

Opossums

If the baby opossum is smaller than 7 inches long (not including tail), they are too young to be on their own. A wildlife rehabilitator should be contacted. If their body length is longer than 7 inches (not including tail), then they are big enough to be on their own.

DID YOU KNOW? Opossums are North America's only marsupial.



Skunks

Baby skunks are near-sighted and follow their mother nose-to-tail. They sometimes lose sight of her when they are scared and scatter. You should not touch or pick up the babies. Just like the raccoon cubs you should put a plastic laundry basket upside down over the skunk to temporarily contain him while waiting for the mom to return. If mom does not return contact a wildlife rehabilitator.

DID YOU KNOW? Skunks are opportunistic eaters and their diets vary dramatically.

Do you have additional questions? Please contact Lewisville Animal Services by using one of the contact methods below.

Helpful Links:

Wildlife Rehabilitators:

tpwd.texas.gov

(search: wildlife rehabilitators)

ahnow.org

Wildlife Resolution Guide:

animalsheltering.org

(search: wildlife resolution)

dfwwildlife.org



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How to Help Orphaned Wildlife



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Birds

If possible, put the baby bird back in the nest. It is a myth that parent birds will not care for their young if touched by a human. If you cannot access the nest you should place the babies in a wicker or stick-like basket in a safe place near the original nest. The basket will not only mimic the appearance of a nest but allow for drainage if it were to rain. The basket should not be deeper than four inches and should only be used for older nestlings who are feathered and can retain body heat. Then watch the nest closely to see if the parent birds provide care to the babies. If you see feces in the basket this is evidence that the birds are being fed. If you do not observe the parent birds or feces after a few hours or if the birds do not have feathers, contact a wildlife rehabilitator.

DID YOU KNOW? A Bird's heart beats 400 times per minute while at rest and up to 1,000 beats per minute while flying.



Rabbits

Mother rabbits only visit their young two to three times a day to avoid attracting predators. To test if the rabbits are orphaned, you can place a tic-tac-toe pattern of sticks, string or yarn over the nest to assess whether the mother is returning to nurse them. After a day, check the nest. If the pattern is displaced or pushed aside, but the nest is still covered, the mom has returned. If the pattern is undisturbed contact a wildlife rehabilitator. Note: Do not touch the baby rabbits. Mother rabbits are very sensitive to foreign smells and may abandon their young if handled. It is also important to keep cats and dogs away from the nest.

DID YOU KNOW? Baby rabbits are called kittens.



Raccoons

If you find a baby raccoon wandering around for more than a few hours, most likely he has lost his mother. When a mother raccoon is trapped or killed the babies will exit the den after a few days due to hunger. You can place a laundry basket over the baby with a one-pound weight on top. If mom does not reclaim the cub after a few hours you should contact a wildlife rehabilitator.

DID YOU KNOW? Raccoons can make over 50 sounds to communicate.



Squirrels

Give the mother a chance to reclaim her baby by leaving the squirrel at the tree base (especially if tree services have recently been performed). Only do this if the baby is uninjured. Do not cover the squirrel or put him in a deep box; the mother may not find him. If there are free-roaming cats or dogs around, they can put the squirrel in a berry basket or something similar with drainage and attach the container securely to the tree trunk as high as they can safely place it. The baby squirrel must remain within the immediate vicinity of where he fell, or the mother will not find him. If the baby does not have a full coat of fur, or it is cold outside, provide a heating source such as a hand warmer or warm water bottle wrapped in fabric. Check on the baby to make sure he is warm, but not too hot. Do not feed the baby. Babies require a specific diet and the baby's hunger cry will attract the mom. Leave the baby there for the day. If the baby is not reclaimed by the mother, contact a wildlife rehabilitator.

DID YOU KNOW? A newborn squirrel is about an inch long.