

Capture and Handling of Adult Jack Rabbits.

We catch a reasonable number of adult Jack Rabbits each year. Generally they have been hit by a vehicle. The most common injury is one of that a back legs is badly broken. If we catch it relatively early in the injury, and the damage is not too severe other than the broken leg, we have been able to remove the leg and after some care release the rabbit back into the wild. They do get along very well on three legs. Dr. Harvey has been very good with this. He operates and we pick up the rabbit immediately as his people rant as good at caring for them an he want us to take them right away. If the go to the Vet college they will be put down. We only put down those that do not have a chance of recovering. If the injury is older and dried up and the hare has not died of infection, their recovery is very quick. They do very well since by removing the segment of leg you actually make them more mobile because the flopping leg was getting in the way. The main reason for rabbit dying if they are hit by vehicles and survive, is infection.

How we catch and handle a rabbit is important. We generally use two people, one with a dip net and the other to block one direction and encourage the hare to move in a direction where the person can net it. You generally have only one chance, if you miss it is spooked and hard to approach a second time. We make sure the kennel that the rabbit is to be put in is very close to where we are catching it. Jack Rabbits are extremely strong and can break

their back while straining against you. As soon as we have it in the net we quickly gather it up to our chest and go right to the kennel. We untangle it quickly and get it into the kennel. I know the manual says put it in hind end first, however we do the opposite as it tends to run into the darkened kennel if shown the kennel head first. We cover the kennel and it will stay quite quiet. Jack Rabbits are an amazing animal and stay very calm in a kennel. They generally will start to eat within one hour. We give them a selection of foods, carrots, apple, peeled banana and timothy hay to start. We also put in water. If they have an infection, they have a temperature and often are thirsty.

Adult Snow-shoes hare are much easier to deal with as they do not have as much chance for injury of the back if caught. The only problem is that they do very poorly in captivity and seldom even survive long enough to have the Vet assess them.

I should not that before Dr. Harvey does much for assessment he knocks them out. He also often wants me to do the handling as his people are not trained to handle wild rabbits. He will give the rabbit a shot for pain and a long-term antibiotic and will often send some medicines home with us to be given somewhat later. Generally Jack Rabbits will begin eating again the same day that they wake up. To keep them for a time I use two large kennels with clean soft towels. I leave the rabbit in one for 1 -1.5 days and then put the second kennel in front of the one with the Jack Rabbit. I open both doors and push them together and just use a

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stick to prod the rabbit to move into the second clean kennel. Very easy, little stress. Continue to do this till the wound is well healed and then it can be left in a kennel for a longer period before changing it. I also have the large out door kennel 12 feet by 10 feet and the room in the basement. I will often put it in one of these place for several weeks till it is completely healed and moving well before I release it. Most have gone to Donna's but I will have to find more suitable places this next years as with the better success of raising the babies and likely more pressure from adults, as the population increases in the City, we will need more areas.