

FOXES and COYOTES

Determining if a Fox/Coyote Need Help After-hours

To determine whether a young fox/coyote needs help, answer the following questions:

1. Does the animal appear coordinated?
2. Is the animal avoiding people, or trying to get away when approached?
3. Is the animal growling at you?
4. Parents often leave their young unattended during the day while they are hunting, just because you see them out does not mean they are orphaned

If the answer to any of these questions is “**NO**,” do not approach the fox/coyote. Leave the animal alone until you can contact Greenwood Wildlife Rehabilitation Center at (303) 823-8455. We are open 9 a.m. - 4 p.m. seven days a week. **Remember, foxes/coyotes are rabies vector species and carry other diseases. The animal’s best chance for survival and/or rehabilitation comes from minimum human/pet contact.**

If the answer to any of these questions is “**YES**,” the fox/coyote may not need assistance. Do not approach the animal. Leave the fox/coyote alone. If the animal is still around in the morning, and you are still concerned, contact Greenwood Wildlife at (303) 823-8455. We open at 9 a.m. - 4 p.m. seven days a week.

Reuniting

It is very important to give parents every opportunity to find and continue to care for their babies. If the baby seems healthy, it should be left out for the remainder of the day and one full night for the parents to claim. It is possible that they are still around but have become temporarily separated from their baby.

NEVER use bare hands when handling a baby fox/coyote. Keep all skin covered. Wear thick gardening gloves and wrap a t-shirt or pillow case around the baby. Maintain a barrier between your skin and the animal at all times. If you are bitten or scratched, call your local health department for further instructions.

Step 1: Contain the baby in a box or crate with clean linens on the bottom

If using a medium-sized cardboard box, cut air holes in the top third of the box. If the baby is eight-inches long or smaller and seems passive, you can contain the animal by wearing thick gardening-type gloves, covering up the entire baby with a spare linen or t-shirt, then using the linen to scoop it up into the box, leaving the linen in with the baby. Make sure to cover the babies with spare linens so that they are not exposed to the temperatures and weather. Do not put the box directly in contact with the ground. Use a piece of cardboard, blankets, or leaves under the box to act as insulation. You could also place a laundry basket upside down over the baby (this is more appropriate for bigger babies that may bite), leaving a rock on top of the basket to keep the baby from leaving the area. Make sure the rock isn’t too heavy for the parent to push aside to retrieve her baby. Do not use towels as bedding. Sharp nails can get stuck in the loops of a towel, which can cause injury. Also, be careful not to use linens with holes or large-weave blankets, as these can also cause injury to the animal.

Step 2: Give the baby a source of heat

Babies can die from getting too cold (hypothermia). Additionally, parents typically will not retrieve cold babies. The best thing to use is a heating pad set on LOW under half of the box, because it provides a nice consistent source of heat. You may have to run an extension cord to the area. If you don't have a heating pad, you can use chemical hand warmers such as Hot Paws, a rice sock, or a plastic water bottle filled with hot tap water. The hot water bottle will need to be replaced frequently as it cools. Tuck the heat source under the linens in the box with the foxes/coyotes, rather than placing it directly next to the babies. You should only use heat sources inside the box if the babies are very young, as older babies can bite. No matter what the age, avoid handling them directly to minimize risk of disease transfer.

Step 3: Leave the container in the area where the baby was found

If you have seen the parents, place the box along their route where you think they would encounter it. Otherwise, put the box as close as possible to where the baby was found, as the parents will be most likely to look for it nearby. If using a box without a lid, place a flat piece of cardboard over half the box to give the baby some shelter from sunlight, light rain or snow.

What if it rains or snows? In heavier rain or snow, try placing a plastic bin on its side and tucking the box inside for shelter. In the case of stormy weather, keep the baby in the box and bring it inside until the weather clears; parents won't be looking for it in the middle of a storm. As soon as the weather clears, put the baby back out where it was found.

Step 4: Check to see if the parents have retrieved the baby

Babies should be left for 24 hours, even if found during the day. Parents are most likely to retrieve their babies when there are fewer people around. Stay far away from the area so that you do not scare the parents. Return to check the box periodically. Hopefully, the parents will return and take their baby back to the den.

