

Keep Wildlife Wild

A Lesson Plan for
Grades 4-6



Bureau of Wildlife Management



and

**Wildlife Rehabilitation
Advisory Council**

WM-658-2017





LESSON ONE
KEEP WILDLIFE WILD
POWERPOINT





Lesson 1

Keep Wildlife Wild

Goal

Students understand the difference between wild and domestic animals and why young wild animals should be left in the wild.

Objectives

Students will be able to:

- Describe the difference between wild and domesticated animals.
- List 4 to 6 reasons why it is not a good idea to capture a wild animal and keep it at home or in one's backyard.
- State that keeping most wild animals--particularly native birds and mammals--is illegal in Wisconsin and most other states.

Subjects Science or Social Science

Grades 4-6

Time 25 minutes

Materials and Equipment:

- **Keep Wildlife Wild** PowerPoint program
- **Keep Wildlife Wild** script (pages 12-25)
- Laptop or other computer to run Microsoft PowerPoint
- Projector with appropriate connecting cables
- Projection screen
- Electrical extension cord



Teacher Preparation:

- Set up and connect computer and projector.
- Load the Keep Wildlife Wild PowerPoint presentation onto the computer.
- Rehearse the printed script prior to class (pages 12-25).

Procedure

Introduce the **Keep Wildlife Wild** slide presentation by explaining that you will be sharing some important information about Wisconsin's wildlife. Spring is the season of the year when young wild animals are out and about. Sometimes these young wild animals may be found without the natural parent nearby. It is important for students to know what steps they should take if they encounter a young wild animal.

You may wish to first review some of the words used in the slide show. We have provided you with a vocabulary list on pages 8-10.

The slide show explains what a wild animal is and how it is different from a domestic animal. The presentation explores some of the adaptations that young wild animals possess to help them survive—even without the presence of their parents. Finally, the program discusses what students need to do if they should encounter a young wild animal in a situation that seems like the animal needs help.

Begin the PowerPoint presentation using the script provided on pages 12-25.

When you are finished showing the PowerPoint, explain that you are now going to provide students with some interesting dilemmas involving some young wild animals common to Wisconsin. Proceed to **Lesson 2: What a Dilemma!**



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Vocabulary

The words or phrases defined below are described in terms of how they are used in the Keep Wildlife Wild PowerPoint program.

Animal Husbandry: *The science of caring for animals.*

Aggressive or Aggression: *An animal that is ready or likely to attack or confront a person or another animal.*

Binoculars: *An optical instrument with a lens for each eye used by people for viewing distant objects (such as wild animals).*

Captive or Capture: *Refers to a wild animal held or confined by people against its will.*

Deformity: *A misshaped part of an animal's body, such as feathers that grow unnaturally outward from a wing.*

Disease: *An abnormal impairment in the function of a specified bodily organ or system in a animal, especially one that produces specific symptoms that make the animal ill and that is not simply a direct result of physical injury.*

Doe: *A female deer or rabbit.*

Domestic Animal or Domestication: *A tame animal or the act of taming an animal through generations of breeding wild animals to bring out specific characteristics desirable to people such as milder personalities that allow the animal to live in close association with people (as a pet or work animal), or animals that are heavier, taller, differently colored or shaped than the wild ancestor. Such animals usually are very dependent on people to the extent that they lose the ability to survive in the wild.*

Enriching or Enrichment: *To improve or enhance the quality of a captive animal's life by providing stimulating experiences that engage one or more of its senses.*



Euthanize: *To put a sick or injured animal to death gently and humanely.*

Fawn: *The young offspring of a deer.*

Fledgling: *A young songbird that is nearly fully feathered. Its eyes are open, it is alert and it can flap its wings though it may not yet be able to fly any distance. It is active and ready to leave the nest.*

Illegal: *An act that is forbidden by law and often punishable by fines or even time in jail.*

Injured: *An animal that is physically damaged and hurt, often from an accident (falling, getting hit by a car, being captured by a predator).*

