

# Wildside Rehabilitation

Rescue ♡ Release ♡ Respect

## Newsletter

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Wildside Rehabilitation is a non-profit organization dedicated to provide a safe-haven for wildlife in need of healing and advocacy in Central Oregon. This rehabilitation includes fawns, raccoons, squirrels, rabbits, chipmunks, elk and many other species of wildlife. Wildside care-givers strive to heal or nurture and prepare wildlife for a return to their native environment.

### Mission Statement

*Provide competent, compassionate care to mammals of Central Oregon with the least human impact; Educate and advocate for wildlife; Conservation and preservation of the wilderness.*

### Donations Greatfully Received

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[www.wildsiderehab.com](http://www.wildsiderehab.com)

# Wildside Rehabilitation

## HOW IT ALL BEGAN

### Tracy Leonhardy

Tracy first encountered wildlife care while working at a vet clinic in Sisters as a licensed veterinary technician in 1999. Two inebriated cowboys came in carrying a 10 gallon bucket. "We've got a litter of baby Badgers in here", one exclaimed! "Yeah", slurred the other, "There's 14 of them in here!" Tracy laughed at them & explained that Badgers don't have that many in a litter and Badgers are fiercely protective of their young. Since the cowboys still had all their fingers, Tracy deduced that these were not likely to be baby Badgers. She peered into the bucket. There were several baby something's that could easily be mistaken for Badgers since they had similar markings. As it turned out though, they were baby Marmots. Yellow-bellied Marmots, to be exact. Otherwise known around here as Rock Chucks. Vermin, hated by the farms for the damage they do to the hay fields! Due to their drunken double vision, the cowboys had doubled their count. There were 7 babies nestled in the bucket, not 14. Their eyes hadn't opened yet but their hair had grown in enough to identify their species. Tracy called a local wildlife rehabilitator named Jane Stevens. Jane taught Tracy how to care for these adorable critters and together they raised 7 Marmots to adulthood. Thus began Tracy's journey to becoming a licensed wildlife rehabilitator. Under Jane's tutelage, Tracy received her own license in 2003.



In the winter of 2005, Tracy received a phone call from a young woman named Valerie McKie. She said she wanted to get involved with wildlife care. Tracy explained that in the winter, there really wasn't much to do. Tracy only had one raccoon at the time that was too young to be released; a little female named Shelby. When Valerie met Shelby, it was love at first sight. From then on, Val was Tracy's best volunteer, always willing to take on the most difficult cases, spending her time & money in dedicated service to orphaned and injured wildlife.

One day, Val & Tracy were discussing money issues & lamenting that the cost of needed supplies for the wildlife required more than their available funds. They needed to raise some funds and therefore a non-profit status needed to be established. Val contacted a lawyer and a month later **Wildside Rehabilitation** became a legal non-profit organization.

Tracy is currently the Wildside Rehab's president and the only licensed Rehabilitator. All of the volunteer caregivers legally care for wildlife, under Tracy's knowledgeable tutelage. This knowledge is incredibly far reaching! Each species has unique dietary needs and must be handled and housed according to their specific needs. Tracy is a dedicated, educated, patient and persevering caregiver and teacher. She takes calls for help at any time of day or night and responds to whatever is necessary to place an orphaned or injured animal in a situation that will facilitate and meet the animal's needs.

Often, these animals are less than cooperative! Tracy's fearless determination, more often than not, saves lives and facilitates the release of a healthy animal, despite their resistance and against all odds!

### Valerie McKie



Valerie has excelled at everything she ever set out to do! She held Honor Roll status through all four years of high school. A superb athlete, she broke records as a golfer and lead her team to the state championship. After high school, she obtained a degree in Psychology from the University of Washington, on the Dean's List all four years. Her pac-ten All-star golf team toured the Far East. From there she pursued a medical degree at the Military's Uniformed Services University of Health Sciences in Bethesda, MD. She was awarded the Outstanding Service Medal in 1999 for creating and producing a promotional video for the University.

All of these achievements did not satisfy Val's calling for something her soul craved and her passion called her to do. She decided to pursue her credentials as a Physician's Assistant, scale down her monumental accomplishments, move to Bend, Oregon and satisfy her need to be close to the complicated simplicity of nature and the wild animals. This is not to say that she did not dedicate herself to her medical career. As always she excelled in her service to both hospitals in Deschutes county and she earned the admiration of everyone she worked with in the medical profession.

Val is admired, respected and loved by most people who cross her path but she is never truly fulfilled in the company of humans. She is exhausted by her compassion for her fellow man and her unrest with man-kinds evil side. She can only sooth her troubled soul when she is alone with the wonders of nature and in the company of animals. She often hikes alone and absorbs the beauty of Central Oregon's wild side. She seeks to fulfill her calling by contacting the area's most dedicated licensed wildlife rehabber, Tracy Leonhardy.

As she has with all of her endeavors, she strives for knowledge about the animals she wants to help. With Tracy's guidance, Val is quick to become an expert in the field of wildlife rehabilitation.

