

of the previous nest. Due to raccoons' nocturnal habits – allow the mother overnight to recover her young and move them to a new den.

Juveniles (eyes open)

Juvenile raccoons will venture from their den to explore their surroundings. Those that are found alone are almost never orphans. They are frequently left alone by their mothers for several hours at a time.



Fawns

A doe will leave her young on its own up to 12-18 hours each day. If a fawn is found alone it is almost never orphaned. If a fawn is found next to a deceased mother and identified as orphaned, concerned individuals may contact their county wildlife officer for additional assistance. The state of Ohio does not allow the rehabilitation of white-tail fawns.

Opossums and Skunks



Older opossum and skunk young are often seen accompanying their mothers on nocturnal foraging expeditions. If uninjured and otherwise bright and alert, they should be left overnight to rejoin their family. If they have not moved by morning, they may have possibly become lost or orphaned. While still dependent, baby opossums stay near their mothers – often clinging to a mothers back or side from one location to the next. Young skunks, however, often play alone near the den cavity or hole and should not be bothered. Remember that even the young are capable of defending themselves with their potent spray.

Squirrels

Occasionally, squirrel leaf nests are destroyed by storms and young fall to the ground. If there is no evidence of a leaf nest, look for a cavity-type nest. Place the youngsters in a 10"x10" reunion box, with a 2" hole 2" from the top, on a branch of the tree and allow the mother 4-6 hours to retrieve them. If she does not, or if the young are injured, they may be brought to Brukner Nature Center for care and rehabilitation.



FOR MORE INFORMATION

If you find a wild animal and are concerned, leave it alone and call Brukner Nature Center at 937-698-6493, seven days a week, 24 hours a day.



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

The purpose of our wildlife rehabilitation program is to educate people regarding the natural history of Ohio's wildlife, to offer help and advice when wildlife and people conflict, and to care for, rehabilitate, and release native Ohio wildlife expected to survive in their natural environment.

Living with WILDLIFE BABIES

in Miami County



Brukner Nature Center

Nestling & juvenile mammals and birds can be found from early March through October. Unless young are injured, their mother's care is the absolute best for their survival. Many wild mothers leave their young for hours. Extra care and vigilance should be given to make sure we are not taking wildlife out of the wild because we "think" they may need our care or protection. To help all wildlife, keep pets indoors and educate children on the natural history of the animals that we share our environment with.

EMERGENCY CHECKLIST

1. If an animal is injured with visible wounds or broken limbs or wings, always contact Brukner Nature Center at (937) 698-6493 for advice. Staff will provide details on natural history, proper transport, and more.
2. Juvenile mammals will often stray from their dens when exploring their environments; always wait to see if the parents return. Keep pets and kids indoors. If parents do not reclaim the young after 24 hours, the juvenile is approaching people, or it appears unhealthy, contact Brukner Nature Center for additional advice and assistance. If calling after regular business hours, you will be given instructions for calling our afterhours emergency hotline. Please leave a message and a staff member will return your call as soon as possible. In the meantime, stay calm and monitor the situation from a distance.

3. If you will be transporting a bird or mammal to Brukner Nature Center, place the animal in a closed box or staple paper grocery bag. If the animal must wait before you are able to transport it to BNC, keep it warm, dark, and quiet. Supplemental heat can be provided with the use of a warm water bottle or a heating pad set on low. Dark and quiet are vital to reduce the stress of wildlife until transferred.

Please do not feed or water the wildlife waiting to be transported!

In most cases, wild babies should be left alone. Young wild animals are not like humans. They are not constantly watched by their parents, and they spend large amounts of time alone or with siblings. This is especially true of juvenile birds and mammals with the possible exception of opossums.

Brukner Nature Center receives hundreds of young birds and mammals each year. Although the center has been very successful in raising young native wildlife, animals always fare better if their parents continue to care for them.

Yes, the nature of life in the wild is that most young animals, even with their parents' expert care, do not survive to become adults. If they did, however, overcrowding, starvation and the spread of disease would more than likely result. Ironically, the wheels of living nature keep turning only because the death of one organism fuels the life of others.

Pet dogs and cats are an exception to the rule because they are fed by their owners and are not part of the natural web of life. The solution to a dog or cat threatening a young animal is not to take the wildlife out of the wild, but to keep the pet restrained while any young are in the neighborhood. Neighbors should be persuaded to do the same, especially during the summer months. Brukner Nature Center recommends the following measure for certain common situations.

BIRDS

In many cases, both parents assist with the upbringing of their young. Never assume that young are orphaned – even if you find one adult that is deceased.

Featherless Nestlings



Make attempts to find the nest and place the young back in it. With the exception of the turkey vulture, birds in Ohio have an under developed sense of smell. After you leave the nest, they will quickly forget your intrusion. Nests are most commonly found in nearby trees and shrubs as well as cavities including dryer vents, gutters and awnings. If you cannot reach the nest, a make-shift nest can be built from materials such as a berry basket, small colander, or a plastic bowl with holes in the bottom. Nesting materials 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 to care for the young include: the young is bright, alert and warm to the touch, or feces is present.

Fledglings



Birds rely on their parents – even after they leave the nest! Hopping on the ground, low flight and gaping will give many juveniles the appearance that they are injured and/or in need of additional

parental care. The way to protect these "fledglings" is to keep pets and children indoors and to watch from a distance. Fledglings should not be placed back into their nest as they are already past this point of development. Additional protection can be given by placing fledglings in tall grass, under shrubs and in flower beds that offer a bit more camouflage. However, keep in mind that they are learning to live in their surrounding and won't stay put for long! Often the parents will make their presence known by squawks or swoop attacks when you approach the young.

MAMMALS

Eastern Cottontails

Eastern cottontail nests are shallow holes in the ground and are often found in lawns. The mothers line the nests with fur and dry vegetation. If you find a disturbed nest, return any stray young cottontails to the nest and cover it with grass. Cottontail mothers return to the nest even if the young have been handled or if the nest has been exposed by a lawn mower.



Since the mother visits her young only once or twice each night, do not expect to see her. Remember, too, that young eastern cottontails, even ones only 4 to 5 inches long, are independent of their mothers soon after their eyes open.

Raccoons

Neonates (eyes closed)

Often times neonate raccoons become dislodged from their nest when trees are cut down. Young should be placed into a 12" x 12" reunion box with supplemental heat (warm water bottles and hand warmers are best for this). Cut a 3" hole 2" from the top and close the box. The reunion box should be placed near the area