

Injured Animals

Below are some steps you can take if you find an injured animal.

The Boone County Conservation District receives many calls about injured or orphaned wildlife. The BCCD does not operate a wildlife rehabilitation facility. It does have a *volunteer* wildlife rehabilitator who will receive calls during work hours if available. However, animals **should not** be brought to the office without calling first. Please do not leave animals in a box at our door. It only further endangers them and almost certainly seals their fate. Wait until morning then give us a call or contact another rehabilitator. It may be that you will have to wait for someone to return your call. Please be patient, most will return your call after work hours. In the meantime, keep the animal warm, quiet, and away from people and pets. Do not let your children hold it no matter how “cute” the animal might be. **DO NOT FEED AN INJURED ANIMAL.**

When to Rescue

A large percentage of animals die in their first year of life in the wild, many as food for other animals. This is nature’s way of balancing the population. Death is a part of life and cannot always be prevented, nor should it be.

Please follow the advice of your wildlife rehabilitator as to whether or not a rescue is warranted. It is both time-consuming and expensive to care for an orphaned animal. Please don’t add to this burden by taking a young animal from its mother when it’s unnecessary. No matter how well-intentioned, a human is never a better parent than the one nature has provided. If you have been advised to rescue an orphaned animal please bring with it a canister of milk replacer for mammals or hand-feeding formula for baby birds. These can be purchased at any pet store.

An animal should only be rescued if it obviously orphaned, injured, sick, or very weak, if it is covered with flies or maggots, or if it is in immediate unnatural danger. An animal should not be rescued if it looks fat and healthy and is able to run or fly away from you. Chasing an animal causes it to expend precious energy and creates a stressful situation which will further tax its system. Also, an animal should not be “rescued” because it has taken up residence in an inconvenient spot. For example, if you find a nest in your BBQ grill just wait a few weeks, leave it alone and the young birds will soon fledge and move on. If advised not to rescue an animal, however difficult it may be, know that rehabilitators struggle with these decisions too, but they have an obligation to do what is best. Licensed rehabilitators are required to follow certain regulations so please consider this if you happen to disagree with the course of action recommended.

Before Rescuing

Please consider how much you are willing to do for an animal before you attempt to rescue an injured animal. Are you willing to transport the animal? Are you able to provide suitable shelter for the animal until you can get it to a rehabilitator? Are you willing to listen to the advice of a rehabilitator, even if it means doing nothing? Are you willing to donate food for the duration of its stay with the rehabilitator (which can be up to four months)? Are you willing to pay for its veterinary care, including medications and X-rays? Caring for injured wildlife is everyone’s responsibility. Wildlife rehabilitators are not paid for their service, nor does any agency provide

funds for the care of injured wildlife. No one person can properly care for all the orphaned and injured animals in the area. Please consider this before you make your call.

Bird Window Strikes

Most adult birds that are found near a house have flown into a window and are dazed from their collision. They can be placed in a large paper bag in a shaded protected area. Fluttering indicates recovery. Open the top of the bag. If a bird cannot fly out by himself, his injuries are more extensive, and you should call a licensed wildlife rehabilitator for help or advice. Birds that have been caught by cats or dogs, but do not appear to have broken bones or wounds, are probably suffering from shock. They should receive the paper bag treatment.

It is illegal to possess animals and parts of animals such as nests, eggs and feathers unless taken legally by hunting or as authorized in a permit issued by the Illinois Department of Natural Resources or United States Fish and Wildlife Service.

Remember that cute little animals can turn into really big wild ones!

Below is a link to the Illinois Department of Natural Resources list of licensed wildlife rehabilitators:

http://www.dnr.state.il.us/law3/08/rehab_permit.pdf