Tracy's admiration for Val's dedication and natural instincts with the animals is evident when she recalls: "As a Physician's Assistant, Val was so loved by her co-workers that they all covered for her need to attend to her animal patients. Val became notorious for sneaking in baby animals that were on tight feeding schedules. She could be found on her breaks bottle feeding a squirrel or cuddling a fussy raccoon under her lab coat while she'd rock it back to sleep. Even at her work, her animals remained an important focus of her daily life."

Many hearts ached when the news of Val's untimely death on the 22nd of June 2012 was revealed. While out hiking in Sisters, alone, she fell to her death from a trail high above a wilderness canyon that she loved to frequent. Val was only 38.

Valerie McKie's deep love for wildlife is what created **Wildside Rehabilitation**. It is with deep sorrow that we carry on without her. Her loving family, realizing how much it meant to Val, strive to support her dreams both with physical participation and fund raising.

# 2012 in Review

We reflect upon some of the babies whose lives we held in our hands and our hearts last year. We remember the bitter sweet feelings when we released them to face the world on their own. As the 2013 Spring approaches, we anticipate new babes that are soon to depend upon us.



Wildside Rehab took in ten fawns last year. Many calls were received which resulted in the successful reuniting of baby with mom. All of the fawns we took in were in need of bottle feeding. Pictured here is "Tucker", a buck whose fate would have been drowning in a canal if not for a concerned citizen who rescued him and brought him to us.

The fawns were released in a beautiful canyon near Sisters in November 2012.



Two Fox pups were released in September 2012



Four Golden Mantled Squirrels were brought to us by a hero who rescued them from her cat. They were bottle fed until ready

to wean and then released on the property of one of our caregivers.



Our baby Porcupine gained his freedom in the spring of 2012



"Pearl" was one of nine Gray Squirrels who were bottle fed and nurtured by Wildside Caregivers in 2012. Seven of our babies have been released but Pearl and Shirley were too young to be released this fall. They are wintering over with us and will be released this spring.

Then there was the "earless rabbit" that turned out to be a Guinea Pig! She remains in the home of one of our caregivers.



Mac (right) and Teddy (left), both male Raccoons, came to us separately, both in need of bottle feeding. Mac came first and quickly bonded with his caregiver. When Ted arrived, Mac had to adjust to sharing his "mommy" with his little step brother. These boys are still with us because they were not ready to fend for themselves and deal with the winter weather. They will be released in early April.



There are few places left on the planet where the impact of people has not been felt. We have explored and left our footprint on nearly every corner of the globe. As our population and needs grow, we are leaving less and less room for wildlife.

Wild animals and their habitat are under threat from many different kinds of human activities, from directly destroying habitat to spreading invasive species and disease. Most ecosystems are facing multiple threats. Each new threat puts additional stress on already weakened ecosystems and their wildlife.

# What can you do to protect them?

## When you visit the wilderness

Stay on the trails. Habitat is destroyed, babies are frightened away from their parents, hunting and hiding is disrupted, homes destroyed and seedlings broken when you walk or ride your horse or motorized vehicle into wilderness area. Be respectful.

Leave **NOTHING** behind. Human food can kill or injure wild animals. Don't leave your garbage in their homeland. Be considerate.



If you must build a fire, don't leave it until you can stand on it in bare feet. Don't smoke. Keep motorized vehicles on the trail. Be careful.

Don't let your pets run through the forest threatening and disrupting everyone's life, just for fun. Be kind.



When you move camping equipment, pets, vehicles and boats from one wilderness location to another, be mindful of the invasive species and disease that comes and goes with you and your equipment. Clean things to the best of your ability. Do not transfer fish or mammals from one location to another. Obey the law.

## On your property

Keep your cats in the house. Millions of wild critters are killed, injured and separated from their babies by well fed domestic cats, just out for the fun of it! Housecats live longer, have less injury, disease and parasites....keep them inside. Be responsible.

Before you feed wildlife, be sure that what you give them won't harm them. Research! Don't lure them with food into a place where a predator has the advantage. Be thoughtful.

# HOW TO BE A SUPERHERO

## Volunteer



Wildside Rehab needs volunteers. Our primary need is **caregivers**. If that is not your bag we have many other needs for your help.

Fund Raising

Research

Transporting of animals

Cage building

Building animal feeders & houses

Distribute literature

Publicity

Gather food for fawns

Building builder

Cement slab expert

Veterinary services

CAREGIVERS

## Donate



Wildside Rehab is a non-profit organization. If you can help with any of the following,

Fence panels

Portable shelters

Traps

Large cages

Food

Cement

Bedding

Money

Leash pole

Nets

Squeeze cage

Cat sacks

Trailer to transport animals

Bird, Squirrel, Bat Houses

Medical supplies

Rescue stretcher

Tranquilizer gun

Poop scoopers

Water heaters

Heat lamp fixtures

heat lamps

## I found baby bunnies-what do I do?

Rabbits are on their own at 3 to 4 weeks of age. Their main defense mechanism against predators is to remain completely still so as not to be seen. That is why it is so easy to closely approach a very young bunny. If you see a small rabbit that is about 4 inches in length from nose to tail in a hunched position, it is already independent of its mother.

