. If the bat is unavailable for testing, all people who came in contact with it should be advised to contact their health care provider to discuss being treated for rabies exposure.
- **Bats should only be referred to licensed wildlife rehabilitators** that are permitted to handle them (reference ODNR Licensed Rehabilitator Directory).

Raccoons



The female builds a nest, lives in tree cavities, or makes a den to raise her young. Young are weaned in 6-8 weeks. **During the weaning process, the young begin to leave the nest or den and explore.** Each time the young venture out, they go a little further than before. Eventually, they will leave for good. **It is important to note that raccoons are nocturnal animals, but when the young leave the nest they may be spotted during the day trying to find a new home.**

CAUTION: *Raccoons are known for carrying **many** diseases that are transferable to humans. It is important for the public to know the risks they are taking when they have a raccoon in their possession. Zoonoses are diseases that humans can contract from animals. Listed here are zoonotic diseases carried by raccoons that can be transmitted to humans:*

- **Rabies:** This virus is transmitted in the saliva of infected animals. An animal does not have to have symptoms of the disease to transmit it. Though the chances are small of contracting rabies, the possibility is always there, and precautions should be taken. ***NOTE: More than a dozen counties in northeastern Ohio are prohibited from rehabilitating raccoons due to confirmed cases of raccoon rabies. Callers from these quarantined counties must not be encouraged to move raccoons for any reason and should contact their county wildlife officer for additional assistance.***
- **Roundworm:** This parasite is found commonly in young raccoons. Eggs from the adult roundworm are shed in the feces. Humans can contract the disease by coming in contact with fecal matter.
- **Giardia:** This parasite lives in the fecal matter and can infect humans coming in contact with it.

- ***Leptospirosis:*** This disease is spread from animals to humans by direct contamination of mucus membranes or broken skin of the human by urine of the animal.

What to Do?

- **Leave them alone!** Remember that young mammals are very curious and tend to find themselves in precarious situations. Just enjoy and do not interfere.
- If possible, **place babies that have fallen, back into the nest. Wear thick leather gloves!**
- **Can't find the nest or can't reach it? No problem. Make your own nest.** Using an 18"x18" box, cut a 5" hole approximately 5" from the bottom of the box. Line the box with natural materials, as well as a warm water bottle or hand warmer. Place the nest close to where you found the baby. The mother will still come back.
- **If mother is not happy with the living situation she will move her babies.**
- **Don't feed your pets outdoors.** This is a free meal to many animals and may support more animals in your yard than is healthy.

State Permits: *Raccoons must be euthanized or held for 65 days by a licensed rehabilitator with no sign of disease before being released. If held for 65 days, the raccoon must be released into the same county and township in which it was originally obtained. Many rehabilitators do not accept raccoons at any stage due to higher exposure to zoonotic diseases and parasites associated with raccoons. Therefore, the best solution is euthanasia if a licensed rehabilitator cannot be found.*

If a sick raccoon cannot be taken by a rehabilitator:

- **Suggest the caller euthanize the animal.** This is truly the best thing for the animal.
- **Contact their non-emergency police line** – *some* officials are able to assist.
- **Contact a licensed nuisance trapper** to assist in the removal of the sick animal.

White-Tailed Deer



From late April to early June a female deer typically can have up to 2 fawns, but on rare occasions she can have 3. Fawns nurse for about 6 weeks, then are weaned from their mother. For the first two weeks of the fawn's life it is too weak to travel with its mother. For this reason **does will "hide" their young for 12-18 hours when they go feed by themselves. It is important to note that even though the young may look abandoned, they are not.** Once weaned, young deer stay with their mothers for several more months before they go off on their own.

What to Do?

- **Leave that baby alone!** Many fawns are wrongfully taken from their mothers.
- **Only act if you are 100% positive** that the mother has been killed. Leave the young for 24hrs. A bleating fawn can be fostered by a nearby mother. If the fawn remains after 24-hrs direct the caller to licensed wildlife rehabilitators that specialize in fawns (reference [ODNR Directory of Licensed Wildlife Rehabilitators](#)).
- **By state law, injured adult white-tailed deer must be euthanized.** Call your county wildlife officer or non-emergency police line immediately.

BIRDS

5 Tips to Wildlife Reunion and Rescue

1

Is the bird injured?

Injured wildlife need the assistance of trained professionals. Contact a licensed wildlife rehabilitator immediately! Signs of injury may include blood, displaced limbs, lethargy and immobility.

A list of all licensed wildlife rehabilitators can be found at www.owra.org.