Kit: *The young of a rabbit, fox, skunk, squirrel or badger.*

Legal: *Allowable under the law.*

License or Licensed: *Permission (through the issuance of an official document) to carry out an action in accordance with the law.*

Nestling: *A naked, downy, or partially feathered baby bird that is too young to be out of the nest. Its eyes may still be closed and its head may be wobbly. It needs assistance and cannot fend for itself.*

Nutrition or Nutritious: *These words are used in reference to providing food to wild animals that is nourishing and full of essential nutrients important for the health and growth of the animal.*

Obesity: *The condition of being grossly overweight.*

Orphan: *An animal whose parents are dead.*

Predator: *An animal that eats meat and that catches and kills other animals (prey) for food.*



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Prey: *An animal that is hunted and killed by another for food.*

Rehabilitate or Rehabilitation: *The act of restoring an orphaned, sick or injured animal back to health.*

Rehabilitator: *A person with the skills, training, and necessary licenses and permits to rescue an orphaned, sick or injured animal and restore it back to health for release back to the wild.*

Scent: *An odor left behind by an animal.*

Sick: *Physically ill and unhealthy.*

Social Behavior: *The way an animal acts with others of its species.*

Temperament: *An animal's (or person's) general attitude towards people and other animals. Temperament traits include, in part, shyness, aggressiveness, protectiveness, prey instincts, and self-defense instincts.*

Veterinarian: *A person trained, skilled, qualified and professionally licensed through an accredited university to treat diseased or injured animals (domestic or wild) to diagnose health problems and to treat the ailments to bring the animal back to good health.*

Wild Animal or Wildlife: *Referring to those animals that are able to obtain--all on their own--all the food, water, shelter and other life requirements they need to live in nature without the aid of people.*





Domestic duckling bigstockphoto.com



A wild Canada Goose gosling bigstockphoto.com



Lesson 1



Wild or Domestic?

It isn't always easy to look at an animal and know if it is wild or domestic. Often, though, domestic animals have louder, brighter, flashier colors than their wild cousins. The sunny yellow farm duckling (upper left) is a domestic animal, whereas the mallard duckling (lower, right) with its more muted, camouflaged colors is a wild animal.



Keep Wildlife Wild Slide Show Script

1. Blank, Black Slide
2. Today, we're going to talk about wildlife and I'm going to help you understand why it is important to **Keep Wildlife Wild**. I hope you come away from this program understanding **one important concept**— that **a young wild animal's best chance of survival is with its mother**...in the wild.
3. Before we continue, I want to make sure you understand what I mean when I talk about a "wild animal." Can you tell if an animal is wild or not, simply by **LOOKING** at it?
4. I'm sure you agree that **THESE** animals are **NOT** wild. Right? Pets, like dogs & cats, parakeets & goldfish and farm animals like the cow, goat, chicken & pig are what we call **DOMESTIC** animals. The word "domestic" simply means "belonging to the home." So domestic pets and farm animals are those animals that live around our homes and farms.
5. Domestic pets and farm animals depend on people for their food, water and shelter.
6. **WILD** animals, on the other hand, are what conservationists call **WILDLIFE**. Unlike domestic animals, wild animals do not directly depend on people for survival.
7. They must find all their food, water and shelter on their own.
8. Watching wildlife is a very fun activity. Sometimes you can get really up close and personal with wild animals.
9. Other times, you need to keep a more respectful distance.
10. Now, you probably already know that some times of the year are better for finding **YOUNG** wild animals than other times of the year.
11. May and June are the prime months when wild animals are busy raising a brand new crop of inexperienced young.