Unlike most infant mammals baby bunnies have a very large stomach capacity that can hold large amounts of milk. This allows mother rabbits the ability to visit the nest only twice a day (typically at dawn and dusk) to feed her infants, reducing the risk that she will draw attention to them by her presence. The rest of the time the infants are left unattended covered only by a layer of grass. Rabbit nests are often located in yards and are simple, shallow depressions usually made of grass and lined with fur from the mother rabbit. The nests are easily disturbed by lawn care, pets, and children.

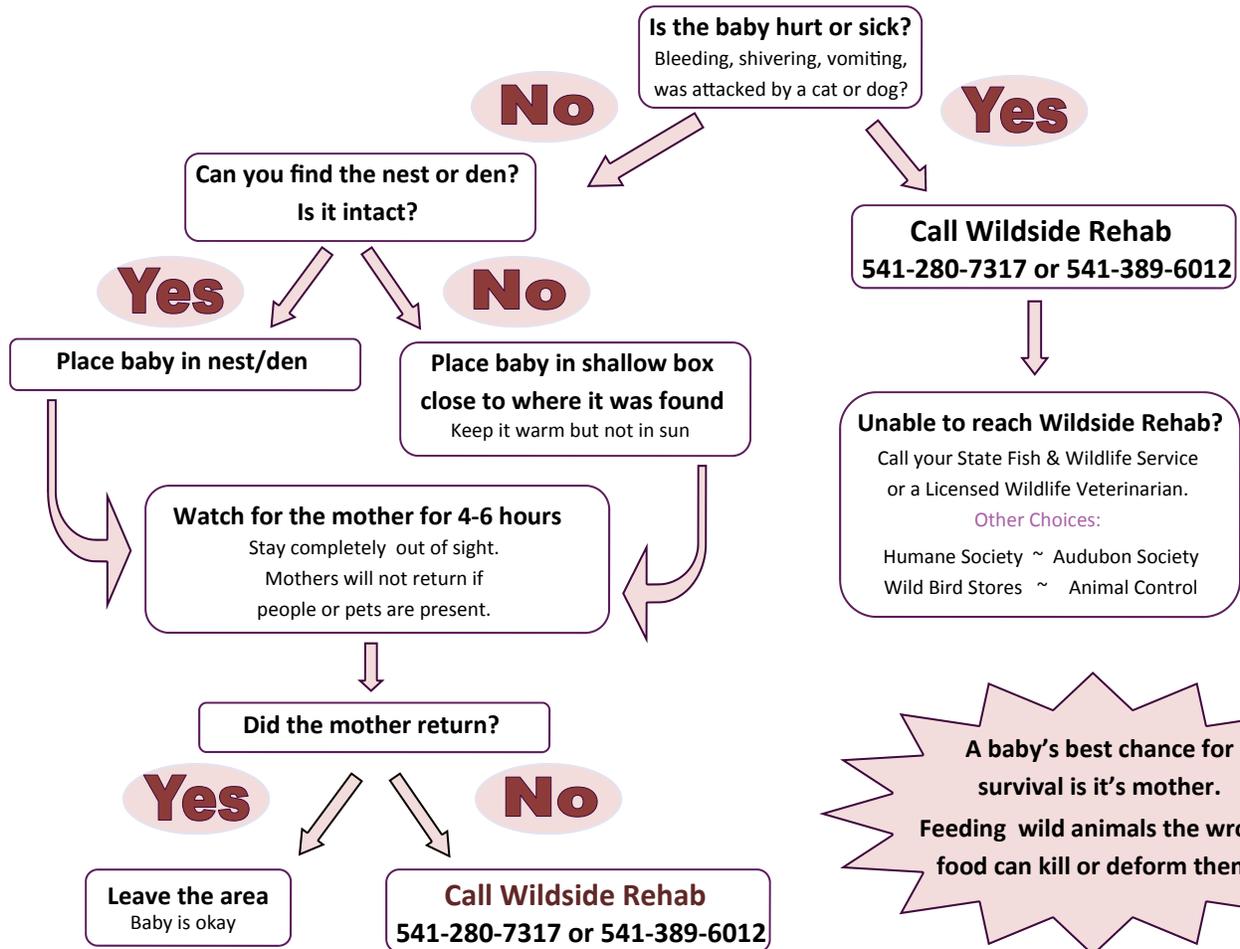
If you have disturbed a nest follow these suggestions:

- ✦ Carefully examine the bunnies to determine if any of them are injured.
- ✦ Put the healthy bunnies back in the nest and replace the grass on top.
- ✦ Keep other animals and people away from the nest.
- ✦ To determine if the mother rabbit is returning place a pattern of twigs or yarn across the grass top. If by morning the pattern has been disturbed, she has most likely returned.

If any of the bunnies are injured or if the mother rabbit has not returned please contact Wildside Rehabilitation.



