



SO YOU FOUND A...

Baby Raccoon

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INTRODUCTION

Before handling any raccoon, please read this [safety information](#) regarding potential zoonotic diseases.

Most raccoon babies (kits) come to Operation Wildlife because their mothers have been trapped and euthanized as pests.

WE CANNOT EMPHASIZE ENOUGH THE IMPORTANCE OF NOT TRAPPING RACCOONS FROM FEBRUARY THROUGH SEPTEMBER. Hundreds of kits are needlessly abandoned and cost Operation Wildlife \$250-\$300 per raccoon in volunteer time and effort, food, and medication.

Raccoon kits are like any other babies and love to explore and play. When they are around four to six weeks old and weigh about two pounds, they begin wandering outside the den while their mothers are out foraging. This is perfectly normal behavior and it should not be assumed that these raccoons are “orphaned” if there is no adult in the immediate vicinity. If any of them are showing any of the below signs of a raccoon in trouble, call Operation Wildlife for further assistance.

SIGNS OF TROUBLE

A kit may be legitimately in trouble if:

- A **dead lactating mother** is found nearby
- It is **weak, lethargic, and cold**
- It is covered with **parasites**
- It is **dehydrated**
- It is **emaciated**
- It is **crying and moaning**

If the baby exhibits any of the signs listed above, it should come to Operation Wildlife immediately.

TRANSPORT

Before transporting the raccoon, read the [safety information](#).

Keep in mind, raccoons can carry rabies without exhibiting any signs of the disease. In other words, they are unaffected, but are contagious to other susceptible animals (you). Because of this, their offspring can be born with the disease as well.

SIGNS OF RABIES/DISTEMPER

If the animal exhibits any of the signs below, keep pets and children away and call Operation Wildlife **IMMEDIATELY**.

- **paralysis**
- **muscular tics, spasms, twitches or convulsions**
- **erratic behavior (calm one minute, hyper the next, then friendly)**
- **excessive salivation (frothing at the mouth)**
- **aggressive towards humans and other animals (wild animals are usually extremely fearful unless cornered and then they will fight)**
- **prolapsed rectum**

CAUTION SHOULD BE TAKEN WHEN HANDLING ANY RACCOON, NO MATTER WHAT AGE OR HOW DOCILE. ACCIDENTS CAN HAPPEN, AND EVEN A NON-AGGRESSIVE NIP THAT BREAKS THE SKIN IS A DEATH SENTENCE. RABIES TESTING IS MANDATORY FOR ALL ANIMALS THAT HAVE CAUSED SKIN BREAKAGE, SO IT IS ESSENTIAL THAT YOU PROTECT YOURSELF NOT ONLY FOR YOUR SAKE, BUT FOR THE BABY'S AS WELL.

WEARING GLOVES, scoop up the baby in a non-terrycloth towel and put it in a cardboard box or pet carrier. Depending on the age of the baby, masking or duct tape may need to be used to keep ornery raccoons from escaping. **AVOID ANY DIRECT CONTACT WITH THE RACCOON AND WASH YOUR HANDS THOROUGHLY AFTER HANDLING IT.**