I found a baby mammal! What should I do?

Is the baby mammal a rabbit, deer fawn, seal pup or opossum?

NO  

YES – See reverse

Is the baby mammal hurt or sick? (Bleeding, vomiting, shivering, lethargic, attacked by cat/dog?)

NO  

YES

Can you find the nest or den? Is it intact?

NO  

YES

Place the baby in a surrogate nest (see below), close to where it was found and off the ground (preferably in a tree), out of the sun, rain, etc.

Keep all pets and people away and watch from a distance.

Place the baby in the nest or den (wear gloves).

Keep all pets and people away and watch from a distance.

Are the parents visiting the nest/den?

NO  

YES

Call a wildlife rehabilitator.

Leave the area. Baby is fine.

Call a wildlife rehabilitator.

To find a licensed wildlife rehabilitator, contact:

- Washington Department of Fish & Wildlife  
  360.902.2936
- PAWS  
  paws.org or 425.412.4040
- Washington Wildlife Rehabilitation Association  
  wrawildlife.org
- National Wildlife Rehabilitators Association  
  nwrwildlife.org
- Your local animal control

NOTE: It is illegal in the state of Washington to possess a wild animal without a permit unless you are transporting that animal to a licensed wildlife rehabilitator.

How to make a surrogate nest

1. Find a container such as a small box.
2. Fill the box with leaves, paper towels or a clean, soft cloth.
3. Place the nest in the tree or bush closest to where the animal was found, out of the sun and rain, as high up as you can safely manage.
4. Place the animal(s) in the nest (wear gloves) and leave the area.

See reverse side for:

- How to safely contain a wild animal
Baby Rabbit
If the nest is still intact, place the baby(ies) back into the nest and cover with twigs or leaves. The nest will be a shallow depression in the ground, lined with fur, usually located under brush or other form of cover. Leave the area. If people or pets are present, the mother will not return. The mother visits the nest at dawn and dusk.

If the baby rabbits are at least four to five inches long, able to hop, have their eyes open and ears up, and there are no visible signs of injury, leave them alone. They are old enough to be on their own.

Deer Fawn
Mothers normally leave their babies alone while they forage for food. If the baby looks cold, hungry, diseased, or confused, or if dogs, other animals, or people threaten his safety, or if you found the dead mother, call a licensed wildlife rehabilitator, or Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife. (See section “To find a licensed wildlife rehabilitator in your area” on page 1.) Otherwise, leave the baby alone and leave the area. The mother will not return if people or pets are present.

Seal Pup
Mothers normally leave their babies alone while they forage for food. If the pup looks cold, hungry, diseased, or confused, or if dogs, other animals, or people threaten the pup's safety, call the Northwest Marine Mammal Stranding Hotline at 1.800.853.1964, managed by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) Fisheries department. They will dispatch an expert to evaluate the pup. Otherwise, leave the baby alone and leave the area. The mother will not return if people or pets are present.

Never attempt to rescue a seal yourself. Doing so may endanger both you and the seal, and may also lead to heavy fines under the federal Marine Mammal Protection Act, which prohibits people from harassing, disturbing or capturing marine mammals.

Virginia Opossum
Young opossums who are five to six inches long (excluding the tail) are large enough to be independent from their mothers. If you find an opossum five to six inches or longer who does not appear to be injured or in distress, leave the animal alone. If you are uncertain of whether or not the animal is in distress, call a licensed wildlife rehabilitator. (See section “To find a licensed wildlife rehabilitator in your area” on page 1.)

How to safely contain a wild animal
1. Find a suitable container (cardboard box, pet carrier). Poke air holes in it, if needed. Line it with a clean, soft cloth.
2. Gently pick up the animal (wear gloves) and place in the container.
3. Place the container on a heating pad on the lowest setting. If a heating pad is not available, use a hot water bottle or a plastic soda bottle filled with hot water covered with a towel. Place it inside the container, next to the animal for warmth.
4. Secure the container so the animal cannot crawl or jump out.
5. Keep the animal in a warm, dark, quiet place. Do not give her food or water. Leave her alone.
6. Take the animal to a licensed wildlife rehabilitator as soon as possible.