12. It's during these warm spring days that you are most likely to find a young animal out and about....apparently on its own.
13. It's not unusual to have tender feelings for these young animals...particularly if they are cute and fluffy...
14. ...or furry and funny. Such little animals look harmless....they just seem to be crying out "I'd like to play with you! Won't you pick me up?" But **PLEASE NEVER EVER** touch, move or capture a wild animal. In just a moment, we'll learn **WHY** picking up a wild animal is **NOT** a very good idea.
15. If you are ever tempted to capture a young wild animal that you **THINK** needs help, or—**WORSE**— that you would like to take home with you and keep as a pet...**PLEASE THINK AGAIN!**
16. You should never keep a wild animal as a pet. Trying to make a pet from a young wild animal isn't the same thing as keeping a parakeet in a cage or a gecko in a terrarium.
17. When young wild animals appear alone or out of place we tend to think they are either lost or that their mother has abandoned them or that she was hit by a car...leaving her young as **ORPHANS**.
18. Our natural sense of kindness and sympathy drives many of us to want to reach out and rescue them because they appear so helpless. We just naturally assume "They **MUST** need my help!"
19. But stop and think again!
20. Did you know that **MOST** young wild animals you find alone in the wild have **AMAZING** abilities to survive and that they usually are not orphans?
21. In fact, most times their wild parent is nearby, out of sight, anxiously waiting for you to leave the area so she can attend to her young.
22. Did you also know that many wild **MAMMALS**, like this white-tailed **DOE**, **DELIBERATELY** leave their young somewhere they think is safe?

23. Experienced wild mothers instinctively know the best place to hide their offspring. A doe may place her fawn in a quiet meadow filled with tall grasses and fragrant wildflowers...
24. ...where her fawn will rest quietly and remain still all day long.
25. Or she may select a quiet spot on the forest floor, hidden under a brush pile.
26. A cottontail **DOE** will cover her nest of **KITS** with dry grass. Those young cottontails will stay there all day long.
27. Once the wild mothers have placed their young in a safe location, they wander off to feed and rest themselves during the day.
28. By leaving her young alone during the day, a wild mother's **SCENT** drifts away on the breeze making it more difficult for wandering predators to detect her hidden young. Can you spot the young animal hiding here?
29. Only later, under the safety of a darkening sky as the evening sun begins to set, does the white-tail doe come back to feed her fawn....
30. ...or the cottontail doe return to nurse her kits.
31. It's natural for young animals to begin exploring the wild on their own when mother is away.
32. If a young cottontail is fully furred, with eyes wide open, and ears perked up, it is usually able to feed on its own, even if its mother is absent.
33. When songbirds are newly hatched like these day-old bluebird **NESTLINGS**, they are basically naked and their eyes are closed. Such tiny, helpless birds would need the expert advice of a wildlife rehabilitator if you found them out of their nest.
34. But nestlings quickly grow fatter, with more feathers and their eyes eventually open.
35. When songbirds reach two weeks of age, like these bluebird **FLEDGLINGS**, they are fully feathered and their eyes are open and alert. These birds are almost ready to leave the nest.

36. Most of the young birds **YOU** are likely to encounter in the spring will be feathered fledglings hopping around on the ground. Though fledglings aren't fully able to fly right away, they **ARE** at that stage where they are **SUPPOSED** to leave the nest. These birds, with their parents nearby to assist them, are capable of surviving on their own--as long as you keep your pets locked inside your house!
37. So, if you happen to find a young wild animal that you **THINK** may be on its own...
38. ...remember that its mother is very likely nearby.
39. **NEVER** attempt to rescue a young animal on your own...
40. and **NEVER EVER** try to keep a wild animal as a pet. As I mentioned earlier, some young animals, like this fledgling, are **SUPPOSED** to be on their own.
41. Keeping a wild animal captive at home is cause for concern...for several reasons.
42. Put yourself in the position of these rescued raccoon kits. How would **YOU** feel if people or pets suddenly started looking in on you: sniffing you, touching you, licking you, petting you? You'd probably be pretty scared, wouldn't you?
43. Many of us just can't help ourselves. If we see a young animal all alone in the wild, we just want to rescue it. The majority of us are good-hearted; and we mean well.
44. But, stop and think again.
45. Being well-meaning isn't a substitute for being well-trained.
46. It is important to THINK before we ACT.
47. You may **THINK** you would make a great foster parent to a truly orphaned young wild animal, but the reality is that most of us haven't a clue how difficult that job is. A lot of skills and knowledge are necessary for that job. Let's take a look!

