



What to do if you find a 'lost' baby animal

Most baby animals that appear to be lost are not; the parent is often nearby. In most cases, humans should let the animal be and leave so the parent will return. There are some exceptions. Here is a guide.

When in doubt, call a rehabilitator. Your local animal shelter can help you find one, or check the Web site of the National [Wildlife](http://www.nwrawildlife.org) Rehabilitators Association, <http://www.nwrawildlife.org>.

BABY RABBIT

Leave it alone if:

- It's at least as big as a tennis ball and [eating](#) grass.
- It's in a nest and the mother is caring for it. Check by placing a couple of light twigs across the nest and coming back the next day to see if they've been disturbed.

Call a rehabilitator if:

- You've checked as above and the nest is abandoned.
- The nest has been destroyed, such as by a dog.

BABY SQUIRREL

Leave it alone if:

- The mother is attending to it. Baby squirrels can fall from trees and be uninjured.

Call a rehabilitator if:

- You saw it attacked by another animal.
- It is following people around.

BABY BIRD

Leave it alone if:

- It's mostly covered with feathers.
- You see parents caring for it.
- It's hard to catch; if it can get away from you it's probably [healthy](#).

Call a rehabilitator if:

- It is injured or was attacked by a cat.
- It is sitting in the open asleep.



- If you see no parents taking care of it after going away and giving them a chance to return.

BABY DEER

Leave it alone if:

- It is lying quietly and is not being bothered by flies. The mother may have left it alone while she grazes.

Call a rehabilitator if:

- The baby is not moving to get flies off it; it may be ill or injured.
- You know the mother is dead - such as a fawn found beside a dead adult.

NOTE: Do not attempt to approach a deer over about 15 pounds; both you and the deer may be injured. Deer can kill an adult human! In all cases, if an animal is obviously injured, with a broken limb or bleeding, call a rehabilitator.