Keep Wildlife Wild

A Lesson Plan for
Grades 4–6

Bureau of Wildlife Management

University of Wisconsin-Extension

and

Wildlife Rehabilitation
Advisory Council

WM-658-2017
Lesson Two
What a Dilemma!
What a Dilemma!

Goal
The goal of this activity is to help students understand that people can make a variety of personal decisions to take certain actions if they find a young bird or mammal. Generally, the best first course of action is to contact the nearest licensed wildlife rehabilitator or the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources to request assistance and further information.

Objectives
Students will be able to:
• State at least five of the eight Key Messages, with the most important two being 1) Never pick up a wild animal and 2) ask an adult to contact WDNR or a licensed wildlife rehabilitator.

Subjects  Science or Social Science

Grades  4-6

Time  20-25 minutes

Materials
• Copies of the 8 dilemma cards (The number depends on the size of your class)
• Keep Wildlife Wild bookmarks to hand out after the activity.
• Classroom set of the 7 Keep Wildlife Wild Wild Cards.
• For the cartoon portion of the activity, set up your computer and projector to show the PDF cartoon pages on the classroom screen (pages 44-45).
Key Messages

- A young wild animal’s best chance of survival is with its mother.
- Young wild animals (often referred to as “baby” animals) that are found alone are rarely orphans: a parent is often nearby.
- Never chase, touch or pick up a wild animal.
- **Wild animals DO NOT make good pets!** Captive animals are difficult to care for at home or in your backyard:
  - They often become stressed which may lead to illness or even death.
  - Even young wild animals are unpredictable and may exhibit dangerous behaviors that may threaten the safety of people and domestic animals.
  - Every wild animal has specific dietary needs not easily met with food from your cupboard or refrigerator. Wild animals may get sick from eating the foods we eat.
  - Captive wild animals are prone to becoming used to being around your house and yard. They may lose their natural fear of people, domestic animals and even natural predators--behaviors not helpful to their survival when they are finally released back into the wild.
  - While most wild animals are healthy, some may carry diseases or parasites that may spread to people and domestic animals.
- It is illegal to keep wild mammals and birds captive in Wisconsin without proper permits and licenses.
- If you find a sick, injured or truly orphaned wild animal, tell an adult and ask him or her to contact a licensed wildlife rehabilitator or the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources.
- You have 24 hours to legally transfer a wild animal to a licensed wildlife rehabilitator, but please do so as soon as possible.
**Procedure**

Prior to the lesson, reproduce enough of the eight **What a Dilemma!** cards so that each team has a card to discuss. Print these double-sided so that the Dilemma is printed on the front of the card, and the four possible actions are printed on the reverse side. Larger classes may require duplicate dilemma cards.

Ask your school librarian to select a variety of books appropriate for your class that cover such topics as wild animal rescue, the remarkable survival adaptations of common urban wildlife, and careers in wildlife-related fields. A suggested list of potential titles follows the **What a Dilemma!** activity (pages 35-42).

Following the **Keep Wildlife Wild** PowerPoint presentation, explain to your students that you will now present them with a dilemma about a young wild animal. Ask students what the word “dilemma” means. Confirm that a dilemma is a situation in which a difficult choice has to be made between two or more alternative actions. Some actions may be better than others.

As a helpful example to begin the dilemma activity, project Page 1 of the “Keep Wildlife Wild” cartoon (page 44). Ask for three volunteers: two boys to play the part of the two school classmates and one girl to play the role of the DNR employee/mother. As you project the cartoon ask the two boys to recite their lines.

The first page of the cartoon sets up a dilemma for the students to consider. After the volunteers recite their
lines, ask your class what they think should be done with the white-tailed fawn that the two boys have discovered. Do they think the fawn is really scared? Why or why not? How would you know if a young wild animal is frightened?

After a round of discussion, project Page 2 of the cartoon (page 45) on the screen and ask the two boys and the girl to recite their new lines.

