



Guidelines for Helping Wildlife in Distress: What to Do When You Encounter Animals Needing Assistance

By: Meridith Teehan, Naturalist

Sometimes there are moments when we encounter wildlife in need of help. Here are some ways you can become a wildlife warrior!

When encountering wildlife, it's important to determine if the animal is truly orphaned. Many young animals like rabbits or deer may appear abandoned but are safe. For example, a rabbit mom spends significant time away from the nest. She has done a very good job of hiding her young so most predators can't find them. If you accidentally uncover a nest of rabbits, it's best to leave them and watch to see if mom is coming back in the evening. If the nest is vulnerable after you have discovered it, you can place a laundry basket over it so the mom can come and go, but predators can't get inside. If the babies are fully furred with their eyes open, they are ready to be on their own! Birds are often found on the ground, but this doesn't always mean they are orphans. When a nest has been blown down by a storm, it can usually be placed back in the tree. Even a small basket will do as a substitute. It is perfectly OK to handle the baby to place it in the nest; parents

will still accept their babies. If the parents are in the area, they will soon respond to their babies' cries for food. When a baby bird has most of its feathers, it has begun to learn to fly. This often looks like the bird needs help, but, in reality, it is just testing out its wings. Mom and dad are usually close by to cheer the baby on. A baby wild animal's best chance for survival is with its mother.

If you do find wildlife that is truly orphaned or injured, it is best to call a wildlife rehabilitator. Wildlife rehabilitators are trained and have the proper tools and resources to care for wildlife. This includes medications for pain relief and reducing swelling or infection, the proper tools and diet for each individual animal, and facilities to house them. Rehabilitators also have the state and federal permits required to care for wildlife. It is illegal to keep wildlife without these permits. If you do find wildlife in need of help, keep the animal in a warm, quiet, dark place like a box. Do not give it food or water as this can make things worse! Please remember wildlife rehabilitators are most often unpaid volunteers who are very busy caring for wildlife. They may ask you to transport the animal to their locations because they can't take time away from the animals in their care. They are, generally, non-profit and can always use donations and supplies. Remember, good intentions can hurt, so please leave wildlife in the wild, and when in doubt, call a wildlife rehabilitator.

Please note Medina County Park District does not have the permits required to rehabilitate wildlife and cannot accept injured or orphaned wildlife.

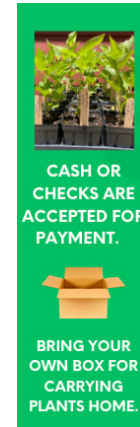
Local Wildlife Rehabilitation Resources

<https://www.owra.org/find-a-rehabilitator>

<https://ohiodnr.gov/discover-and-learn/safety-conservation/about-ODNR/wildlife/orphaned-injured>



In celebration of the park district's 60th anniversary, Friends of Medina County Parks is selling t-shirts for \$15 each. The "In My Parks Era" t-shirts are available for purchase (cash or check made out to Friends of Medina County Parks) at Oenslager Nature Center each Tuesday through Saturday from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. and Sundays from 12 to 5 p.m. The t-shirts are also available at Medina County Park District Headquarters Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.



WEEKENDS THIS SUMMER:
JUNE 14 AND 15
JUNE 21 AND 22
JUNE 28 AND 29

JULY 12 AND 13
JULY 19 AND 20
JULY 26 AND 27

SATURDAY HOURS
10 A.M. - 4 P.M.

SUNDAY HOURS
1 - 4 P.M.



June, July, and August are PACKED with fun!

- Music at The Lodge
- All Aboard Mini Train Rides
- Learn to Kayak
- Discovery Drop-Ins
- Adventure Camps
- Nature Explorers Camps
- Senior Strides
- Forest Therapy Walks
- Starry, Starry Nights
- Invasive Species Management
- Slo Roll Bike Rides
- Art Programs
- Paddling Programs
- K-9 Kapers
- Healthy Dose of Nature Hikes
- Natural Discoveries Hiking Series
- Nature Book Club

Visit [medinacountyparks.com](https://www.medinacountyparks.com) for program details.



Celebrate Medina County Park District's 60th anniversary by taking part in the Park Perks Challenge! This is a self-guided adventure where you will need to successfully complete challenges to collect perk points to earn park prizes! Challenge yourself across three categories: *Research It*, *Seek and Find*, and *See You There*, all designed to help you explore and learn about Medina County parks.

The challenge runs through October 4. Download the form at www.medinacountyparks.com. Hard copies are available at the nature centers or park headquarters.