

KEEP CATS INDOORS - Every year, WWI receives numerous calls from cat owners about animals injured by their pets. Many are admitted and most do not survive. Sadly, it is pet cats' instinct to hunt - not real hunger - that usually drives them to kill wildlife. It's a fallacy that cats need to roam outside to be happy, and the common strategy of putting bells on their collars has been found to be ineffective for alerting wildlife to their danger.

Allowing pet cats to roam outside is not just bad for backyard birds and wildlife, it's bad for the cats too. Outdoor cats are exposed to disease as well as the dangers of traffic, traps, poisons, abuse, and attacks from other animals. In fact, outside cats frequently don't live past the age of five, while indoor cats often live to be 17 or more.



BABY BIRDS - It's a fact, a large percentage of young animals rescued by well-intentioned people don't need help. Out of the thousands of baby birds we have admitted to WWI, many would've had a greater chance of survival if they were left alone or moved to a safe place.

Knowing the difference between a nestling and a fledgling is a key factor in determining whether or not to intervene. A fledgling is no longer a baby. It is a young bird in the process of learning to fly. These birds try, but don't quite get into the air. Instead, they end up on the ground, hopping and fluttering about. Nestlings, on the other hand, do not yet have flight feathers. They may be un-feathered or partially feathered with some skin visible.

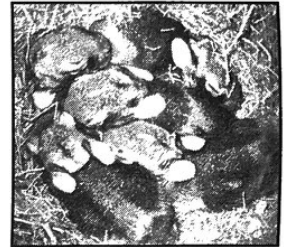
Fledgling - If you see a baby bird on the ground that seems to have all of its feathers, but still looks a little downy, it is a fledgling. Unless you know of an immediate threat such as a dog, a cat, children, or a busy road, you should not approach the bird, but watch it from a distance. **Watch and wait.** Make sure the parents are checking on it every few hours. If the fledgling is otherwise healthy but there is an immediate threat move the fledgling to the safety of a nearby dense shrub or tree. If the fledgling is wet or listless or if it is still where you placed it after several hours, call WWI for further advice.

Nestling - If you find a nestling, examine it carefully. If the bird is not injured, is alert, dry and warm, carefully pick it up and return it to the nest. Touching a baby bird **will not** keep the parents away, but do not handle the baby a lot. Remember, their bones are fragile. If you cannot re-nest the bird, or if you are sure the parent is dead or if the bird is cold, wet, and/or listless, place the bird in a small container lined with tissue, keeping the legs and wings snug to its body. Cover a heating pad (set on low) with a folded towel, then place the substitute nest on the towel and pad. Again, do not attempt to feed or water the bird as this could be fatal. Call WWI as soon as possible.

BABY BUNNIES - Wild cottontail rabbits "nest" in shallow holes dug in the ground by the mother rabbit. Nests are often found in lawns, gardens or under shrubs. The mother, called a doe, lines the shallow hole with fur pulled from her body and covers it and her babies with a mixture of dry grass and twigs to hide it from predators. The doe feeds her babies 2-3 times a day, once before early morning (dawn) and a couple of times

right after it gets dark (dusk). She squats over the nest so the babies can reach up and nurse her milk. The mother does **NOT** continually sit on the nest or stay with the baby bunnies. Doing so would signal carnivorous (meat-eating) birds and animals (like owls and foxes) as to where her babies are living. By staying away from the nest, the doe protects her young.

If you know where a nest is, mow around - not over - the site. If you've made your discovery after the fact, re-cover the nest with the disturbed debris from the nest top or other suitable material such as dry grass and leaves. Baby bunnies that have been removed from the nest can be returned if they are healthy, uninjured, warm, dry, and no flies are present. Replacement should be done without the presence of children or pets. Cover the nest. Use twigs or short pieces of yarn and criss-cross the pieces over the cover. Use these as markers to identify the nest site for future mowings.

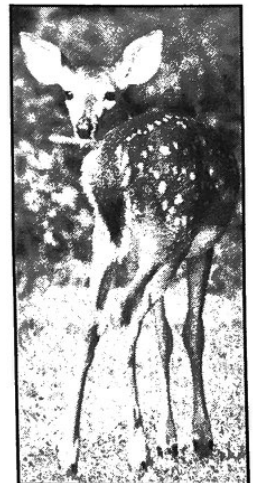


Remember, the doe visits the nest at dusk, dawn, and sometimes in the middle of the night, so watching for her during the day is futile. If the markers you left have been disturbed the next day, it is an indication that she has returned to feed, and all is well.

FAWNS - Fawns in PA are generally born in late May and early June. During their first days of life, these delicate creatures are often left alone for long hours while their mother forages for food. Returning only to nurse their young, the mother knows that the hidden fawn is safe from predators because he has little or no scent and remains motionless in his bed. Though primarily crepuscular, nursing does may be active throughout the day, so it is possible to stumble onto a seemingly "abandoned" fawn at any time. In most cases the mother is nearby, nervously waiting for the intruder to leave.

Since fawns are not completely weaned until they are approx. four months old and they have shed their spotted coats, they must remain in their mother's care. Even after they are weaned, fawns usually stay with and are cared for by their mother until they are about a year old. If you find a fawn:

- Do not touch or move the fawn unless it is in imminent danger or is obviously injured.
- Watch with binoculars from a distance for several hours to see if the mother returns.
- If you have concerns about the fawn's safety or well-being, call a wildlife rehabilitator immediately.



Please remember that White-tailed Deer are very easily stressed by captivity and contact with humans. So, please, if you find a fawn, be courteous and respectful and do not try to touch or move it.