Draw your students’ attention to the frame on Page 2 in which the mom (DNR employee) is carrying the fawn to a safer location. What does she have on her hands? (Answer: blue gloves). Why would she be carrying the fawn using gloved hands?

Ask your class what they learned from this dilemma presented in cartoon format. Answers may include:

- Wild animals do not make good pets as do dogs or cats.
- A young wild animal’s best chance of survival is with its mother.
- Mother deer (called does) usually leave their fawns alone during the day and come back to feed them at dawn or dusk.
- It’s wise to ask for advice from a parent or other adult.
- Never pick up a wild animal...let an adult handle the situation.
- Adults should wear protective gloves if they must pick up or move a young wild animal.
- Sometimes wild animals need intervention from people to assist with their survival.
Now, divide your class into small groups. Distribute one dilemma card to each team. Separate teams into various corners of your room. You have two courses of action, depending on your time:

1. Ask each team to select a leader who will quietly read the dilemma aloud. Encourage teams to talk quietly among themselves as they discuss what course of action they should take to resolve the dilemma. After the teams arrive at their first course of action, hand team members a Wild Card appropriate to the focal species of their dilemma. Ask them to read their card and if the information they learned requires them to modify their first course of action.

2. If time permits, ask teams to now turn over their assigned dilemma card. Ask the team leader to quietly read aloud each of the four potential courses of action listed on the back of the dilemma card. As each course of action is read, team members should discuss the pros and cons of that action.

Many birds are adapted to living near people’s homes. American Robins, House Wrens, Eastern Bluebirds, Tree Swallows and even Barn Swallows, shown above, readily raise their young in nests placed on or around our dwellings.
Ask each team leader to carefully formulate his or her team’s response. Now, ask students to return to their assigned seating. Direct each team leader to the front of the classroom to report what his or her team’s dilemma was and what the team decided was the best course of action to take and WHY. Ask the class if they agree or disagree with that team’s decision.

As the classroom instructor, refer to the information presented in the Possible Actions--Teacher Info cards (pages 55-63) to help guide the classroom discussion. This is particularly important if your class had time to discuss each of the four potential actions on the back of their dilemma card. **This information is critical to help your students reach a common understanding about what actions are appropriate** and what actions are not if they find a young wild animal alone in the wild. **Be sure your students know that they should NEVER chase, hold or pick up a wild bird or mammal by themselves.** Instead, they should tell an adult about the wild animal situation and ask the adult to contact the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources or a licensed wildlife rehabilitator.

Finally, ask the students the followup question presented in the Note section on the Possible Actions--Teacher Info cards.
Activity Extension: The After Word
Critical Reading and Thinking Skills

After your presentation of the Keep Wildlife Wild PowerPoint slide show and the What a Dilemma! activity, give each student a Keep Wildlife Wild bookmark. Review the information on the back of the bookmark with your class.

Encourage students to show their bookmark to their parents and ask them to keep the WDNR webpage information and phone number handy in case they ever need to contact a local wildlife rehabilitator for information on how to handle a situation with a wild animal.

Misinformation may sometimes be presented in books and magazines about how to interact with wildlife, depending on the author’s personal beliefs. This activity extension encourages students to visit the school library and check out one of the books on rescued wildlife, adaptations of young wild animals, or wildlife-related careers that your school librarian has set aside for your class. Ask your students to read their selected book with a careful and critical eye, keeping in mind the main points they learned in the lesson today (they can refer to the back of their bookmarks for a quick reminder of these points). Do the authors of their selected books provide accurate information to readers? What actions taken by the book’s main characters follow the information as presented in the Keep Wildlife Wild slide show? Which actions go against the main points of Keep Wildlife Wild?