48. One of the first job skills a wild parent must have is the ability to build the right kind of nest or den for its young. Wild parents know the best materials as well as the best techniques for building a proper home.
49. Job Skill #2 relates to knowing how much room a wild orphan needs while in captivity to prevent it from feeling cramped or overcrowded. Most well-meaning people simply do NOT have cages of the correct size at home or in their backyards to provide the required amount of space needed to keep wild orphans content as they grow healthy and strong.
50. Being held captive in a cramped cage can be very stressful to a wild animal.
51. Job Skill #3 relates to providing the right kinds of food to keep wild orphans healthy. While we may occasionally provide **OUR** pets with little treats from the cupboard, we don't feed them such food day in and day out, do we?
52. Feeding human food, such as popcorn, white bread, crackers, peanut butter or even cow's milk from the local grocery store can actually—in the long run—do more harm than good.
53. Every wild animal has a very specific diet that is difficult to duplicate under captive, household conditions.
54. **INFANT** wild animals, in particular, need extra care with feeding. Just like human babies, infant wild orphans require **VERY** specialized diets that are complete in nutrition. Wild parents, like this mother robin, automatically know the best kinds of **NATURAL** foods to feed their young.
55. When wild orphans are fed poor diets, they often end up suffering serious nutritional deficiencies that can lead to such health problems as **OBESITY...**
56. And physical **DEFORMITIES**.
57. Natural foods derived from the wild are **SO** much more **NUTRITIOUS** than processed foods—even pet food kibbles—that come from a can or a bag.
58. Job Skill #4 deals with knowing not only **WHAT** to feed a wild orphan, but also **WHEN** to feed it, **HOW MUCH** to feed it and **HOW MANY TIMES** during the day to feed it.

59. How often do you think songbird parents feed their nestlings? Would you believe every 15 to 20 minutes??? And that's from sunrise until sunset. That's probably way past your bedtime.
60. It always turns out that an animal's **NATURAL** mother is **BEST** equipped to provide the most appropriate nutrition, in just the right amounts and at just the right times. That's why it's important to remember that....
- 61. “A young wild animal's best chance of survival is with its mother.”**
62. I call Job Skill #5: **PARTY TIME!** to reflect the fact that young wild mammals and birds like to—and **NEED** to— hang around together...
63. ... at least when the young are being raised.
64. Time spent as a family unit is an example of a type of behavior that scientists call...
- 65. SOCIAL BEHAVIOR.** Most young birds and mammals benefit from being around their parents and siblings.
66. Being together as a family helps young birds and mammals learn the necessary skills of survival. Wild parents can't shout to their youngsters “Look both ways before crossing the road!!!” Instead, the young ones **LEARN** from each other by following their parents and watching what they do.
67. Another form of social behavior that young MAMMALS exhibit is called **PLAY**. [Do you play with your brothers or sisters or parents?]. But play isn't just all “fun and games”...it is **CRITICAL** to the growth and learning of young mammals.
68. Play is what helps young **PREDATORS** learn the art of stalking, hunting and catching their **PREY**.
69. And it's what helps prey animals learn some of the survival skills needed to defend themselves from predators.
70. Social time in a family unit also helps young animals learn what to eat, what time of the year to search for certain types of foods, where the nearest water hole is and where the best hiding spots are.

