



GUIDE TO WILDLIFE

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Please note that it is illegal in Maryland to have any wildlife as a pet.

Debunking Wildlife Legends

Birds will abandon the nest/young if you touch the babies. NOT TRUE!

Songbirds have no discernable sense of smell. If you are able to place a fallen baby bird back into its nest, please do so. DO NOT hover about the area. Your presence is why parents stay away.

Mammals will abandon their young if you touch them. NOT TRUE!

If you return the young to the nest and then leave the nest alone, mom will still care for them. DO NOT hover about the area.

A fawn lying quietly by itself is abandoned. NOT TRUE!

Mom places her fawn in a quiet spot in the predawn hours and then leaves to feed for the day. The fawn lies quietly to not draw attention to itself. If it is lying there uninjured and there are no flies, LEAVE IT ALONE.

A deer with spots is a baby. NOT ALWAYS TRUE!

While it is true that babies do have spots, they will keep them until they grow in their winter coat 5 months later. A fawn born in May will still show spots in September when it is 4 months old and about 45 lbs.

If you do not see a mother rabbit, she has abandoned the nest. NOT TRUE!

Mom only visits her nest twice a day, once in the early dawn hours and again in later evening when things are quiet.

Cow's milk is ok for non-cow babies. NOT TRUE!

Cow's milk is ONLY good for calves. In all other species it can cause severe diarrhea. The only milk that is truly best for each species is the milk from their mother. We have formulas that we can use, but mom's milk is best.

A turtle in the road needs care. NOT ALWAYS TRUE!

Turtles are very territorial and sometimes roads just happen to fall in their territories. If you see a turtle in the road and you want to help, simply place it on the side of the road in the direction it was going. If you see the turtle was hit by a car then it needs help.

Inexperienced people trying to raise squirrels will feed them what they believe is healthy food, assuming that because the animals are eating they are doing fine. However, comparison with the healthy baby squirrels in the bottom right shows that these squirrels are actually starving.

Source: NWRA Wildlife Rehabilitation Bulletin, Volume 25, No. 1, Spring 2007, pages 19 - 20