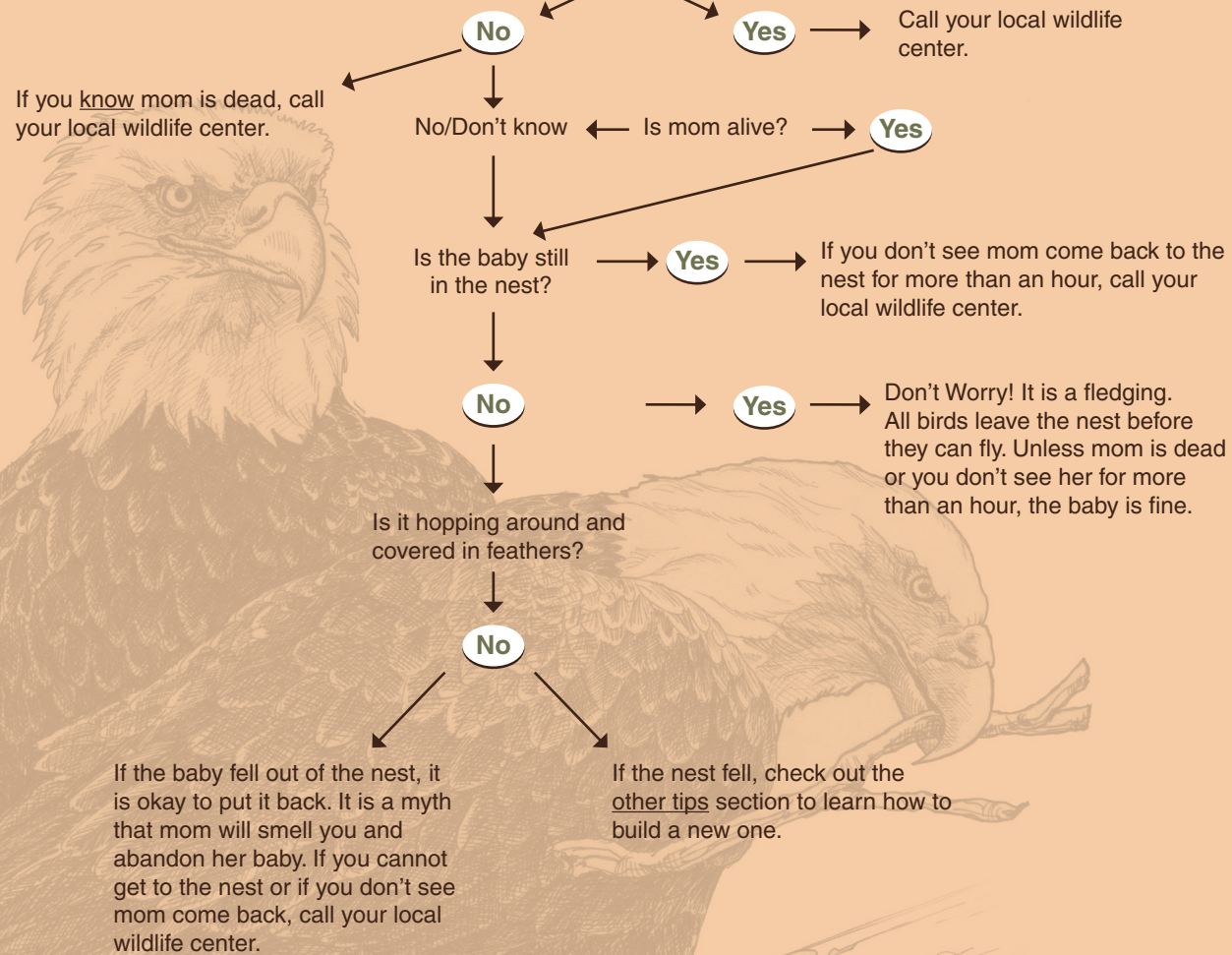


Avian Orphans. . . Or are they?