71. Being held captive all alone in a cage at the home of a well-meaning, though inexperienced, person acting as a foster parent prevents a young mammal. . .
72. ...from gaining key learning experiences it would normally get while in the company of its family.
73. Wild animals held captive learn abnormal behaviors from people and their domestic animals. Unfortunately, these captive wild animals will likely not survive when released back into the wild because they have not learned the correct survival skills. They become used to being around our dwellings and have lost their natural fear of people and predators.
74. Finally, Job skill #6, deals with the development of a wild orphan's brain and its five senses. **WE** develop our brains in a number of ways. Our parents often tell us that reading is a great way of **ENRICHING** our lives.
75. Wild orphans held in captivity also need activities to **ENRICH** their daily lives by challenging them to use and develop all of their senses.
76. But we all know that animals can't read. So **THEIR** enrichment activities need to be in some other form.
77. For instance, fledgling birds and young bats need opportunities to stretch and exercise their wings every day to help them learn to fly.
78. Tree-dwelling orphans, like this little squirrel, need opportunities to climb and scurry about from one tree branch to another.
79. Animals that normally spend time underground, such as badgers, chipmunks, woodchucks or ground squirrels, need opportunities to dig in the earth.
80. Animals that normally live near water benefit by having some supervised time spent in the water even if it's just a small rubber tub or play pool.
81. Hiding food under leaves is an excellent **ENRICHMENT** activity that helps wild orphans develop their five senses.

82. So let's summarize the six job skills needed by any person who **THINKS** they have what it takes to be a good foster parent to a truly orphaned wild animal. [Review the list in your own way.] I hope you see that most of us do not have the required job skills necessary to raise a wild orphan to the point that it can be successfully returned back to the wild.
83. Besides the fact that most of us lack the skills to raise a wild animal, there are a few more very good reasons not to try to do this at home on your own. The first of these has to do with a wild animal's natural personality or temperament.
84. As we mentioned moments ago, mammals learn through rough and tumble play. But what appears as harmless activity when the an animal is very young...
85. ...eventually blossoms into more aggressive behaviors as it grows older and its natural defensive survival instincts kick in.
86. This young raccoon appears meek and mild to the point that you would think it would be easy to pick up...but **BEWARE!!!!**
87. ...even tiny young animals have very sharp teeth, beaks, hooves and claws that they are more than willing to use if you try to capture them.
88. If you've ever raised a kitten or puppy you know they have a natural tendency to nip and gnaw when they are young.
89. You may think such playful behavior is amusing,
90. And you may even tolerate such behavior when your pet is young. But this is unwise, because, if you do nothing now to stop this early expression of aggressive behavior...
91. ...it can blow up into something hurtful, dangerous, and potentially deadly as your pet matures into an adult. Now these are **PETS** I've just been talking about. Domestic pets are usually much more mild-mannered than wild animals.
92. If you thought kittens and puppies were a little nippy, imagine the level of aggressive behavior that wild animals are capable of inflicting on people. Wild animals couldn't survive in the wild if they were gentle and meek.

93. No matter how cute and cuddly young wild animals seem at first...they always grow up.
94. Time and again, well-meaning—though inexperienced—people who try to rescue what they **THINK** is a truly orphaned wild animal—or worse, who try to take one home as a pet(!!!)—quickly come to regret their act of kindness when...
95. ...the young animal grows up and its instinctive defense behaviors kick in.
96. All adult wild animals have a natural tendency to fight. After all, they have to fight every day of their lives just to survive in the wild.
97. More than one inexperienced person handling a wild animal without the proper training and skills has been bitten.
98. Ouch! That hurts!
99. It can be quite an unpleasant and painful experience. I don't want this to happen to YOU!!! Harboring a wild animal—either to try to rehabilitate it, or worse, to keep it as a pet—is **NEVER** a good idea.
100. Being bitten by a wild animal is serious business. If you ever get bitten, tell your parents immediately and have them rush you to the emergency room to be examined as soon as possible.
101. Now let's explore another good reason why you should **NEVER** pick up a wild animal: It's an unfortunate fact of life that **SOME** wild mammals—though certainly **NOT ALL**—may become infected with **DISEASES**.
102. That's very unfortunate— not only for the animal that happens to be ill, but also for you, your family or your pets who may come in contact with the infected animal if you try to rescue it on your own.
103. Not only may your **PETS** contract diseases when they come into contact with diseased wild animals that you may bring home....
104. But you or your family members can become sick to your stomach, get severe cramps, a bad case of diarrhea...or **WORSE!**

