

Sick, Injured or Orphaned Wildlife

Natural Resources

www.pinellascountyextension.org

At some point you may come across an animal that appears to be sick, injured or orphaned. While the temptation to provide help may be great, often times this causes more harm than good.

Baby animals are frequently mistaken as orphans due to their helpless appearance. It is often difficult to resist providing care for an adorable baby animal, but by handling them you may be endangering the animal. In

most cases, the parent is nearby and is in control of the situation, waiting for you to leave the area. Young animals may be leaving the den or nest to search for food for the first time on their own. During this time, the animal may appear helpless, but this is a normal stage in development.



UF/IFAS Photo: Josh Wickham

Problems arise when people bring “orphans” inside their home. By removing the young animal from its natural environment, it is possible that you have scared away its parents, and will not be able to provide it with the care it needs. Do not try to give the animal any food or water inside or outside the home. Very young animals can inhale the food or liquid, resulting in pneumonia and eventually death. It is nearly impossible for you or even professional rehabilitators to provide the care that infant wildlife requires, so it is best to let nature take its course. Furthermore, it is illegal to keep wild animals as pets without special permits.



UF/IFAS Photo: Milt Putnam

If you observe an animal that appears sick or injured, you should assess the situation before you take any action. If the animal you are observing flies or runs away from you or tries to defend itself, it probably does not need help. Look for signs of sickness (glazed eyes, fly eggs, fire ant bites, irritated eyes or rectum, matted fur or ruffled feathers, visible cuts, twisted or limp limbs, and weakness) before you interfere. If none of these symptoms are present, the best thing you can do is to leave the animal alone and check on it again in a few hours.

Do not try to capture the animal if there is any threat of being bitten or you cannot get in touch with a registered wildlife rehabilitator to walk you through the capture process. Animals that are sick or injured are likely to bite if they feel threatened. Even young animals can inflict a serious bite. Some species carry diseases that can be transmitted to humans with or without a bite.

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If you determine that a sick or injured animal needs help, you should contact the nearest registered wildlife rehabilitator. If the animal is a domestic animal, such as a dog, cat, or horse, then contact the nearest Humane Society, Animal Service, or County Animal Control Office. Here are a few in your area:

Location	Contact	Phone	Address
Clearwater	Humane Society of Pinellas	(727) 797-7722	3040 State Road 590 Clearwater, FL
Hillsborough County	Animal Services	(813) 744-5660	440 North Falkenburg Road Tampa, FL
Hillsborough	Lowry Park Zoo	(813) 935-8552	1101 West Sligh Avenue Tampa, FL 33604
Largo	SPCA Tampa Bay	(727) 586-3591	9099 130 th Avenue Largo, FL
New Port Richey	SPCA of West Pasco Inc.	(727) 849-1048	7734 Congress Street Port Richey, FL
Odessa	Wildlife Haven Rehab. Inc.	(813) 792-8511	12514 Jot Em Down Lane Odessa, FL 33556
Oldsmar	Yvonne Miller-Ferran	(813) 854-5977	922 Old Village Way Oldsmar FL 34677
Pinellas County	Animal Services	(727) 582-2600	12450 Ulmerton Road Largo, FL
Pasco County	Animal Services	(813) 929-1212	19640 Dogpatch Lane Land O' Lakes, FL
Tampa	Humane Society of Tampa	(813) 870-3304	3607 North Armenia Avenue Tampa, FL
Tampa	Christy Holley	(813) 963-2661	5139 Nashville Drive Tampa, FL 33601
Westley Chapel	Lisa Goffrey	(813) 991-4447	27620 Golden Meadow Drive Westley Chapel, FL 32709

If you are unsure of who to contact, call:

Southwest Region (FL)	Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission	863-648-3200	3900 Drane Field Road Lakeland, FL 33811-1207
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Resources:

<http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/uw069>

http://myfwc.custhelp.com/app/answers/detail/a_id/2064/kw/injured%20animal

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