# What to do if you find infant wildlife:



## Until you are able to reach a wildlife authority:

**Only adults should rescue baby animals or birds. Before rescuing adult wildlife seek guidance from a wildlife rehabilitator.**

1. **Prepare a container** Place a soft cloth on the bottom of a cardboard box with a lid or a cat/dog carrier. If it does not have air holes, make some. For smaller animals you can use a paper bag with air holes in it.
2. **Protect yourself** Wear gloves, if possible. Some animals may bite or scratch to protect themselves. Wild animals commonly have parasites (fleas, lice, ticks) and/or carry diseases.
3. **Cover the animal with a light sheet or towel.**
4. **Gently pick up the animal and put it in the prepared container.**
5. **Warm the animal if the weather is cold or if the animal is chilled.** Put one end of the container on a heating pad set on low. Or fill a zip-top plastic bag, a plastic bottle with a screw top, or a rubber glove with hot water. Wrap the warm container with cloth and put it next to the animal. Make sure the warm container does not leak, or the animal will get wet and chilled.
6. **Secure the container so that the animal can not get out!**
7. **Note exactly where you found the animal.** This will be important when it is time to release the animal.
8. **Keep the animal in a warm, dark, quiet place. *Don't give it food.* Leave it alone, don't handle or bother it.**
9. **Contact a **Wildside Rehab**, State Wildlife Agency, or licensed Wildlife Veterinarian as soon as possible. *Get advice before you feed the animal!*** Don't keep the animal at your home longer than necessary. Keep animal contained, do not release it in your home or car.
10. **Wash your hands after contact with the animal. Use bleach to wash everything that came in contact with the animal (towel, jacket, pet carrier, gloves) to prevent the spread of disease or parasites to you or your pets.**
11. **Get the animal to a wildlife rehabilitator as soon as possible**



# GRAY SQUIRREL REHABILITATION

*If you ever entertained the thought of working with wildlife in need of rehabilitation, consider starting with a baby Gray Squirrel.*



Every spring and summer, Wildside rehabilitates many Gray Squirrels. Some are adults that have been injured but most are infant squirrels that need to be bottle fed and nurtured until they are ready to fend for themselves in their natural habitat. Rehabilitation requires knowledge and is required by law to be done under the supervision of a licensed Wildlife Rehabilitator. Working with Wildside of-

f-fers you the guidance and knowledge of a licensed Rehabilitator, as well as financial support. The cooperation and camaraderie of fellow rehabbers will induce confidence in the work you do for these tiny creatures in need of our help.



To care for a baby Gray Squirrel, all you need is a quiet warm room in your home. Wildside will provide a cage and all the supplies you need. If you don't have space to house your baby when he is ready for outside accommodations, he can be moved to another rehabber's facility until he is ready for release.

## *SQUIRREL FACTS:*

Female squirrel is a doe. Male squirrel is a buck. Baby Squirrel is a pup.



In 1 week, squirrel pups will double their birth weight. In 3 weeks the pup's fur begins to grow and the ears open. Their lower incisors start growing at 3 weeks and their upper incisors at 4 weeks, and when their chewing teeth erupt at 6 weeks, their mom begins to wean them. They are fully weaned at 9 weeks. After the 10th week, the pups live outside their mother's nest while she teaches them

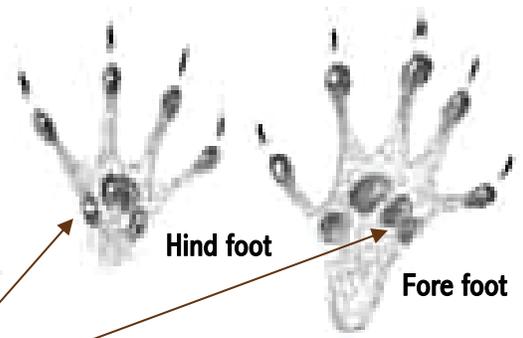
the skills needed to survive; nest building, finding and storing food, and developing their muscles and coordination through playing.



Young males leave the nests before the young females. Since the females stay at the nest until they're more mature, females are numerically almost twice the population as males because they are less exposed to predators. Gray squirrels can live to sixteen years of age only if they're very, very lucky. 70% are killed in their 1st year by predators and human intervention.

Because of their high metabolism squirrels must eat their weight in food each week to stay active and healthy. Their superb sense of smell and memory are used to relocate the hundreds of food caches they buried during the harvest time to sustain them during the winter. During summer and fall, gray squirrels eat a third more than their body needs to prepare for the rigors of winter. This is in addition to storing food in the ground for future consumption.

Gray squirrels have several adaptations for arboreal life. They have parallax vision which is the slight distance that the eyes are separated and allows a squirrel to judge distances when jumping. They can jump eighteen feet with their strong rear legs. Squirrels have color vision but are blue and yellow colorblind. Their toes, which are long and flexible allow them to cling to vertical surfaces. They can climb any tree no matter how large and when descending, the back legs can rotate one hundred and eighty degrees to allow the sharp, rear claws to hook into the bark.



Their feet are equipped with suction-like pads to allow them to cling to slick surfaces.

Gray Squirrels are one of the cleanest wild animals. A buck will spend twice as much time grooming itself as a doe.