105. Not all sick animals appear sick....especially in the early stages of a disease.
106. Merely handling a wild animal...particularly those that live in water....can make you ill.
107. If you forget my cautions and happened to pick up a wild animal, such as a turtle, a duckling, or a frog, then **PLEASE** be **SURE** to **WASH YOUR HANDS** thoroughly soon after you've released the animal back into the wild.
108. An additional concern with diseased wildlife is that they may act as though they have lost all their natural fear of people to the point of appearing tame.
109. It's true that some mammals living in urban areas get used to being around people and they may appear "tame," but if an animal doesn't run away when you approach it, or if it appears confused and disoriented as it wanders aimlessly about, then **BEWARE!** This is not normal behavior and you should leave the area immediately.
110. Now let's discuss one last— but very important—reason why it is a bad idea to rescue wild orphans on your own or—as this family is doing— to keep a wild animal as a pet.
111. It happens to be **ILLEGAL!!!** You don't want to break the law do you?
112. The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources has developed detailed **RULES and REGULATIONS** that set the standards of care and maintenance for wild animals held in captivity.
113. This is the law not only in Wisconsin....
114.but also in most other states. These laws are not intended to make our lives complicated or miserable.
115. These laws are designed for a very good reason: To protect wild animals from neglect and abuse and protect people from injury and disease.
116. There may be times, however, when you may find an animal truly in need of help. It may actually be orphaned, injured or sick. Very few of us want to leave a wild animal to die a slow death if it can be helped.

117. Perhaps you found a young bird that has become tangled in fishing line along the shores of Lake Michigan.
118. Or you may have discovered a young raccoon that looks sick: It has a runny nose and matted eyes, and seems overly weary and exhausted.
119. Maybe your house cat escaped out your back door and destroyed a bird nest, killing both parents and all but a nestling or two.
120. Or, perhaps you found a dead doe alongside the road near your house and later heard a young fawn bawling like a lost lamb. Your heart goes out to this little orphan and you truly believe it needs some kind of help.
121. Hopefully you'll know by now that you should **NEVER EVER** capture a wild animal and try to raise it at home on your own! Most of us lack the necessary job skills; it isn't in the best interests of the young wild animal to be taken from the wild; you might get kicked, scratched or bitten; you, your family and your pets may become sick; and it is illegal.
122. Rather than attempting to rescue a truly orphaned wild animal on your own,
- 123. THINK AGAIN!** Always tell your parents or other adult about the situation....
124.and ask them to contact the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources **IMMEDIATELY.**
125. If you have a home computer with internet access, ask your parents to go online and search for Wisconsin DNR.
126. Click on that link to get to the Wisconsin DNR homepage.
127. Once there, your parents can type in "**Keep Wildlife Wild**" on the search line.
128. This will take them to the **Keep Wildlife Wild** webpage where they will find great fact sheets to help them decide the appropriate steps to take in case the animal you found is truly orphaned. They can also find the list of licensed wildlife rehabilitators to turn to for advice.
129. If you don't have a home computer with internet access, then ask your parents to call the Wisconsin DNR ...