The following list of books has been included simply based on the information presented in on-line descriptions of each book’s content. Age levels may vary, but most books should be appropriate for grades 4-6. Ask your students to keep a critical eye on how accurate the information is presented compared to what they learned in the Keep Wildlife Wild lessons.
Suggested List of Books

Animal Hospital: Rescuing Urban Wildlife by Julia Coey
This book describes how injured and orphaned wild animals are rehabilitated and cared for after being rescued from perilous situations. It follows the activities of an urban animal rescue facility and the efforts of the trained professionals that rescue, treat, rehabilitate and release the animals. Students will learn about the amazing wild animals that they may encounter in their neighborhoods. Even the most recognizable have fascinating traits. They will get tips on how to protect and support urban wildlife, and learn what to do if they encounter an animal that needs help. Exciting real-life stories include animals in North America, as well as describe international efforts that encourage conservation and awareness.

The Animal Rescue Club by John Himmelman
Jeffrey, Beaner, Raymond and Mike--they are the Animal Rescue Club. If a squirrel is caught in the mud, an opossum in a gutter, or a goose with a wounded foot, these youngsters are off to the rescue. The creatures are taken to an animal hospital where an adult oversees the animals’ care. After the wildlings have recovered, the children release the creatures back into their natural habitats. This story is based on real events. Although an author’s note explains that it is dangerous to approach injured animals and that wildlife rehabilitators must be trained and licensed, adults do not assist with the rescues and no mention of training is made in the narrative. The images in the story contrast with the warnings: a youngster rides his bike with a squirrel peeking out of his backpack, a boy totters on a high ladder with an opossum clinging to his shirt, and a girl puts her arms around a huge goose that is pulling her hair. While this book features characters that do important work with courage and competence, issues about safety and the proper treatment of wild animals make it a good book to discuss as a class using the information learned in the Keep Wildlife Wild Lesson Plan.

Animal Rescue Team: Gator on the Loose! by Sue Stauffacher
Meet the Carters: Mr. and Mrs. Carter, 10-year-old daughter Keisha, five-year-old Razi, baby Paolo, and Grandma Alice. Together, they run Carters’ Urban Rescue, the place you call when you’ve got an animal where it shouldn’t be. In their first adventure of this series, there’s a baby alligator at the city pool, which will seriously interfere with opening day, especially Keisha’s cannonball practice. So it’s up to the whole family to figure out what to do with the poor guy who has no business hanging around Michigan.
Keep Wildlife Wild

Lesson 2

Animal Rescue Team: Special Delivery! by Sue Stauffacher
Keisha and her family are just sitting down to Saturday-morning breakfast when the phone rings. Uh-oh! There seems to be a skunk at the community garden, and it’s dug a hole under the shed. At the same time, Mr. Sanders can’t deliver the mail to a certain house because crows keep dive-bombing him when he gets near the mailbox. Time for the Animal Rescue Team to spring into action! This time they’ve got two mysteries to solve: What could crows have against mail delivery? And what really dug that hole at the community garden—as Mama knows, it’s too big to have been dug by a skunk. Once again, it’ll take the whole team, along with help from some new friends, to sort out what, and who, is creating all this mayhem around town.

Animal Rescue Team: Hide and Seek! by Sue Stauffacher
The Carters’ have another problem to solve in this third installment of Animal Rescue Team. In this book, it’s autumn in Grand River, and that means getting ready for Halloween. As Keisha and her pals prepare for the school’s annual Halloween parade, the Carters are getting ready for trick-or-treaters. Unfortunately, the phone rings one morning. A young deer’s curiosity has gotten the best of him. He was enjoying a treat of birdseed inside a plastic pumpkin when his antlers got caught! Now he’s wandering through the neighborhood with a pumpkin on his head. What’s a deer to do? And how do you get a plastic pumpkin off a deer’s head when you can’t catch it?

Animal Rescue Team: Show Time! by Sue Stauffacher
The squirrels at Mt. Mercy College are getting too friendly—they’re frightening the students, making the nuns jumpy . . . and they’re super messy. It’s time to call the Animal Rescue Team!

