

## What To Do If You Find A Sick, Injured Or Orphaned Wild Animal

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If you see what you think may be sick, injured or orphaned wildlife, don't remove it from its natural habitat. The bird or animal may not need assistance and you could actually do more harm in your attempt to help.

Where an animal is in need of help, it requires specialized care to recover and return to the wild. You cannot keep wildlife in captivity without approval from the Ministry of Natural Resources. However, a person may possess a wild animal for up to 24 hours to transport it to a wildlife custodian or a veterinarian.

### Determining if Wildlife is Orphaned

Some species leave their offspring alone temporarily, especially during the day. For example, deer and cottontail rabbits spend much of the day away from their well-camouflaged offspring to minimize the chance of predators finding them.

To determine if young wildlife is truly orphaned:

- Check the animal periodically for 24 to 48 hours to see if it is still around, but keep your distance.
- Keep cats and dogs away from the area inhabited by the young animal; the adult will not return if it is noisy or if predators or people are close by.

### Signs of injury or illness

- Blood, wounds or swelling on the body
- Body covered in fleas
- Unusual or uneven loss of fur or feathers
- Difficult or raspy breathing or sneezing
- A dangling leg or wing
- Closed eyes; head tucked under wing

### Care Necessary To Help The Animal

- Contact a wildlife custodian who can help you assess the situation and provide advice on what action to take.
- If specialized and immediate care is necessary to help the animal, take it to a wildlife custodian or a veterinarian within 24 hours of capture.
- If you must handle the animal, follow the instructions provided by the wildlife custodian on how to minimize risk of injury to yourself and to the animal.
- Wear protective clothing and equipment, such as leather gloves, to avoid bites or scratches, and wash hands well after handling the animal.

It is important to recognize that many of the volunteer-operated organizations have limited capacity to accept animals, especially during the spring.

## Potential resources for finding a wildlife rehabilitator in your area:

### ▫ (Southern Region)

- Ontario Wildlife Rehabilitation and Education Network ([OWREN](#)) ([www.owren-online.org](http://www.owren-online.org)):
  - call 905-735-6885
  - contact [info@owren-online.org](mailto:info@owren-online.org)
- Local Humane Society or local branch of the [Ontario Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals \(SPCA\)](#):
  - call the Ontario SPCA Wildlife Rehabilitation Centre at 1-888-668-7722
  - find Wildlife Rehabilitation Centres at <http://ontariospca.ca/8-branch.shtml>
  - visit <http://ontariospca.ca/>
- Ministry of Natural Resources
  - Call your [local district office](#) at [ontario.ca/mnr](http://ontario.ca/mnr)
  - Call 1-800-667-1940 – Monday to Friday 8:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

### Diseased or Dead Wildlife

- To report dead animals, birds, or bats contact the [Canadian Cooperative Wildlife Health Centre \(www.ccwhc.ca\)](#) at 1-866-673-4781.
- If you suspect there is a public health risk from a sick wild animal, such as rabies, or you or your pet had contact with a suspected rabid animal, contact your local [Public Health Unit](#) immediately.
- Rabies is fatal for humans and animals if not treated.
- Symptoms of rabies and several other diseases in animals can include tremors, aggressive behaviour, partial paralysis, convulsions, and loss of fear of humans.

### Contact Information:

#### ▫ (Northeast, Northwest and Southern Regions)

- [Public Health Units](#):
  - call 1-866-532-3161 between 8:30 a.m. and 5:00 p.m. Monday to Friday
  - visit [www.health.gov.on.ca/english/public/contact/phu/phuloc\\_mn.html](http://www.health.gov.on.ca/english/public/contact/phu/phuloc_mn.html) for a list of offices.
- [Canadian Cooperative Wildlife Health Centre](#):
  - call 1-866-673-4781
  - visit [www.ccwhc.ca](http://www.ccwhc.ca)

For more information on Wildlife, visit [ontario.ca/wildlife](http://ontario.ca/wildlife).