

BI-STATE WILDLIFE HOTLINE, INC.
BABY MAMMAL TRANSPORT PROTOCOL

To Rescue or Not to Rescue?

Baby wildlife does not always need rescuing. However, sometimes it is necessary for their survival to find a kind soul like you who is willing to take the time out of their day to save them.

Reasons to Intervene Include:

- You are absolutely sure that Mom is dead
- Reunite strategies did not work
- It is cold and lethargic
- It is covered with parasites (fleas, fly strike or ticks)
- It is screaming in a high pitch over & over (this is a distress call for mother)
- It has been in a dog or cat's mouth
- It has a broken limb
- It has abrasions
- It is having difficulty breathing (gasping, gurgling)
- Its coat is matted and/or patchy
- It has a head tilt and cannot hold its head straight
- It is exhibiting odd behavior (circling, falling over, etc.)
- It is bleeding

How to Transport Baby Mammals

All babies will need a 'pouch' of some sort to feel comfortable. A winter hat works well for this, or a pillowcase, washcloth, or even a sock depending on how small the babies are. Place the babies, gently, in the makeshift pouch and then place the pouch into a shoebox, plastic tote, insulated lunch box, or any small container with a lid. Hairless babies need a heat source immediately. You'll need a heating pad, set to medium, place under HALF of the shoebox or small container so the babies can get away from the heat source if they really want to. If you do not have a heating pad, you can make something similar in two minutes. Grab a men's long sock, or even knee high nylon, and fill the sock with dry rice – any kind, just uncooked. Microwave the sock filled with rice for 1-3 minutes until it is very warm to the touch but not scalding. Cover the now warm rice sock with a small hand towel or washcloth. Place the rice sock in the shoebox or other small container under the babies, making sure that they are not directly on top of the sock. Sometimes they will crawl on top of the sock and that's okay, but make sure they have the option to get away from it if it gets too hot. You'll need to reheat the rice sock once an hour or so, until you can get to a rehabber. **DO NOT FEED THEM ANYTHING!** Babies often aspirate fluids and unless you are prepared to save them once they aspirate, and treat the impending pneumonia from aspirating, don't feed them.

Larger babies with eyes open can be placed on a non-terrycloth towel in a box of appropriate size. A pet carrier, large plastic tote, or any kind of cage will work well too. They don't NEED a heat source, but if you have them for longer than a couple of hours, provide them with heat of some kind. Make sure the box you put them in has a lid and that it is taped or tied down, yet still allows them air to breathe! If babies have their eyes open, place a small lid or coaster with water into the 'cage' you are keeping them in. **DO NOT FORCE THEM TO DRINK WATER!!** Just make sure it is available to them if they want it. Do not use a bowl that they could drown themselves in. We know it seems unlikely, but we've seen it happen! A jar lid, coaster, or Tupperware lid works perfectly for a temporary water dish.

Keep babies secure and warm in this makeshift 'cage' while you try to reach a local rehabber. Call the wildlife hotline @ (636) 492-1610 to assist in finding a rehabber nearby that specializes in the species that you have found. 'Cage' should be in a quiet room, away from air conditioner vents, fans, pets, children, and other hazards. Do not spray 409, glass cleaner, hair spray, or anything else anywhere near the babies. It doesn't take much for them to die from these chemicals. They also die from shock, fear, and exposure very quickly. Be careful to not allow the children to keep getting the baby in and out of the 'cage' to look at, play with, or anything else. Let the baby rest quietly until you can get him to a rehabber. Most rehabbers will allow you to take photos of the baby right after they assess its health. Plus, most rehabbers will be happy to send you updated photos via email as the baby grows and gets released.