A squirrel has the jaw muscles and teeth to bite through the toughest nutshell to get to the food inside. They will spend over an hour each day cleaning all of their twenty-two teeth. The teeth's cleaning is done by gnawing on branches and nutshells. As they bite into various small branches and expose the fibers, they will use these fibers much as we use floss to clean our teeth. The gray squirrel has two upper and two lower incisors that continuously grow at the rate of four to five inches in each year. Like rabbits, if they do not have something hard to chew on, their teeth will just continue to grow.

## OUR FOSTER SQUIRRELS

Their age dictates their habitat. A very small box or cage with a heat pad is used for the tiny orphans. An infant will be bottle fed a specific formula every three hours around the clock. As they grow, the time between feedings gets longer. Food is introduced and the size of their habitat enlarged as they progress. We try to introduce as many of their natural foods as possible. If they are ready to release in the early fall, we cage them for about a week close to where they will be set free. This is called a *soft release*. This gives them a safe place to get used to the sights and sounds around them and allows them a place to come back to for food for a while after release. We choose a location that meets their needs and is as safe as possible from predators. We do this before extremely cold weather sets in so that they can establish a nest while the weather is mild.



If they are too young to release before the weather turns too cold, we keep them over the winter. We adjust their habitat to allow them access to the outside while still containing them. Closer to release time we hide their food outside so that they learn to hunt. They instinctively hide their food and gather bedding for their den. Hand fed squirrels are very personable and affectionate with their foster parent. As soon as their eyes are open, they will naturally shy from people other than their caregiver. As their dependence upon us diminished so does their desire to be handled, especially if they are not an "only squirrel". The natural instincts that these wild ones have is truly awesome!

## GRAY SQUIRREL'S DIET

Acorns	Bird eggs	Certain flowers	Inner bark	Pine seeds
Animal bones	Bulbs	Frogs	Insects	Roots
Antlers	Bugs	Fruit	Mushrooms	Seeds
Berries	Carrion	Green shoots	Nuts	Vegetables

# Reuniting tree squirrel babies with their mom

A squirrel's real mom is the best mom. We should try to do anything we can to reunite the baby with its natural mom. That is first priority if possible in orphan wildlife rehabilitation.



We find babies on the ground after high winds and storms have knocked the nest out, after tree trimmers have cut the nest down, if one sibling has kicked the other out because of limited milk supply, if one just fell out while playing, if one is sick or injured or if mom has died and the babies are trying to look for food on their own. If there is a chance that mom is still alive and healthy, she will most definitely try to retrieve her baby if her baby is warm and healthy.

If her baby is not warm but healthy, we must warm the baby up before trying to reunite. Mom won't take back a cold baby. She will think it is sick or dying. You can warm the baby up by placing it in a box half on a heating pad on low with a soft fabric on the bottom. You can also fill a latex glove with warm water, knot it like a water balloon, cover it with a sock and place it near the baby. You can microwave the glove every few hours to keep it warm. Just make sure it's not too hot or you can easily burn a baby. If her baby is injured or disabled, we must take it to *Wildside Rehab* as quickly as possible. Mom won't take back an injured or disabled baby. Be sure to thoroughly inspect the babies. Mom won't mind if your scent is on them but you could also rub dirt on your gloves from the local area before touching them just to be safe. If you have two healthy squirrels and one dead squirrel, remove the dead baby and try to reunite the other two with their mom. Often, mom won't take the other two, perhaps she can smell the scent of the other dead baby on the healthy ones. But it is worth a try.



**1. MAKE A NEST.** Use a small cardboard box a foot or so square and maybe six to 12 inches deep. You can also use a basket. Gather some natural nest materials from the area where the baby is found. Put leaves in the box built up in the shape of a donut with the babies in the middle. Make sure they can't climb out. If it's very sunny, put a few leaves over the babies to protect them. If they're old enough, they will pull some leaves over themselves. If it's cold out, you can leave your warming device in the box with the babies such as the latex glove or warm gel pack.



**2. PUT NEST UP A TREE.** If you can, put the nest back up into the tree where the babies fell. Try to go up 8-10 feet which should be high enough to protect the baby from dogs and cats. Keep your pets away! If there are birds of prey in the area, try to hide the box in the branches. You can use wire to wrap around the main trunk and run through the box. Don't put nails in the tree and damage it. If you can wedge it in the crotch of two branches, even better. It doesn't have to be perfect because unlike birds, squirrels can carry their babies in their mouths to move them. They will take the babies one by one to one of their backup nests. The baby will wrap it's legs around her neck to hang on.

If their tree has been cut down completely, put them in the closest tree, on a nearby tall post, on top of anything 8-10 feet tall. A hanging basket in a tree works well.

If you have no cats, dogs or natural predators in the area that might attack a baby on the ground, you can of course place the babies on the ground in a box so they won't crawl away. Place the box directly under the tree where found.

**3. CALL MOM.** Try to get the baby to call to its mom. When they call to their mom they sound like little birds going "peep peep peep peep." You can hold one baby by the foot to make it feel like it's about to fall. It will call it's mom for help. Obviously, don't let the baby fall. You will see most of the squirrels in the immediate area come out to see what's up. Hopefully one of them will be mom.