Wildlife Rescue by Jennifer Dewey
Grades 4-6. An engaging picture of wildlife rehabilitation. From beaver kits to deer to great horned owls, the dedicated staff at the Wildlife Center in Espanola, New Mexico, headed by veterinarian Kathleen Ramsay, deals with an array of injuries and situations. Readers learn about the circumstances that land the various creatures in the center, about its operations, the kinds of surgeries that are performed, and the monitoring and medicating of the patients. Part Two focuses on “baby season,” a time of year when many orphans are taken in. The effects of imprinting are explained in detail—how humans as “mothers” can present difficulties when later setting the animals free. The last section, “Return to the Wild,” tells of the various nature reserves that take in once-injured creatures and protect them, and describes the joyous occasion of releasing three birds of prey into the wild. This well-written book, illustrated with many clear, full-color photographs, will prove interesting to anyone curious about this timely subject.
About the Wildlife Rescue Series by Diane Haynes
When you carve a city out of a rainforest, you can be sure the animals are going to need somebody on their side. In this series of books, reluctant heroine Jane Ray is that somebody. The series explores the challenges and rewards of wildlife rescue and rehabilitation. The books are packed with fascinating facts and interactive resources including volunteer opportunities and animal rescue how-to’s.

Wildlife Rescue Series: Crow Medicine by Diane Haynes
This book opens under the impending threat of West Nile virus. Jane Ray’s favorite animals at the Urban Wildlife Rescue Centre (UWRC) are the juvenile crows—mischievous tricksters with blue-black feathers and an appetite for all that sparkles. But the inexplicable deaths of crows in the city, public fear and media frenzy culminate in the center’s policy to euthanize all crows admitted to it, in order to protect staff and volunteers from the deadly disease. Torn between her love for the crows and her loyalty to the center, Jane sets out on a quest to bring a controversial vaccine back over the Rocky Mountains—in time, she hopes, to save the birds. Crow Medicine features natural history, facts about the West Nile virus and Native mythology.

Wildlife Rescue Series: Gaia Wild by Diane Haynes
When a film production company arrives in Cedar’s Ridge to shoot a movie, everyone in the city is excited—except Jane Ray. One of the film stars is not being treated very well: Gaia the elephant is kept in tiny quarters and forced to kneel, walk and trumpet on command. Jane soon learns that Animal Actors Inc. wants to buy Gaia from the local zoo and put her to work, and Jane is determined to sabotage their plans. When the sale falls through and Gaia is scheduled to be euthanized, Jane decides it’s up to her to save Gaia’s life and restore the elephant’s freedom.

Wildlife Rescue Series: Flight or Fight by Diane Haynes
When shy, quiet Jane Ray rescues a drowning seabird from an oil spill in Vancouver’s Burrard Inlet, she finds herself face-to-face with national television cameras—and head to head with the alleged culprit, SeaKing Shipping Pacific. Jane discovers that there comes a time when everyone has to choose between running and taking a stand. Impassioned by the dedication of animal rescue crews working around the clock to save hundreds of oiled birds, Jane volunteers with the Urban Wildlife Rescue Center and begins a campaign urging SeaKing to take responsibility for the spill. Jane grows frustrated by the lack of response, but far from ignoring her, SeaKing executives are growing worried about the vocal young girl. Will they resort to drastic measures to keep her quiet? Jane is going to need all the help she can get from her two best friends—and a couple of surprising allies as well.
Backyard Rescue by Hope Ryden
Ten-year-olds Greta and Lindsay are friends who become involved in caring for injured wildlife in their backyard. Once they start caring for an injured screech owl, word gets around and kids start bringing them all kinds of wounded wildlife: a raccoon, snake, red squirrel and a grebe. The girls research feeding and care of wildlife through books and magazines. They talk with veterinarians, teachers, parents. Then a State Fish and Game Officer comes to investigate and the girls must fight tooth and claw to save their furred and feathered patients from being destroyed. How can something that seems so right be against the law?