If the baby has been out for a full night and the parents have not retrieved it, contact Greenwood Wildlife Rehabilitation Center at (303) 823-8455. Keep the baby in a securely closed container with air holes and continue to offer a heat source.

NO FOOD OR WATER!

People often think that feeding an orphaned baby will make it feel better, but doing so can actually endanger its life. Here are the reasons why:

1. If the animal is dehydrated, emaciated, or suffering from trauma, it won't be able to digest food. If it tries to do so, it could bloat or go into shock.
2. Baby animals can easily inhale food or liquid into their lungs by accident, a situation which can quickly lead to pneumonia and possible death
3. Foods that are not a normal part of the animal's diet, like cow's milk or other milk replacers, can cause serious digestive problems.

Transporting

1. Make sure that the box containing the animal is secure on the seat or floor of your car.

2. Keep the car warm and quiet (no radio, minimal talking) while you travel. Avoid sudden stops and sharp turns.

3. NEVER let anyone, especially a child, hold the animal on his or her lap during the trip.

It is very important to think first about what the injured animal needs and the fact that contact with people is stressful for the animal. Once the animal arrives at a rehabilitation center, it will be treated by experienced staff and volunteers who will ensure that it receives the best care possible.

Nuisance Fox/Coyote (READ THIS BEFORE CONTACTING PEST CONTROL COMPANIES)

Contrary to popular belief, live-trapping a wild animal and relocating it elsewhere is not a good way to solve problems with wildlife. In the State of Colorado, you must get permission from Colorado Parks and Wildlife to trap nuisance wildlife. While it may seem like a humane option, it usually ends up being a slow death sentence for the animal. It also leaves your property vulnerable to ongoing wildlife conflicts, and here is why:

1. Wild animals removed from their home territory have trouble adapting and often can't survive in their new surroundings.
2. Babies are usually left behind and will die without their parent's care.
3. It doesn't work moving one animal out because it just opens up space for another one to move in.

Baby foxes/coyotes left behind after both parents have been relocated may or may not be orphaned and in need help. Call Greenwood Wildlife Rehabilitation Center at (303) 823-8455.

Use humane harassment to encourage foxes/coyotes to move the den:

Sight-Sound Harassment – place the following items near the den opening:

- a. **A bright light.** A motion activated light is ideal, but any powerful light will do. If the light is used near a structure, you may wish to enclose it in a wire cage so that it doesn't come in contact with flammable material.
- b. **A radio.** Tune the radio to an all-talk station. The sound of human voices is threatening to wildlife. The radio should be as loud as possible, but does not have to be so loud that it keeps you or neighbors awake.

Contact a humane wildlife removal service.

Bugs and Beyond at (303) 746-1129

The Critter Man at (720) 219-8041

Jack Murphy with Urban Wildlife Rescue at (303) 340-4911 or www.urbanwildliferescue.org (FOR ADVICE ONLY)

Coyotes and Foxes Suffering from Mange

Both of these species are commonly affected by sarcoptic mange, a condition caused by an infestation of microscopic mites that burrow into the skin of the animal, resulting in an intensely itchy rash. Scratching can lead to the characteristic hair loss and thickened, crusty appearance to the skin. Although the sarcoptic mites are a common parasite which results in minimal harm to their host in low numbers, severe infestation causes secondary problems for the affected animal, such as significant hair loss, painful bedsores, infections, hypothermia (cold), and as their condition deteriorates, severe

emaciation and dehydration. Foxes or coyotes affected by mange can be treated by a licensed wildlife rehabilitator, but they don't always need to be treated. Call Greenwood Wildlife Rehabilitation Center at (303) 823-8455 if you are concerned.

Sarcoptic mange is a zoonotic disease, meaning that it can be transferred to humans and pets. This condition in humans is called scabies. Generally, mange is a fairly species-specific parasite. In order for the parasite to survive, it needs exactly the right environment. Mange mites that live on foxes or coyotes do not normally thrive on healthy human hosts. These mites also cannot survive long in the environment with any host. Animals and people whose immune systems may be compromised are most at risk of contracting sarcoptic mange. Outdoor pets with high levels of exposure, such as those sleeping in the same area where the affected animal has been sleeping, may be at a higher risk. Contact your local veterinarian with any concerns regarding your pet.