4. LEAVE IMMEDIATE AREA. Get away from the area but stay close enough to keep an eye on them. Wait 2-3 hours in good weather or until dark, whichever comes first. If the baby is found late at night or in hard rain, you can take the baby inside, get it warm, hydrated then try to reunite it in the morning when it's clear. (In this case, a call to Wildside Rehab is in order if you need to know how to hydrate the baby) Mom won't approach her babies if there are people or animals around. Keep people away. Put up a perimeter with stakes, rope and a sign if it's a high traffic area. Mom will carry her baby like a cat carries her kitten in her mouth. When they're bigger, they will wrap their legs around her neck to hold on.

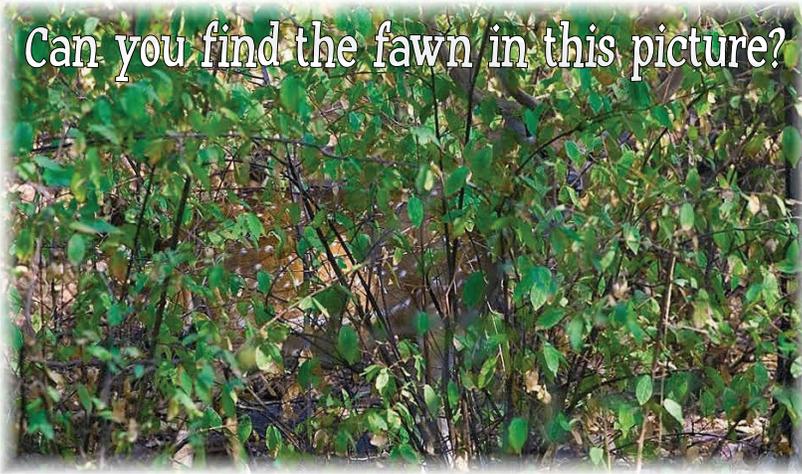
5. MOM DOESN'T SHOW. If mom doesn't show up, it's time to take action. Perhaps mom was killed, sick or there is something wrong with the baby that you just can't see. Occasionally a mom will come and look at her babies and still reject them. Upon closer inspection, the baby may have a neurological injury or an injured body part.



*If your attempt to reunite the babies with their mom fails, you are already a hero for trying. Chances are good that we can still save these orphans, raise them and release them. Call Wildside Rehab and we will work together to raise a healthy squirrel or decide that euthanasia is in his best interest.*

## I found a fawn-what do I do?

Can you find the fawn in this picture?



If you find an infant deer alone, do not assume that it is orphaned and needs your help. It is common to find fawns alone during the spring and summer months, particularly during the fawn's first month of life. Due to its inability to keep pace with its mother in the weeks following its birth, a doe will often bed a fawn down during the day as she searches for food and feeds. The fawn remains in a location designated by his mother. A doe may also leave her young alone during the day to lure predators away from the fawn. The doe will come back at intervals or after dusk to nurse and care for her baby.

The fawn is protected from potential predators while its mother is away by its color, which provides camouflage in grassy and wooded areas. The lack of a strong body odor also makes it less vulnerable. Thus touching or coming too close to a fawn may put it in danger of being attacked by predators because your body odor could lead predators to the fawn's location.

A fawn will freeze when it is approached by anything other than his mother. He is so serious about playing dead that you might pick him up and think he is injured or dead, when in fact, he is using his God given survival instincts.

If you have discovered a fawn, the best policy is to enjoy from a distance unless the fawn is obviously injured or calling or crying for more than three hours. Sometimes a fawn may have just been startled or scared if it is crying; in other cases if a large enough deer population exists he or she may be adopted by another doe; or if it is late in the season the youngster might be old enough to make it on its own.

Because each situation is different, you should ALWAYS contact Wildside Rehabilitation to confirm your suspicions before intervening.

## Handle it Humanely

*In the early spring, the critters will be looking for a place to raise their impending family. You may soon hear the patter of little feet. Your walls may be emitting scratching noises. You may hear some peeping sounds. You may be experiencing "close encounters" of the wild kind. With almost 80 percent of the U.S. population living in urban or suburban areas, the average person is likely to encounter wildlife in their backyard or even in or around their house. Most people do not mind, and even enjoy having wildlife in their backyards; however, conflicts between wildlife and people do happen.*

*While prevention is the best solution to almost any wildlife conflict there are some simple, effective, and humane strategies to resolve common conflicts with your wild neighbors.*

*Early in the spring is the best time to "encounter-proof" your house. It is important to do this before the wild creatures begin to have babies so you do not trap either the mothers or their young. When it is time for one of your wild neighbors to find a new home, the following suggestions are simple and humane ways to handle the situation.*

### How to get them to move out:

Although many people do not mind, and even enjoy, wildlife in their backyards, wildlife can sometimes make themselves a little too "at home." Here are some helpful hints on how to get critters to move on.

