

## WHAT YOU SHOULD DO IF YOU FIND A SICK, INJURED OR ORPHANED WILD ANIMAL

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If you find a wild animal that appears to be orphaned, sick or injured, contact a wildlife custodian who can advise you on what action to take. Wildlife requires specialized care to recover and return to the wild with the necessary skills to stay alive and away from people. Avoid contact with the animal to prevent bites and scratches. Some wildlife can carry diseases and parasites that are harmful to humans. Under the Fish and Wildlife Conservation Act, you can not keep wildlife in captivity without authorization. However, a person may possess a wild animal for up to 24 hours to transport it to a wildlife custodian for rehabilitation or to a veterinarian for immediate medical care.

### Signs of orphaning, injury or illness

- Blood, wounds or swelling on the body
- Lethargy
- Body covered in fleas
- Unusual or uneven loss of fur or feathers
- Vocalizing and/or following humans around
- A fawn that is wandering around
- Contact with a domestic cat
- Difficult or raspy breathing or sneezing
- A dangling leg or wing
- Closed eyes
- Head tucked under wing

### Determining if Wildlife is Orphaned

It is normal for some species to leave their offspring temporarily alone, 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 where the young animal is; the adult will not return if it is noisy or if predators or people are close by.

### Care Necessary To Help The Animal

- Contact a **wildlife custodian** who can help you assess the situation and will 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.

**Contact information:**

Check your phone book for wildlife custodians in your area. Additional potential contacts include:

- Ontario Wildlife Rehabilitation and Education Network (OWREN):
  - call 905-735-9556
  - contact [info@owren-online.org](mailto:info@owren-online.org)
  - visit [www.owren-online.org](http://www.owren-online.org)
  
- Local Humane Society or local branch of the [Ontario Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals \(SPCA\)](http://www.ontariospca.ca/):
  - call 1-888-668-7722 or the Ontario SPCA Wildlife Rehabilitation Centre at 705-534-4350
  - visit <http://ontariospca.ca/>.

**Diseased or Dead Wildlife**

- 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.
- To report dead animals, birds or bats contact the [Canadian Cooperative Wildlife Health Centre](http://www.ccwhc.ca/) ([www.ccwhc.ca](http://www.ccwhc.ca/)).

**Contact Information:**

- [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](http://www.ccwhc.ca/):
  - call 1-866-673-4781
  - visit [www.ccwhc.ca](http://www.ccwhc.ca/)