

WILDLIFE RESCUE HANDBOOK

ENPA GENOVA WILDLIFE RESCUE
CENTRE



Considering the increasing interest in and interactions with wildlife, as well as the complex nature of wildlife rescue, we thought about providing guidelines for wildlife rescue. This handbook will allow you to act with readiness and, most importantly, safely, while carrying on an effective intervention.

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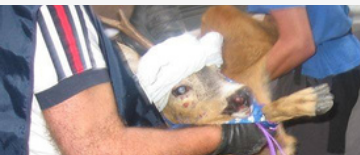
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GUIDELINES FOR WILDLIFE RESCUE

In most states, wildlife is property of the state and its stewardship is defined according to public law. Without specific permits, **citizens might not be allowed to take wildlife into custody, including for rescue and rehabilitation.** In case of rescue, the best course of action is to call the nearest wildlife rescue centre to ask for directions on how to act. They also have the proper infrastructures, expertise, feed and equipment to take care of such creatures.



In case you find wildlife in need, refer to official entities, such as wildlife rescue centres or local rangers. In the meanwhile, **do not raise your voice and keep your distance.** Human presence causes great stress to wildlife and, even if wounded, animals might have sudden and dangerous reactions.

For a rescue, use **gloves** as a protection from bites and scratches and help yourself with a **cloth** for an easier hold on the animal. To isolate and transport the animal, use a **container with holes for air.** When acting, be **delicate but firm** to avoid further injuries to the animal or to yourself.



This guide is suited for European wildlife but its general principles can be applied to: **adult mammals, mammal cubs (especially deers), adult birds, young birds and insectivore bats** across the globe.



FEEDING

Adult rescue mammals might not have urgent need for food. They can get to the nearest wildlife rescue centre without eating but providing water might be of help.

SAFETY FIRST

Some adult mammals, such as badgers, foxes, porcupines, martens, skunks, wolves, deers (including roe deers), can be dangerous. **Do not touch them and wait for the intervention or advice of experts.**

Watch out for bites from dormice and squirrels, while you can be generally safe with hedgehogs and bats. Still, wear gloves for extra protection.

WHAT TO DO

- Before acting, **call designated authorities and ask for advice**

- Avoid loud noises, speaking and touching the animals: **our presence greatly upsets them**





WHAT TO DO - **Do not touch the cub** and do not get close
- Leave the cub where he/she is and **move away unless he/she is unquestionably wounded or debilitated**

DO NOT TOUCH, DO NOT RESCUE

Mammal cubs need help only if wounded or debilitated, such as if affected by mange or if covered in maggots or in case you are sure their mother will not come back to take care of them (verified death).

Baby deers (including roe deers) must not be touched or removed if not under the above mentioned circumstances. Mothers leave their cubs hidden while looking for food, then return to take care of them - if and when intruders are not present.

Taking the cubs with you would mean removing them from maternal care, fundamental for their survival. The same goes for rabbit and hare cubs (as well as for a majority of other mammals): the parents leave their youngsters hidden, sometimes in different points of the same area, so they do not need our help (unless under the above mentioned circumstances).



FEEDING

Cubs are in urgent need for food, therefore, if rescued, they need to be taken to the nearest wildlife rescue centre immediately. It will be able to provide proper food according to age and species. Do not feed any animal with cow milk, it can be lethal for most cubs, or any other DIY diet.



FEEDING

An adult can wait to be taken to a wildlife rescue centre to get the right feed according to species and pathology. You can pour some drops of water over his/her beak to provide hydration.

SAFETY FIRST

You need to be careful with birds such as herons, cormorant and seagulls: they are capable of incredibly sudden neck extensions and can cause serious wounds with their beaks, especially if targeting your face. As for raptors, mind their claws! Parrots beaks can provide considerable wounds as well. As usual, refer to and trust the experts! You can help yourself with a piece of cloth to handle the bird in greater safety.

WHAT TO DO

- Put the animal in a **box with holes** for air for isolation and transportation
- **Minimise the contact with the bird and noises** to avoid excessive stress
- Do not attempt medications





FEEDING

Young birds are not able to feed on their own so they need to be hand-fed with breed-and-age-specific feed, even every one or two hours. Bread and other baked food should never be offered! Allow some water drops to fall on the young bird's beak for hydration as a relief while you carry the bird to the nearest wildlife rescue centre.

WHEN TO RESCUE

Nestlings are recognizable as they are not yet covered in feathers. They always need rescue if found outside their nest. They could die of hypothermia, be killed by domestic animals or vehicles. It is necessary to take them to the nearest wildlife rescue centre as soon as possible. Put them into a box where they can stay warm through a piece of cloth or a bottle of warm water. **Swallows and swifts on the ground (even if adults) should always be rescued.**

WHEN NOT TO RESCUE

On the other hand, many **fledglings** (young birds already covered in feathers), thanks to parental care, can survive on the ground and outside the nest. It is the case of young blackbirds, magpies, crows, seagulls, pigeons and nocturnal birds of prey. **If they are in a safe environment (such as free from cats and dogs), the best thing to do is to let them be.**



BATS | IF INSECTIVOROUS



FEEDING

Do not feed insectivorous bats: their diet is strict and does not allow for errors. While nursing, cow milk can be lethal. The closest wildlife rescue centre will be able to provide proper feed according to the bat's age and breed.

REJOINING THE MOTHER

If the bat is hairless and it is birth season, it could be a cub. **If the cub is wounded, he/she must be taken to a wildlife rescue centre immediately. If the bat is not injured, you should try reuniting him/her to his/her mother.** The mother will try to retake her cub at night so keep the cub safe and warm in a box during the day. At sunset, fill a bottle with warm water, wrap it in cloth and allow the cub to hold on to it. Put the bottle outside in an elevated place, inside a box that would be able to contain the young bat in case of falling down. Leave the area and wait for the mother to take the cub back. The water bottle position should allow her to land and soar back. Still, ask advice to a wildlife rescue centre before acting.

WHEN TO RESCUE

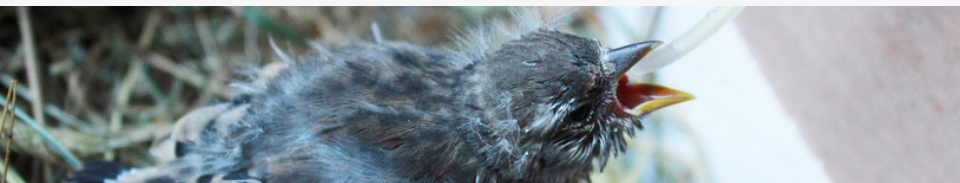
If the mother does not come back to retake her cub in one night, the young bat must be taken to a wildlife rescue centre immediately: he/she urgently needs care! If the birth season is off, the bat is an adult for sure. If wounded or debilitated, you can rescue him/her and take him/her to a wildlife rescue centre.





REACH OUT TO EXPERTS

Do not take the initiative to rescue an animal, do not reinvent yourself as a wildlife rescue or a vet, but immediately **reach out to designated authorities and follow their instructions**. Wild animals are delicate and unpredictable and you need to be sure you're acting according to their and your own safety. **Wildlife rescue centers are a good source of information; Google, social networks, family or friends might not be the best advisors.**



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