- If you know where the animal is nesting, place an ammonia soaked rag in or near the area where the animal is entering and exiting. Soak rags every day to keep them smelling strong or place them in a cup to maintain their dampness. Ammonia mimics predator urine which can be intimidating especially for small mammals. You should not use ammonia or other scent deterrents for birds, they will be ineffective. Keep ammonia in open area, ammonia in a closed area can be deadly.
- Play a radio by their home. Talk radio stations tend to work the best because it makes the animal feel as though there are people around when they may otherwise not be. Animals like it quiet especially when they have young, so this is a great way to get them to move on. Keep in mind the species you are dealing with as to the times you should have the radio on; is the animal primarily nocturnal or are they daytime animals?
- Place a portable light near or shining into their home. Animals prefer the cover of darkness when they are hiding or nesting. This technique is most effective for primarily nocturnal animals.
- Unless they have young in a nest, animals will only stay in one place for a period of time if they feel comfortable doing so. Consider unique ways to make their world seem different. For example, for animals that spend time on the ground place whirly-gigs, yard flags or pinwheels near areas you would like them to avoid. For animals spending time in trees, tie strips of Mylar or streamers in the branches that will flap and flutter in the breeze and startle the animal.
- Any other obstacles, detours or annoyances that you can incorporate into your landscape, especially those that limit the access animals have to the things they want, will help to convince them that they need to find a new territory.
- If the animal is in your attic, shed, or other enclosed space you can also use, as a last resort, a one-way-door. Before deciding on this option you must be sure that there are no young present or that the young are old enough to escape on their own to prevent from being trapped inside. To install, cut a piece of hardware mesh larger than the hole with a hole cut into its center matching what is underneath. Cut another piece slightly larger than the hole and attach it to the outside with wire loops on half the door. This will allow any animal within that space to squeeze out the flap as though it were a doggy door, but if it is tight enough they will be unable to push their way back in when they return.
- Remember that these methods always work best if used simultaneously with each other.

## Wildlife Proof Your Home: Eliminate Access and Attraction

Other than specific problem areas and solutions, there are some general areas of access and attraction for mammals and birds. Remember, the goal is always to keep these solutions safe and harmless for you, your pets, and the wildlife.

Brush, debris, and trees that are close to a house are strong attractions for wildlife to gain entry to your house or to set up nests in your yard. Trim branches that offer squirrels and raccoons a launching pad to the house. Put debris and brush piles as far from your house as possible.

Food sources are a huge attraction. If you feed your pets outside, remove the food and dishes after your pet has eaten. Keep garbage cans in the garage and keep the garage door/s closed at all times. If you must keep garbage cans outside, fasten the lids securely with chain or bungee cords and douse them periodically with ammonia (a good deterrent for all wildlife). Compost piles make tasty grazing for many different kinds of wildlife. Screen the perimeter or place screening over the pile of compost.

### Animal Attic Antics

Any mammal or bird can take up residence in an attic, but most likely you find squirrels, raccoons, birds, and possibly bats. Bats are able to get through extremely small apertures such as louvered vents, loose screening, roof peaks, dormer windows, or areas where flashing has pulled away from rooflines or siding. All of these areas can offer openings for wildlife occupancy.



Solutions: Screening over louvers, vents, and other openings can be a big deterrent. Also, caulking compound and expanding foam insulation will fill the very small cracks. Remember, bats are great insect controllers so put up a bat house.

### Dangerous Dryer Vents

Dryer vents are particularly attractive to small mammals like chipmunks or to small birds. Often they will climb in and get trapped.

Solution: Cover the opening of the vent with wire mesh hardware cloth.

### Boat Babies

Raccoons, opossums, and even birds can build nests for young in boats that have been stored for the winter. Tarpaulins can blow off. It only takes a small opening for wildlife to move in and set up a nursery.

Solutions: Check boats regularly, especially those boats in storage, before they are moved to a garage or driveway. Try the ammonia to detour them. If a mother has had young in the boat and the boat has been outside, it is better to put the family safe in the wild rather than move them when you move the boat. Call Wildside Rehab for help moving the family.

### Chimney Catastrophe

Birds, raccoons, squirrels and bats can nest in chimney areas. Birds often can get in, but can not get out.

Solutions: Inexpensive screen or hardware netting can be used to cover or cap off top of a chimney. The best solution is a chimney cap. They are readily available at home supply stores. Please remember to remove all nest debris from the chimney before capping to prevent a possible fire hazard. Companies that clean chimneys will also install caps.

## Porch Problems

The space under raised porches and decks is an attractive spot for various animals to take up residence.

**Solution:** The best way to keep animals out is to cover any openings with mesh hardware cloth or wood slating. To prevent digging animals from breaching your barrier, bury the barrier a foot into the ground.

## Open Overhangs

Raccoons, squirrels, and songbirds love to set up housekeeping in your overhangs.

**Solution:** Keep your soffits and fascia in good repair. Watch for trees or overhanging branches that might provide the initial access. Wrap your trees near the house with sheet metal about five feet off the ground. To keep birds from nesting under your overhangs hang strips of shiny paper or caution tape to keep them from nest building.

## Window Well Wastelands

Uncovered window wells can be a danger for animals that may fall in and be unable to get out.

**Solution:** Cover your window wells with either commercial plastic covers or with hardware cloth or homemade grates. If an animal has fallen into your window well provide a ramp like a board so the animal can climb out.

