

Want to Get Involved?

Wildlife rehabilitation is a respected and important animal care field. Wildlife rehabilitators must be knowledgeable in caring for a wide variety of wildlife species from hawks and crows to raccoons and coyotes. Proper training requires years of time and experience. Most wildlife rehabilitation centers are overwhelmed during certain times of the year and could use dedicated volunteers. Here are a few questions to ask yourself to determine if you have what it takes to volunteer with a wildlife rehabilitator.

- ✓ **Are you prepared to get dirty?** Keeping crates clean of feces, urine and old food is a messy, time-consuming and important job.
- ✓ **Can you handle seeing animals injured or sick?** Open wounds, maggots and severe skin infections are very common. Many animals have a long, difficult road to recovery.
- ✓ **Can you handle the loss of an animal?** Unfortunately, many animals are beyond the help of medicine and must be humanely euthanized to end their suffering. Some animals do not respond to medical care, and pass away during rehabilitation despite every effort to save them.
- ✓ **Are you prepared for little or no contact with animals?** Many people envision themselves rehabilitating an animal with a lot of TLC. However, during the rehabilitation process, minimal contact and no talking is crucial to the process. Most volunteers will begin their training by cleaning crates, washing dishes and preparing diets. Assisting with the rehabilitation process is an honor that will be earned after hard work, proper training and a lot of time and commitment.
- ✓ **Do you have time to commit?** Regular and long-term commitments are always necessary when working with animals. Providing volunteers with adequate training takes time. Ensuring that you are able to commit to volunteering on a regular basis and will be a reliable and dependable volunteer is essential.

Important Contacts



Wildlife Rehabilitation Centers

- Wildlife Care of Ventura County
(805) 498-2794 or (805) 581-3911
www.wildlifecareofventura.org
- California Wildlife Center
(818) 222-2658 or (310) 458-9453
www.californiawildlifecenter.org

*Both are non-profit organizations and are in need of donations. Visit websites for more information.

Department of Animal Care & Control

- Castaic Animal Care Center
(661) 257-3191
- Lancaster Animal Care Center
(661) 940-4191
- West Valley Animal Shelter
(888) 452-7381

*Note that animal shelters are only able to provide assistance and services in their assigned areas.

In the case of a life-threatening human emergency, please call 9-1-1

For more information, please call (661) 259-7721 or visit our website at www.placerita.org

Placerita Canyon Nature Center



Injured & Orphaned Wildlife

19152 Placerita Canyon Road
Newhall, CA 91321-3213
(661) 259-7721

Zoonotic Diseases & Parasites

There are many diseases and parasites that can be passed between animals and humans. Here are a few to be aware of when in contact with wildlife.

- **Rabies:** A viral infection that can be carried by many animals such as foxes, coyotes and bats. If a wild animal is exhibiting abnormal behavior never approach it. If you are bitten, seek medical attention immediately.
- **Sarcoptic Mange:** A skin infection caused by a mite which burrows into the skin causing skin irritation, inflammation and loss of fur.
- **Ringworm:** A fungal infection that causes a red, scaly and often itchy ring-shaped rash.
- **Intestinal Parasites:** Many intestinal parasites such as giardia, roundworm and tapeworm can be passed to humans, often by accidentally ingesting infected animal feces.

Assessing the Situation



When a young animal is seen alone, most people assume that the animal has been abandoned by its mother. However, many mothers will leave their young alone for extended periods of time while they search for food. If the mother is not seen for several hours, contact a rehabilitator before approaching the animal. Partially feathered baby birds, called fledglings, seen on the ground are often learning to fly and are still being cared for by their parents. Unless a baby animal appears sick, injured or is in immediate danger of being attacked by a dog or cat, contact a rehabilitator before you intervene. Reserving space in rehabilitation centers for truly orphaned or injured wildlife is important, so if the animal is safe, let it be.

Contact a Rehabilitator Immediately



- Animal is infested with flies, maggots, worms or mites
- Animal has been attacked by a dog or cat
- Visible external injuries observed such as blood, open or unhealed wounds, limping, eye injuries or drooping wing
- Parent is confirmed to be dead, or return to parent is not possible
- Attempt to reunite with parent was unsuccessful
- Severe trauma observed (hit by a car or a significant fall)
- Animal is cold to the touch, very thin, visibly weak or lethargic
- Animal is constantly vocalizing

What NOT to Do



- Never approach an animal that you feel uncomfortable around. Your safety is most important.
- Never let children touch or handle any wildlife. They are much more susceptible to zoonotic diseases, infections and parasites.
- Never try to give food or water, or provide health care to an injured or orphaned animal. Your well intentions may do more harm than good.
- Never try to rehabilitate an animal on your own. All injured and orphaned wildlife must be evaluated by a licensed veterinarian and cared for by a trained wildlife rehabilitator.

Confining an Animal in Need



When attempting to assist injured or orphaned wildlife, every precaution to avoid injury to yourself and the animal must always be taken! Injured animals are frightened, in pain, and will bite. Here are a few precautions to follow.

- Always wear latex gloves to protect yourself from zoonotic diseases and parasites.
- Always wash hands thoroughly with soap and warm water immediately after handling any animal.
- To minimize stress, avoid talking, loud noises and quick movements.
- Quickly and safely transport an animal into an already prepared holding container or carrier. If needed, use a thick folded towel, leather gloves or a padded jacket.
- Once the animal is safely contained, cover the carrier with a towel. The animal will feel more comfortable in a dark, quiet environment while it waits for transport.
- If you are bitten or scratched, clean area well with soap and warm water and contact a doctor immediately.

Injured wildlife will not understand you are trying to help, and will instead view you as a predator. Even the most visibly sick, weak or injured animal will attack. If the animal is a juvenile or an adult, or is a larger species such as a bobcat, coyote or raccoon, DO NOT approach the animal. Never approach bats, if they are acting sick or injured, as they are likely rabid. Keep a location on the animal and contact a local rehabilitator or animal control for assistance.