

What Should You Do When you Find Young Wildlife Away from their Parents?

Now that it's springtime, some of our Park users might chance upon a baby bird, turtle or other young wildlife in the park that might appear abandoned. The tendency is to want to help by rescuing it or bringing it home. But here's what the PA Game Commission encourages you to do to keep the young wildlife safe:

Following is an excerpt from a PA Game Commission News Release on April 14, 2008:

SPRINGTIME ALERT: DO NOT DISTURB YOUNG WILDLIFE

HARRISBURG - Whether hiking in the woods, driving through the countryside or simply enjoying nature, Pennsylvania Game Commission officials encourage outdoor enthusiasts to leave wildlife alone and not remove it from the wild, especially young of the year.

"Being outdoors in the spring is an enjoyable way to spend time and learn more about nature," said Calvin W. DuBrock, Game Commission Bureau of Wildlife Management director. "In the coming months, it will become common to find young deer, rabbits, birds, raccoons or other wildlife that may appear to be abandoned. Rest assured that in most cases, the young animal is not an orphan or abandoned and the best thing you can do is to leave it alone."

DuBrock noted adult animals often leave their young to forage for food. Also, wildlife often relies on a natural defensive tactic called the "hider strategy," where young animals will remain motionless and "hide" in surrounding cover while adults draw the attention of predators or other intruders away from their young.

"While it may appear as if the adults are abandoning their young, in reality, this is just the animal using its natural instincts to protect its young," DuBrock said. "Nature also protects young animals with camouflaging color and by giving them little scent to avoid being detected by predators. "Wild animals are not meant to be pets, and we must all resist our well-meaning and well-intentioned urge to want to care for wildlife"

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For the full news release, go to

<http://www.pgc.state.pa.us/pgc/cwp/view.asp?A=11&Q=173953>