Is the bird a fledgling?

The fledgling period is a critical part of a bird's development. During this adolescent stage of development birds have left the nest but still rely on their parents to teach them how to forage and fly! The best way to protect fledgling birds is by keeping pets and children indoors and to watch from a distance.

2

3

Is the bird a displaced nestling? Reunite!

Make attempts to find the nest and place the young back in it! With the exception of turkey vultures, birds in Ohio have an under developed sense of smell. After you leave the nest, they will quickly forget your intrusion. Unable to reach the nest? Create a make-shift nest built from materials such as a berry basket, small colander, or plastic bowl with holes in the bottom. Nesting material such as leaves, dried grass clippings and toilet paper should be added. A hand warmer can be added below the nesting material to provide the nestling with supplemental heat until the parent(s) return. Signs that the parents have returned include: young that are bright, alert and warm to the touch, or feces being present. Remember, human's are an animal's last chance of survival; not their next best chance!



Unsuccessful Reunion?

Callers that are unable to reunite nestling birds should contact a licensed wildlife rehabilitator. Only Category II rehabilitators, like Brukner Nature Center, are licensed to assist with orphaned and injured birds.

A list of all licensed wildlife rehabilitators can be found at www.owra.org

4

5

Warm, Dark and Quiet!

This is the most live-saving advice to offer until an animal can be transferred to a licensed wildlife rehabilitator. Warmth helps nestlings regulate their body temperature while a dark, quiet environment reduces stress. Supplemental heat sources include: warm water bottles, heating pads on 'low', hand warmers, etc. Never place a baby animal directly on heat. Birds have specialized diets and should never be fed or watered.

Baby Birds

Natural History

*During the months of May – July baby birds begin to hatch. The parents spend most of their day providing for their young. In fact, the parents may make as many as 1,000 visits to the nest each day! As early as 2 weeks of age, young songbirds begin to fledge (leave the nest). For a few days the young, called fledglings, may be seen hopping around on the ground, having difficulty flying, and may seem very vulnerable. **This is a natural and important process in the birds' lives!** This is the time that they are learning how to fly and find food on their own. Even though the parents don't seem to be around, they are keeping a watchful eye on their babies and will also continue to feed them a few times a day at this stage.*

What to do?

- **ALWAYS** try to **reunite** the young with their parents.
- **Give the parents time to come back** to their nestling and stay a good distance away, preferably inside. Wait 2-3 hours before checking again.
- If not successful, **contact a wildlife rehabilitator** that specializes in migratory birds (reference [ODNR Directory of License Wildlife Rehabilitators](#)).

Important Points to Remember:

- **Parents rarely abandon their young.** You may not see the parents, but they are almost always close by and watching.
- **Mother always knows best.** We can provide help for the young, but cannot replace the care from their mother.
- **Be patient and don't hover over the animal.** Just as humans are wary of unfamiliar things, so are animals, so give them ample time to reunite.
- **Don't panic, nature knows best.** Take the time to fully assess the situation.
- **Avoid the “cute baby syndrome”** and show your true concern for the young bird by reuniting the animal with the parents or at best leaving it alone in its natural environment.
- **Make 100% sure the parents are not caring** for their young before you act.
- **Domestic cats kill billions of wild animals each year.** Please keep your cat indoors. Cat attacks cause an instant and often fatal infection due to the bacteria that cats carry in their mouths and claws.
- **Birds do not have a good sense of smell.** It's o.k. to pick up a baby bird and put it back in its nest!
- **Can't find the nest? No problem! Make your own nest.** A hanging basket or box with holes poked in the bottom for drainage and lined with natural materials will make a good temporary nest. Place the nest (with the bird inside) in the closest tree or shrub.
- **Leave the juvenile bird that is hopping around alone!** To interrupt would be harmful to the natural development process of the young fledgling. Keep pets indoors.

Birds of Prey



Birds of prey are typically recognized by their sharp curved beaks and talons. In Ohio, these birds include owls, hawks, falcons, eagles, osprey, harriers, kites and vultures. Birds of prey provide many valuable environmental services ranging from controlling populations of pest species such as mice, rats, and insects, to removing carrion from the environment and reducing the spread of disease. While many species have adapted to the effects of urban sprawl, many injuries that birds of prey sustain are due largely in part from contact with humans or our man-made obstacles. Avian species are not only protected by state laws and regulations but are protected by federal laws mandated by the US Fish and Wildlife Service.

What to Do?