Baby Birds

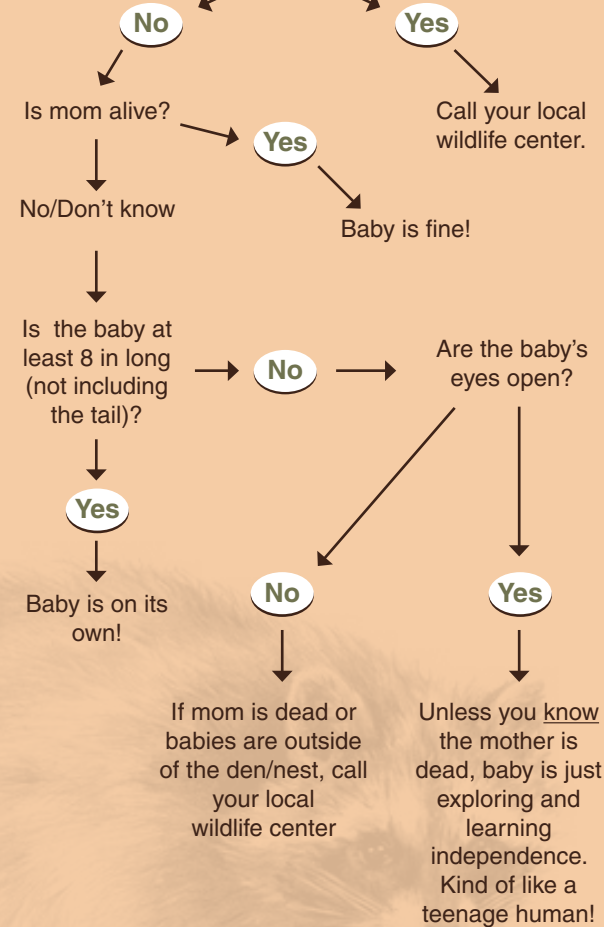
Is it injured?



Wildlife Orphans... or are they?

Skunk, Raccoon, Woodchuck

Is the baby injured?



BACK
TO THE
WILD



Wildlife Orphans. . . Or Are They?

And other Wildlife Myths & Tips...

Wildlife Rehabilitation
& Nature Education Center

P.O. Box 423 • 4504 Bardshar Rd.
Castalia, Ohio 44824

www.backtothewild.org
e-mail: staff@backtothewild.org

phone: 419-684-9539

www.facebook.com/BacktotheWildOhio

Contact Information

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Other Tips

WILDLIFE MYTHS

- If you touch a baby animal, won't mom abandon it? Not usually. Most wildlife moms can tell that something was nearby, but they will not abandon their offspring just because there is a new scent around. However, some species will move their babies to a new nest site. Unfortunately, wild animals are not that great at math so it is always possible that they miss a baby during the move.
- Mother birds will kill or kick out any babies that have been touched by people... or will they? Nope! Most birds do not have a well-developed sense of smell and therefore have no way to know if anyone has been around. If a baby bird falls out of the nest, putting it back in is the best thing you can do for it. No need to worry about finicky moms!
- Wildlife moms spend 24 hours a day with their babies. Ha! Yeah right! Do you know how busy it is being a wild animal? There is a constant struggle to find food and shelter. In this dog-eat-dog...bird-eat-bird?...world, wildlife babies would not survive very long if they had to follow mom into territory populated by predators and rivals. To give her defenseless offspring the best chance to survive, most wild moms keep them hidden in dens, nests and camouflaged in grass and the reeds while they do the hard work of finding resources to keep everyone alive.
- Wildlife babies have to be as big as their parents to be independent... nope. While birds are typically fully grown before leaving their moms and dads, wildlife mammals are usually a little smaller than their parents when they strike out on their own. For example, by the time cottontail rabbits are 3 to 4 weeks old, 3 to 4 inches long, and have their eyes open, mom is already off to start a new family.

OPOSSUMS:

- If you see an opossum get hit by a car, call your local wildlife center. Opossums are marsupials which means these busy moms carry their babies with them everywhere in their pocket on their stomachs. Sometimes, even though mom might not survive the car strike, her babies will.
- Once the babies are too big for the pouch, they hang onto mom's back as she hunts for food and shelter. Occasionally, one may fall off. As long as the baby is at least 8 inches long (not including the tail), there is no need to worry! At that size, they are mostly weaned and can fend for themselves.

DEER:

- Deer often leave their offspring alone for hours at a time. Young fawns are easy prey for predators like coyotes. To protect her baby, the doe will bed the fawn down and then go off to look for food. Mom will come back occasionally to feed her little fawn and move it to a new hiding spot. Unfortunately, she will sometimes choose a weird place, like under a truck or next to a dog pen, to hide her baby. If you are

able to avoid the area for the day, you can really make a difference for mom and baby! It is always best for wildlife babies to be raised by their moms. As long as the baby is quiet and mostly laying still There is no need to worry.

BABY BIRDS

- Fallen nest? No Worries! As long as you know where the original nest was, you can reunite the little babies with their mother. All you need is a little plastic tub (like a butter dish), scissors, nest material and twine or wire to tie the nest into the tree. Cut several holes into the bottom of the plastic tub (so it doesn't just fill up with water if it rains) using the scissors. If possible, use the material from the original nest to make a cup shape in the tub. The area for the babies should be just barely big enough to fit all of the chicks (a tight fit is the right fit!). Using the twine or wire, secure the nest as close to where the original nest was as possible. If you cannot get to the original place, give your local wildlife center a call.

