

Public Encouraged to Avoid 'Rescuing' Young Wildlife

Whether in their own backyards or while taking a walk outdoors, Delawareans are likely to encounter young wildlife this time of year. The Delaware Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Control reminds well-meaning residents that usually the best thing you can do when encountering young wildlife of any species is to leave the animals alone. Taking a wild animal from the wild will almost certainly ensure that it will not survive, so "if you care, leave them there."

While some young animals appear to be abandoned, they usually are not, with their mothers nearby watching over them and waiting for you to move on. Many wildlife species, including white-tailed deer, leave their young while they forage for food, visiting only a few times a day, with the young animal's natural instinct to lie quietly to protect them from predators.

Removing or handling wildlife can be harmful to both humans and wildlife. Precautions to take with both juvenile and adult wild animals include:

- If you see a young wild animal alone, watch from a distance to see if its mother returns, which could take several hours.
- Be aware that wild animals can be unpredictable and sometimes dangerous, especially if they are in pain.
- Wild animals can carry parasites such as fleas and ticks or diseases such as rabies that can affect you or your pets.
- Remember that it is illegal to raise or keep a live wild animal in Delaware.

For more information to help determine if an animal is injured

or orphaned and in need of rescue, or is exhibiting normal behavior and does not need to be rescued, visit the Delaware Council of Wildlife Rehabilitators and Educators at dewildliferescue.com.

To determine the appropriate course of action if a young wild animal appears injured or if you are certain its parent is dead, contact the DNREC Division of Fish and Wildlife's Wildlife Section during business hours Monday through Friday at 302-739-9912 or at 800-523-3336 after hours and on weekends.

About DNREC

The Delaware Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Control protects and manages the state's natural resources, protects public health, provides outdoor recreational opportunities, and educates Delawareans about the environment. The DNREC [Division of Fish and Wildlife](#) conserves and manages Delaware's fish and wildlife and their habitats, and provides fishing, hunting, wildlife viewing and boating access on nearly 65,000 acres of public land. For more information, visit the [website](#) and connect with @DelawareDNREC on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#) or [LinkedIn](#).

Media Contacts: Joanna Wilson, joanna.wilson@delaware.gov; Michael Globetti, michael.globetti@delaware.gov

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