130. It's a toll-free number and fairly easy to remember: it's 1-888-WDNR-INFO. That's 1-888-WDNR-INFO.
131. A helpful DNR employee will answer your parent's phone call and gladly provide them with step-by-step information about how to handle your situation. The DNR customer service representative can also provide the contact information for the licensed wildlife rehabilitators nearest your home.
132. Licensed wildlife **REHABILITATORS** are wonderful people to get to know. They know the best methods for capturing and transporting an orphaned wild animal. Their methods are safe not only for the animal itself, but also for the person handling the animal.
133. If the wildlife rehabilitator cannot personally make the rescue call to your home, he or she can provide your parents with specific instructions on how to safely capture the orphaned animal and transport it safely to the rehabilitator's facility.
134. The rehabilitator may instruct your parents to use heavy leather work gloves to protect hands and arms from sharp talons or claws...
135. ...and they'll explain the best kind of fabrics to use during transportation...
136. Such materials happen to be soft, velvety, non-looped, non-ravelling fabrics that can keep tiny toenails from getting snagged in the cloth fibers.
137. The wildlife rehabilitator will also explain how to build a cardboard crate where you will place the wild orphans.
138. They'll explain how to punch ventilation holes into the side of the box.
139. These holes must be small enough to prevent the animals' escape...
140. ...but large enough to let in plenty of fresh air so that the little orphans can breathe easily while your parents drive them to the wildlife rehabilitator.
141. The law allows you 24 hours to transfer a wild animal from your possession to a licensed wildlife rehabilitator. For the animals' sake, however, make the transfer as soon as possible.

142. Licensed wildlife rehabilitators have lots of experience in the temporary care and treatment of wild orphans or sick and injured wildlife.
143. They have well-stocked and appropriately-equipped care facilities with all the tools, foods, medicines and other materials needed to care for orphaned animals.
144. And they have properly-sized holding pens that conform to Wisconsin's captive wildlife laws.
145. Wildlife rehabilitators maintain close working relationships with local veterinarians who understand wildlife health and disease better than anyone.
146. Wisconsin's licensed wildlife rehabilitators have detailed knowledge about wildlife health and disease, animal behavior, dietary nutrition and animal husbandry. They understand the unique, complex set of needs of wildlife and how best to raise wild orphans to adulthood successfully.
147. When wildlife rehabilitators take in a wild orphan brought to their facility, they quickly assess the health of the animal, then decide on the proper course of action.
148. Their overall goal is to raise wild orphans as quickly as possible and to mend any minor injuries so that the animals may be **RELEASED** back into the wild once they are healthy and strong.
149. If an injury, such as a blind eye or a deformed leg, cannot be mended and it severely hinders an orphaned animal's survival in the wild, then the rehabilitator may keep or find suitable placement for the animal for educational purposes. These disabled animals become **AMBASSADORS** or **OFFICIAL REPRESENTATIVES** for their species when the rehabilitator gives educational programs about wildlife for school or other civic groups.
150. In the most severe cases, if an orphaned animal is too sick or injured for it to either fully recover so it can survive in the wild or be humanely kept for education programs, then the wildlife rehabilitator takes the next sad step that involves gently and humanely euthanizing the animal.
151. In conclusion, remember that spring is the time of the year when Wisconsin's young wild animals are out and about.

152. Young wild animals possess amazing abilities to survive on their own. Just because they are small, doesn't mean they are helpless.
153. Generally, young wild animals found without a parent in the wild, like these red fox kits, are not orphans.
154. Most of the time the wild parent, usually the mother, is hiding somewhere nearby...waiting for you to leave the area so she can retrieve her young.
155. Most importantly of all, if you find a young wild animal you think may be an orphan, PLEASE DO NOT touch it, chase it, capture it, or take it home as a pet.
156. Let's review the reasons why (review the list on the screen).
157. However, if you **DO** find a young wild animal you suspect is truly an orphan, tell your parents and ask them to contact either the Wisconsin DNR or a licensed wildlife rehabilitator for further information on how to handle the situation.
158. No matter how **CUTE** a young wild animal may appear, it is still WILD, with wild--sometimes defensive and dangerous--natural instincts to help it survive.
159. But don't be afraid of wildlife. I encourage you and your family to get outdoors and watch wildlife from a safe and respectful distance.
160. Using binoculars and cameras can help you get a closer look, without interfering with the animals' natural behavior.
161. Won't you please join me in taking a pledge to **Keep Wildlife Wild** because wild animals, like these little stinkers, are happiest and healthiest in the wild.
162. After all, a wild baby animal's best chance of survival is with its mother....
163.in the wild. So let's leave them there.
164. Keep Wildlife Wild!
165. (Credit Slide)
166. (Credit Slide)
167. Thank you!