HOW TO TRANSPORT A WILD ORPHAN

- First things first: give your local wildlife center a call! They can help you decide if the baby animal you are trying to rescue really needs help and give you great instructions on what to do next. It also helps to give them a heads up that you are heading their way with a new patient!
- The most important thing when handling a wild animal is safety! Even babies can bite and spread diseases. Using gloves, dustpans, and brooms, you can easily and safely pick up baby animals.
- When transporting, the most important thing you can do is keep your orphan quiet and warm. Use a box that is only big enough to fit the baby and a plastic bottle. Fill the plastic bottle with hot water and secure it in the box. Use paper towels or non-terry cloth to line the box and cover the bottle. Place the orphan in the box and close it up (make sure they can breathe).

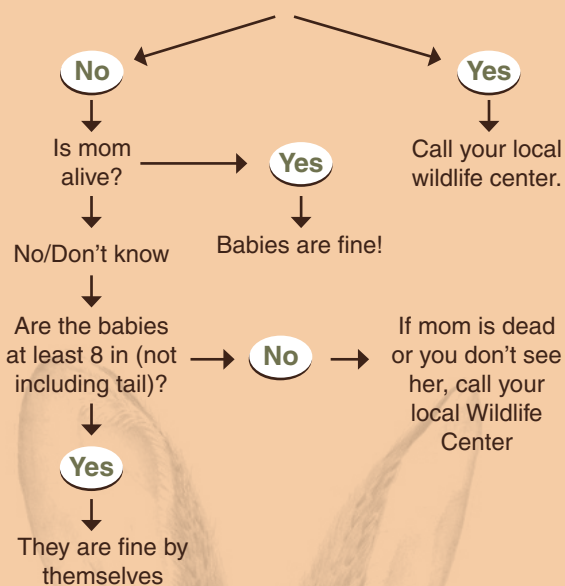
THE DO-NOTS OF HELPING WILDLIFE ORPHANS

- It is illegal to rehabilitate wildlife without state and federal permits so make sure to contact your local licensed center as soon as possible!
- If you find a wildlife orphan, do not try to raise it on your own. Many species require very specific diets and need to be socialized in ways to help them be independent of humans when they grow up. Taking the orphan to a wildlife center is the best way to make sure it has a good chance of surviving as an adult.
- Never feed an orphaned animal. Feeding cow's milk to baby mammals or worms to baby birds can seriously harm their digestive systems and even lead to death. Most babies can go for a while without eating. If you are concerned, give your local wildlife center a call
- As cute as baby animals are, it is not a good idea to cuddle with them. Snuggling a wild animal can cause them a lot of stress and fear. In addition, even the little ones can carry serious diseases and, let's face it, super gross parasites like ticks, fleas, and mites. Yuck!

Wildlife Orphans... or are they?

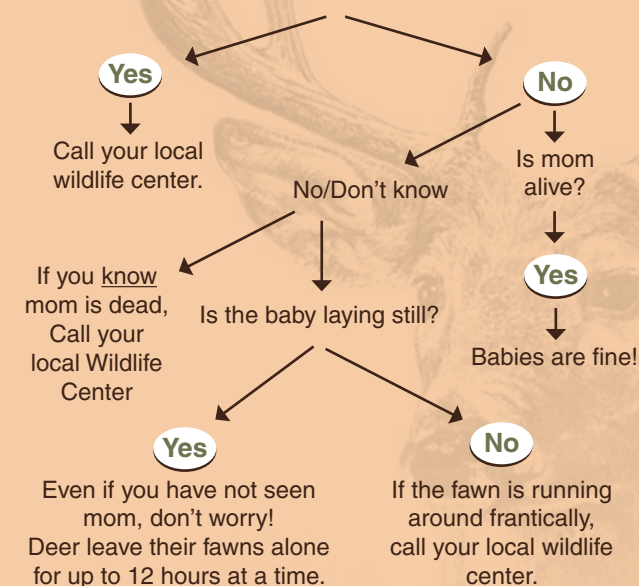
Opossums

Is it injured?



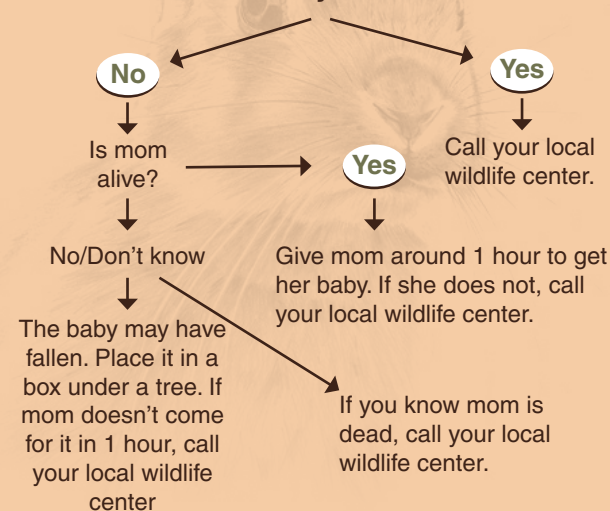
Deer

Is the fawn injured?



Squirrels

Is it injured?



Cottontail Rabbits

Is the bunny injured?

