

Getting Started: Hotline – Questions to Ask

Collecting the following information from the hotline caller will ensure that you are addressing the wildlife issue most effectively and recording the calls into the hotline log completely and accurately.

- **Caller's first and last name**
 - **Caller's phone number(s)**
 - **Caller's location**
 - Which city, acreage, farm, town, or area of city corresponding to the reported wildlife issue, incident or concern.
 - ✦ *We mail personalized, hand-written thank you cards to callers. Please ask for the caller's full address (including postal code). We hope that this will lead to improved public relations, greater awareness through word-of-mouth advertising, and new funding opportunities.*
 - **Caller's question or concern**
 - Collect as much detail about the situation as possible.
 - Who? What? Where? When? How?
 - What did the caller observe? Can they still see the animal? When was the last time they saw the animal? Can they stay with the animal until a volunteer can get there?
 - **What species is the animal?**
 - If unknown, determine if the animal is a bird, mammal, etc.
 - **Is the animal injured? OR Is the animal orphaned?**
 - Refer to the Volunteer Manual for help in determining if the animal is truly orphaned or injured, and in need of rescue and specialized care.
 - **Bonus questions:** asking if the caller is interested in becoming a volunteer or member, or if they would like to donate to the WRSOS. Please direct them to www.wrsos.org for more information, for our volunteer application, to purchase a membership or to donate.
- ✦ **Note:** Sometimes asking the caller to send a picture (via email or text) will help answer the abovementioned questions.

Hotline Triage

While you are on the hotline, you'll need to prioritize your calls based on urgency. For example;

- An owl caught on a barbed wire fence is *urgent* – find help ASAP.
- A baby animal is orphaned – it is important to get help within the next few hours.
- A duck on pond with broken wing – does need help but can wait a few days, if necessary, or until a rescue group can be organized.
- A person looking for info on raccoon deterrent – look up information in the Volunteer Manual and get back to them later. Any calls about wildlife in need will be prioritized as more urgent.

Ensure the call is fully closed out on the Hotline Dashboard.

If you were not able to resolve the call during your shift, keep the call with an 'Open' status in the Hotline Dashboard. Please notify either the hotline volunteer scheduled to take over the hotline after you, or the Hotline Coordinator, to ensure that the team is aware of open, unresolved cases that may need attention.