## Wings and Windows

Often birds mistake windows for open areas to fly through. The result is often a traumatic collision.

**Solution:** Purchase window clings that come in a variety of fun shapes and colors. They simply stick to your window and break up the clear, reflective surface. Also a fine plastic mesh can be purchased at many birding supply stores that can be stapled to the outside of the window to soften a potential collision.

## Birds Building Nests

Birds will often build nests in a variety of places including in your front porch flower basket or on top of your mail box. Any flat surface of your home is a potential spot for the nest building process to take place.

**Solution:** The best prevention is to change the surface from flat to elevated. A 45 degree angle or more works best. Simply attach a piece of hardware cloth or sheet metal to the potential site.

## Problems with Waterfowl

Golf courses, parks, and private lawns have three things in common, they are popular people places, they have lush green grass, and lots of waterfowl! While we may enjoy a day at the park watching the ducks and geese we don't enjoy the mess they leave behind.

**Landscape Changes:** Geese and many ducks require large areas of short vegetation and love grass shoots and open shorelines making your yard or beach a favorite place to nest and feed. Make your space less desirable by letting grass grow longer, by planting wildflowers, adding rocks or shoreline bushes, and turning pond aerators off early in the fall to discourage over wintering.

The presents of a dog can be a very good deterrent.



Fences made of string or chicken wire placed one to two feet off the ground is an effective deterrent for ducks and geese. Mylar tape attached to wooden slates placed three inches apart is also effective. Make sure the slates are at least twenty-five inches in height. If waterfowl has taken a liking to your swimming pool leave the pool toys to float on the water as a scare device. Fences and scare devices are most effective if used early in the spring before nesting season.

For geese a commercial repellent called Rejex is available. The product contains a biodegradable food ingredient called methyl anthranilate. It makes vegetation unpalatable for geese.

## My Garden is Gone

Deer, rabbits, and woodchucks often see our yards as tasty buffet lines. So what do you do? Start by playing detective. When browsing, deer leave plants with ragged, torn ends, while rabbits and woodchuck leave clean angular cuts.

Fencing is the most effective solution. For deer the fence must be at least six feet high with openings no greater than four inches wide. For rabbits and woodchucks wire supported by a post every six feet is sufficient. The fence should be two feet high and be either buried under the soil six to eight inches or be firmly staked to the ground.

Incorporating plants into your garden, particularly around the garden edge, that have evolved mechanisms to deter browsing are also a good option. Black-eyed Susan, Daffodil, Iris, Chives, Hyacinth, Sage, Thyme, Lavender, Maple, Juniper, Blue Spruce, Marigolds and Holly are all good choices.

There are a variety of home-made and commercial repellents that are successful at preventing browsing. *Rockland's Hinder* is especially formulated for deer and is available at hardware stores and nurseries. Repellents work by either giving off an offensive odor or by making plants unpalatable. Use them when browsing first appears.

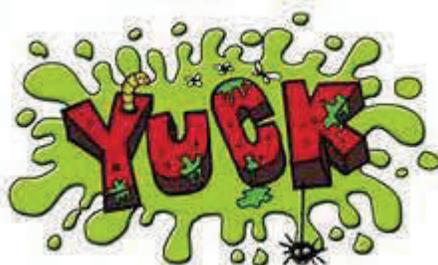
Visual deterrents such as lights on a timed system or Mylar tape strung on bushes and trees can be effective on deterring all three species from tasting your plants. However, to maintain their effectiveness combine them with other hazing techniques.

## Non-toxic Wildlife Deterrent Spray

Some easy-to-prepare deterrent solutions that are safe for plants and animals are effective for all kinds of wildlife:

- 1 whole Spanish onion
- 1 jalapeno pepper
- 1 tablespoon cayenne pepper
- 4 ounces chopped garlic
- 2 quarts water

Chop onion and jalapeno. Add cayenne and garlic; boil in water 20 minutes. Cool and strain through cheesecloth. Use solution in garden sprayer on foundations, garden perimeters, garages, and garbage cans. More than one application may be necessary.



Another safe and easy way to deter deer and other wildlife is to soak strips of sheeting or old rags in hot pepper solution and tying the soaked strips to trees, shrubs, and bushes that wildlife find tasty.

## To Trap or Not to Trap

Live trapping and relocating can be used to move an animal, however chances of survival are not very good once the animal is relocated. Here is a few pointers to keep in mind before deciding to trap and relocate an animal:

- Never relocate an animal during spring since they often have babies that are dependent on them for survival.
- In the cold winter months relocated animals face harsh weather conditions and scarce resources. Survival of winter relocated animals is very low.
- Permission is needed by a landowner before an animal can be released on the land even in the case of state, county, or national forest or park land.
- Traps should be checked a few times a day. Leaving an animal in a trap for an extended period of time is inhumane.

Following some or all of these suggestions can offer protection for our homes as well as for wildlife. We all need to work in a safe way to “avoid encounters of the wild kind” and prevention is the key. Remember, we are **supposed** to be smarter than they are!

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*Wildside needs Caregivers  
take a walk on the wild side*

