

## Keep Wildlife Wild

Wisconsin's year-round outdoor activities bring people outside to enjoy the natural environment and have an opportunity to view and appreciate wildlife resources. Wild animals are valued by many, and it's important to observe them at a respectful distance to keep them wild and allow for their life in the wild to continue.

During the warmer months of spring and summer, the frequency of human-wildlife encounters increases, especially those involving baby animals. While most of these encounters are harmless, there are times when well-intentioned people interfere in wildlife situations because they incorrectly assume a baby animal is orphaned.

*Continued on back*

## Volunteer Wildlife Monitoring

Study Wildlife up Close (Visit [dnr.wi.gov](http://dnr.wi.gov) and search by program name)

- Great Wisconsin Birdathon
- LoonWatch
- Mussel Monitoring Program
- Odonata Survey (dragonfly & damselflies)
- Operation Deer Watch
- Water Action Volunteers (stream monitoring)
- Wisconsin Bat Monitoring Program
- Wisconsin Frog and Toad Survey
- Wisconsin Marshbird Survey
- Wisconsin Turtle Conservation program

## Resources

Visit [dnr.wi.gov](http://dnr.wi.gov), search by these key words

- Keep Wildlife Wild
- Born Wild (video)
- Orphan Wildlife Fact Sheet (PDF)
- Wisconsin Natural Resources Magazine Articles: Keep the "wild in wildlife" (2010); Here's to Your Health (2011); Keep the 'wild' in wildlife (2013)
- EEK Critter Corner - Leave Wild Animals in the Wild - environmental information for kids.
- "I Found a Baby Mammal, Now What?"



A fawn at home in nature.

## Project Wild Activities:

- Can Do! (Identify and design a project to solve problem involving wildlife in their community)
- Enviro-Ethics (develop and use a "personal code of environmental ethics")
- Ethi-Reasoning (assess dilemmas concerning wildlife and natural resources)
- Ethi-Thinking (examine activities that are harmful to wildlife and the environment)
- Everybody Needs a Home (analyzing human homes vs. animal homes)
- Too Close for Comfort (human behavior in shared habitats with wildlife)
- We're in This Together (shared human & wildlife habitat needs)
- What's Wild? (distinguish between wildlife and domesticated animals)
- Wild Bill's Fate (legislation affecting wildlife)
- Wild Words (careers: Naturalist, Wildlife Rehabilitator)

More on  
p. 2



## Additional Info: Five Reasons to Keep Wildlife Wild

1. **Stress:** Wild animals view people and domestic animals as predators and are highly stressed by the sights, sounds and smells of being in close proximity to humans or domestic animals. This stress can cause serious health problems, and even death, for a wild animal.
2. **Diet:** Wild animals have specialized dietary needs that are not easily met in captivity. Baby wild animals especially require a specific, complete diet; otherwise they are at a high risk of suffering serious nutritional deficiencies that can leave them deformed for life. Do not feed a wild animal 'human food items' because non-natural food items will most likely cause more harm and will not provide nutritional benefits.
3. **Disease:** Wild animals carry many different diseases and parasites, some of which are transmissible to domestic animals and even humans.
4. **Habituation/non-natural behavior development:** Wild animals need to learn normal social behaviors from their own species. Wild animals that learn non-normal behaviors from humans or domestic animals will likely not survive if they are released because they have not learned the correct survival skills, they have lost their natural fear of humans and predators and they may be abnormally habituated to human activity. As baby animals grow into adults, they can still demonstrate dangerous wild animal behaviors that can threaten human and domestic animal safety.
5. **It's illegal:** Most wild animals are protected under state and federal laws and cannot be taken from the wild or possessed by unauthorized citizens. Raising a wild animal as a pet is not only against laws and regulations, but it is not doing the right thing for the animal. Wisconsin's captive wildlife regulations allow a citizen to possess a wild animal for up to 24 hours for the purpose of transferring that animal to an appropriately licensed individual, such as a licensed wildlife rehabilitator or veterinarian. Even though wild animals are cute, they should not be viewed as pets.

## Activities (Continued)

- Wild Work (careers: examine careers related to wildlife management)
- Wildlife is Everywhere (wildlife exists in every corner of the planet: microscopic to macro)
- Working for Wildlife (careers: simulated job fair and interviews)

## Wild Work

### Careers

- Naturalist and natural resource educator
- Wildlife Biologist: [EEK page](#)
- Wildlife Rehabilitator: [DNR Rehab Directory](#)
- Wildlife Health & Rehabilitation: [DNR web page](#)

### Wisconsin Project WILD Contact Information

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