- If a baby bird of prey is found, the best thing to do is first try to **reunite it with its mother**.
- **Always contact licensed wildlife rehabilitators that specialize in birds of prey for advice before attempting to handle a bird of prey**. Even young birds of prey have sharp talons and beaks. The same precautions should be taken when handling adult birds of prey.
- When picking up bird of prey, **heavy leather gloves** should be worn.
- The **eyes can be covered with a towel or sheet** to prevent stress to the bird during capture. During transportation, make sure the bird is **secure and quiet**.
- If transporting a bird to a licensed rehabilitator is necessary, **cardboard boxes or kennel carriers** are the best means of transit, **not wire cages**.

Baby Ducks, Geese, Quail, or Killdeer



These birds are born precocial, which means that they are fully equipped to eat and clean themselves at hatching. However, they cannot thermoregulate, maintain a constant body temperature. They must have the warmth of their parents or siblings in order to stay alive. Until they get their adult feathers they are not waterproof and must dry themselves off when out of water. Sometimes when the young are foraging for food they get separated from mother. The young will call to their mother to alert her that they are lost. Mother hears their call and calls back to her young letting them know she is in the area. The young are almost always reunited. Once the young have most of their adult feathers and reach an age of 8-10 weeks, they are on their own.

What to Do?

- If you know where the mother is, **try to reunite** her young by placing them close enough that mother can hear them call. Drive the area and look for the mother in suitable habitat such as: ponds, creeks, ditches and even plantings around fast food restaurants! Abandoned goslings (baby geese) may be adopted by another family with brood of similar age.
- **Remain a good distance away**, preferably inside, and observe.
- If the baby is **not reunited in 2 hours**, contact a licensed wildlife rehabilitator.

Don't Touch that Nest!

- **Waterfowl are protected by state and federal laws.** It is illegal to disturb a nest with eggs.
- **Leave the duck nest in your garden alone** and enjoy nature for what it is.

House Sparrows and European Starlings

English house sparrows and European starlings are two non-native, invasive species frequently found in Ohio and across the nation. These birds outcompete our native birds for their resources and will often times destroy the nests and eggs of young during the nesting season. Many native bird populations are declining due to the negative impacts created by these invasive species. For this reason, many licensed wildlife rehabilitators do not accept English house sparrows and European starlings for rehabilitation, but will accept them for humane euthanasia. It should be noted that, although these birds are not protected by the Migratory Bird Treaty Act, it is still against the law in the state of Ohio to possess and care for these birds without appropriate permits.

Reptiles & Amphibians



Natural History

Reptiles and amphibians, often categorized as 'herps', are animals that are sensitive to changes in their environments and will spend their entire lives within relatively small home-ranges (i.e. 2-miles). Reptiles and amphibians are most often found in moist, wooded environments and waterways but are frequently found in urban environments; navigating through backyards and roadways while migrating to their breeding grounds. Ohio's native reptiles and amphibians are independent and self-sufficient from the moment they hatch.

What to Do?

- **Any uninjured herp should be left alone.** Even old injuries that have healed do not warrant a need to rescue these animals.
- **Do not move herps to a "better spot" or different location.** Removing herps from areas that you deem "unsuitable" will eventually result in the loss of populations. Reptiles and amphibians can and do survive in suburban and even urban areas, but not if they are constantly rescued and relocated. In situations where these animals may be crossing the road, **simply help them across the road in the same direction they were traveling.**
- If you find an injured herp, call a licensed wildlife rehabilitator as soon as possible. Document the location where the animal was collected and provide the information to the rehabilitator. **Do not put the injured animal in water**, as it may not be able to keep its head out of the water and could drown.
- **Do not make a wild reptile or amphibian your pet!** Understand that wild animals are born to live their lives in the wild – not in a house or cage. Also, raising a wild animal in captivity is illegal unless you have a state permit.

Helpful Resources

Ohio Wildlife Rehabilitators Association - www.owra.org

Complete list of licensed Wildlife Rehabilitators in Ohio and other states

Ohio Department of Natural Resources - www.wildohio.gov

Complete list of county wildlife officers, district offices and licensed nuisance trappers

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service - www.fws.gov/birds

To report illegal/environmental concerns about migratory birds

Migratory Bird Permit Office
5600 American Blvd. West
Suite 990
Bloomington, MN 55437-1458
Phone: 612.713.5436
Email: permitsR3MB@fws.gov

County Health Departments - www.odh.ohio.gov

To report wild animal bites or to refer the public to them if they have any health issues regarding wildlife.

United States Geological Survey - www.reportband.org

To report a banded bird