

If You See A Baby Hare, Just Remember: Leave It There!



- White-Tailed Prairie Hares (aka Jackrabbits) are a common urban wildlife species in Edmonton, Sherwood Park, Spruce Grove, St. Albert and surrounding areas.
- Baby hares are born as early as March and as late as September and are fully furred, eyes open, and able to hop around within hours of birth.
- The female hare will leave the young for long periods of time so she does not attract predators to her young. She returns to feed them in the evening and into the night. This is normal.
- Many people who find baby hares alone think they are orphaned. They are not.
- Baby hares commonly “freeze” in the face of danger making caring people think they are lost and scared. This is normal survival strategy.

If You Find a Baby Hare, Leave it Right There!

For more information, or concerns about injured wildlife, please contact the *Wildlife Rehabilitation Society of Edmonton*:

Phone: **780-914-4118** or visit: **www.wildlife-edm.ca**

Baby Wildlife Summary Sheet

BABY JACKRABBITS (WHITE TAILED PRAIRIE HARES)

Every spring, well-meaning citizens pick up baby hares (commonly known as “jackrabbits”) that they believe have been abandoned by their parents.

Contrary to popular belief, adult hares often leave their young alone to avoid attracting predators. Since the animals prefer open fields, humans will often discover them and mistakenly believe them to be abandoned. By removing a baby hare from its hiding place, a person can expose the animal to extreme stress. Unfortunately, hares can be deceptively fragile and this stress often kills the animal.

So what do you do if you come across a young jackrabbit? Large and bright eyes are a good sign that the animal is being fed so in this case it is best to leave it alone. If the animal’s eyes are dull and droopy, the mother may have been hurt or killed. In this case, or if the animal appears injured, please leave the animal alone and call the Wildlife Rehabilitation Society of Edmonton at (780) 914-4118.

Additional Notes:

- Jackrabbit mothers feed their young twice each day- once in the morning, once in the evening.
- Baby jackrabbits have no scent- this is why the mother leaves them alone during the day (predators can smell the mother)
- The babies are moved by the mother every two to three days
- If someone finds a healthy baby (i.e. Big bright eyes) in a dangerous location, they can move it up to 100 feet away. They **MUST** rub their hands in grass or dirt first to prevent their scent from transferring to them. Human scent will attract predators to the baby.

If someone has already picked up a baby hare, they can put it back near where they found it in a quiet, safe place within approximately 24 hours of capture and then monitor. They should not feed it! The mother should not reject it if it has been rubbed down with grass or dirt to minimize human scent. The mother will be looking for it to feed and move to a different place. If they have had the hare for a few days or more, please get them to call us.

If you receive hares at your clinic, and they cannot be put back, please call the Wildlife Rehabilitation Society of Edmonton (WRSE) at (780) 914-4118. If we are closed, please **do not** attempt to give them milk formula. Please warm the animal before attempting to give it fluids (LRS) and keep the animal in a warm, quiet place until WRSE has called you back the following day. We appreciate your support!

NESTLING SONGBIRDS (naked or light down)

Need warmth. If it is out of the nest, the finder can look around the immediate area for nest to try to place back in and monitor for parents.

If the nest has blown down and chicks on the ground - try to get the young and the nest back in the tree; can make a makeshift nest if necessary ** Call WRSE for advice.

FLEDGLING SONGBIRDS (Baby bird out of the nest with feathers)

It is typical for fledgling birds to be on the ground after they have left the nest and before they are able to fly. They need to strengthen their wing muscles and “practice” flying first. This can take 7-14 days. During this time the mother will keep a watchful eye over them to feed them but she is not necessarily in sight. She is trying to wean them and teach them how to survive on their own. It is now when the fledglings are most vulnerable to predation (i.e. cats).

If there are no signs of injury, please advise the finder to leave alone/put back and monitor the situation from a distance. Encourage people to keep cats indoors until the birds are able to fly.

If there are signs/history of injury, contact WRSE.

Additional Notes:

* Birds will not abandon their young due to human handling therefore, it doesn't matter the length of time the bird has been away – it's hunger calls will bring one or both parents back to feed it. Most fledgling songbirds can be picked up and put in a nearby tree for safety though some adult birds will swoop at humans handling their young (notably Blue Jays, Crows, Ravens and Blackbirds).

If you receive orphaned birds at your clinic, and the finder has already attempted to put back or monitor for the parents, please call WRSE at (780) 914-4118. If we are closed, they can be given A/D through a syringe every few hours. Keep the animal in a warm, quiet place until WRSE has called you back the following day. We appreciate your support!

DEER FAWN

Fawns are born a reddish-brown colour with white spots, which provides camouflage when they are lying on the ground. Newborn fawns also have no scent. These two key elements, (camouflage and lack of scent) protect them from predators in the first critical early days of life. They spend much of their time in the first two weeks, lying quietly, waiting for the doe to return to nurse. Does leave their fawns alone for the majority of

the day. This behaviour ensures she does not draw attention to the fawn. The doe returns to nurse the fawns briefly (for a few minutes) several times a day but quickly leaves again. The doe is generally within hearing distance of the fawns.

Additional Notes:

- Fawns are usually born in late May and into June.
- Fawns can stand and walk within 20 minutes of birth.
- Mule deer will respond quickly to a bawling fawn but studies in Alberta have shown that White-tailed deer do not respond or show a weak response to a bawling fawn. White-tailed deer are known to be extremely skittish and will not show themselves to humans even if their fawn is being picked up and is bawling.

Occasionally, a fawn will get into trouble and need help. These times would be:

- 1) When the fawn's mother is known to be dead (i.e. Fawn(s) standing beside dead doe, not merely the absence of doe).
- 2) The fawn has an obvious serious injury or broken bone.
- 3) The fawn has been chased or attacked by dogs or other animals.
- 4) The fawn is crying and the doe does not respond even after you leave the area and observe for at least an hour or more from a hidden vantage point.
- 5) The fawn is found lying in or near a road and is not trying to leave. If found near or on a road, it can be gently placed off the road in tall grass or in a woodlot and monitored.

If a fawn has been collected due to lack of information and the doe is not known to be dead, the fawn can be returned immediately to the area it was found. Do not attempt to feed it or subject it to humans and pets.

All fawn calls should be directed to WRSE at (780) 914-4118.

Red Squirrels

Baby Squirrels: Tree squirrels (Red Squirrel) babies are never alone. The mother is always nearby unless she is hurt/dead. If the nest site has been destroyed, due to storms etc. she will move them. If caller has found baby tree squirrels on the ground ask them to wait a short while and watch for return of mother. She may be moving them to another nest site. If there is more than one baby and/or they are cold to the touch, they should be collected and warmed and ask caller to contact WRSE as soon as possible.

Additional Notes:

- Female squirrels will go to great lengths to retrieve and move their young. They do not abandon easily.

- Tree squirrels will have multiple nest sites.
- Breeding occurs in April and May and young are born 35-38 days later. Another litter may occur at the end of summer/fall.

If you receive orphaned squirrels at your clinic, and the finder has already attempted to re-unite them with their mother, please call WRSE at (780) 914-4118. If we are closed, please do not attempt to give them formula. Please warm the animal before attempting to give it fluids (LRS) and keep the animal in a warm, quiet place until WRSE has called you back the following day. We appreciate your support!