

Baby Animals – March 2009 Classroom Reader

Please join the Wildlife and Education Departments on Saturdays and Sundays at 2 pm throughout March to learn more about baby animals, as well as to receive handouts that you can distribute to your students, neighborhood associations and other groups.

I found a baby bird. What do I do?



(Image taken from <http://www.enr.state.nc.us/upclose/pages/DENRsustainabilityMay.html>)

Baby birds found on the ground are not always as abandoned as they appear. Birds rarely abandon their young, so it is quite likely that the parents are somewhere close. If the bird has a good bit of feathers, a stumpy tail, and can hop around on its own, it is a **fledgling** and it needs to be left alone. It can be put into the top of a shrub if there are predators present. If it does not have any feathers, it is a **hatchling**. A substitute nest can be made for it by using a small woven basket and pine straw. Put the nest in the tree nearest to where the bird was found at a level that can be safely reached, then leave the nest alone. Constant checking can deter the parent from returning. Attempting to take care of a baby

bird yourself is not the best solution. It is illegal to raise an orphan without a permit, newly-hatched babies must be fed every 15 minutes, and no human could ever do as good a job as the parents would. **It is a myth that birds can smell human scent on their babies.**

I found a baby squirrel. What do I do?

(Image taken from <http://oaklandanimalservices.wordpress.com/2008/03/05/baby-squirrel-season/>)

Baby squirrels can easily be returned to their parents. Fill a small woven basket with pine straw, put the baby squirrel in it and cover the squirrel lightly with another layer of pine straw. Then attach the nest to the nearest tree to where the squirrel was found at a level that can be safely reached, then leave the nest alone. The mother will usually come and retrieve the baby and return it to the original nest or another one if the original has been destroyed. (Squirrels construct 4-5 nests simultaneously and move the babies every few days to a new nest.) Constant checking can deter the mother from returning for the baby. Taking care of the squirrel yourself is not a good idea. It is illegal to raise an orphan without a permit and no human could ever do as good a job as the parents would. Squirrels, like most mammals when they are young, are easily acclimated to humans. However, it is illegal to keep them, they do not make good pets, and their being used to humans would make them unable to survive in the wild.



My dog found a rabbit nest. What do I do?



(Image taken from <http://blog.petfinder.com/petfinder/bunnies1.jpg>)

The first thing to realize is that mother rabbits do not sleep with their offspring, so it is in fact, very unusual to find an adult rabbit at a nest. The nest is simply a shallow depression, no more than 8" deep, that is lined with fur and covered with grass clippings, pine straw and the like. Mother rabbits only nurse their babies 2-3 each day and 2-3 each night. If the baby is uninjured it can be gently placed back into the nest with its siblings. Cover the nest back over and lay dental floss or yarn in a tic-tac-toe pattern over the nest. When the mother comes to nurse, the yarn or floss will be disturbed, so you can rest assured that she has returned to care for them.

Teacher Resources

Enchanted Learning Names of Baby Animals:

<http://www.enchantedlearning.com/subjects/animals/Animalbabies.shtml>

Check out this website to find what you call different species of baby animals! This is a great way to introduce new words to your students and teach them science. Includes animals from Alligator to Yellow Jacket!

Time for Kids: <http://www.timeforkids.com/TFK/media/teachers/pdfs/2003S/030307BPt.pdf>

Time for kids has great information perfect for you and your students about animals and their young! Includes background information, poetry, activity sheets and more!

Reading List

Amazing Animal Babies

by Christopher Maynard - Science - Random House Childrens Books, 1993.

Full-color photographs. Learn about fish that hide from dangers in their mother's mouth, a salamander that never grows up, and a whale that weighs as much at birth as 950 humans ...

Baby Animals

More in Zoobooks Series

This book is a simple, light-hearted pictorial of animal babies that is all in cuteness and fun. Kids will 'ooh' and 'ahh' over the new born zebra foal trying to stand, the baby snakes picking out of their eggs, the furry kittens whose eyes are still closed, and much more.

Amazing Animal Babies

by *Maynard, Christopher.*

New York : Knopf : Distributed by Random House, 1993.

This book takes a close-up look at some of the world's most amazing animal babies. Includes excellent photographs and illustrations.