A Boy Called Bat by Elana K. Arnold
When his veterinarian mom brings home a stray baby skunk that needs rehabilitation before it can be placed in a wild animal shelter, Bat, who has autism, resolves to prove that he is up to the challenge of caring for the skunk permanently.

Julie and the Eagles by Megan McDonald
Julie and her best friend, Ivy, find a baby owl in Golden Gate Park--and it needs help. At a wildlife rescue center, Julie meets Shasta and Sierra, two bald eagles that will be caged for life, unless money is raised to release them back into the wild. For Earth Day, Julie thinks of a unique way to tell the public of the eagles’ plight. The “Looking Back” section explores the beginning of the environmental movement.

Kit: The Adventures of a Raccoon by Shirley Woods
Born in the hollow of a maple tree, Kit spends his early days sleeping and eating. But the security of his mother’s warmth and milk are soon things of the past as he learns to fend for himself in the wild. His mother teaches Kit and his siblings how to fish and forage, but the young raccoons learn other survival skills through trial and error. Meanwhile, the family is always on the move, as Mama raccoon struggles to keep her family safe from predators. But without success. After Kit’s sisters are killed--one by an owl, another by a car--Kit finds himself on his own, and life becomes even more of an adventure. He’s trapped while investigating a family’s garbage cans and later is chased out of a cornfield by hounds. In the end, he survives it all, finds a mate, and becomes a parent of his own litter.

Amber: The Story of a Red Fox by Shirley Woods
A touching and accurate depiction of the life cycle of a family of red foxes...filled with factual information about foxes without detracting from the excitement and adventure of the story. The author excels at capturing the extreme moments of danger that Amber faces and accurately conveys feelings of suspense.
Black Nell: The Adventures of a Coyote by Shirley Woods
Nell is born into a litter of four coyotes in a den in northern Ontario. Her black fur makes her an anomaly—and also a prime target for hunters. As they grow, she and her siblings learn how to dodge threats from people and wildlife. Sometimes the pups learn from their parents, other times they learn from experience, as when they gobble wild blueberries directly under the nose of a black bear. Other adventures show Nell steering clear of a trapper, escaping a wildfire, and fleeing from a deer hunter. Eventually, Nell must leave the nest. Her quest for food brings her too close to people and she is struck by a car. Caring wildlife rehabilitators nurse her back to health and release her back into a protected wilderness park, where she will be able to find a mate and carry on with her life.

Jack: The Story of a Beaver by Shirley Woods
The world is a dangerous place for a young beaver. Jack, along with his three siblings, learns quickly that even their lodge is not always safe: Bears, wolves, bobcats, and even birds of prey are a constant threat to the young kits. Mother, Father, the yearlings, and their old Uncle all work hard to protect them. Nevertheless, out of the original litter of four, only Jack and his sister survive their first summer of life on the pond. As Jack matures, he quickly becomes a working member of the colony. While he is expected to protect his mother’s new litter, he also learns to fell trees and repair the lodge. One day Jack will set out alone on a long journey of discovery. It is time for him to leave the colony, find a mate, and establish a home of his own.

Rascal by Sterling North
At 11 years of age, young Sterling North found himself the caretaker of a baby raccoon named Rascal. This long-enjoyed Newbery Honor book provides the details of a year in the life of a boy and a raccoon. Set in 1918, Sterling’s father is often absent and perpetually involved in research for a novel about the Fox and Winnebago Indians. Sterling’s mother is deceased, and he is often left to his own devices. Rascal therefore enjoys such comforts as sleeping in Sterling’s bed and attending the county fair. As Rascal ages, Sterling is aware that the raccoon is having normal springtime urges and is not happy residing in the pen Sterling has constructed for his raccoon.

Baby Owl’s Rescue by Jennifer Keats Curtis
Join brother and sister Max and Maddie who just wanted to play baseball one day. They never expected to come face-to-face with a wild animal! What if you found a baby owl in your backyard? Would you know what to do? Where would you go to find help? Includes “For Creative Minds” educational section.
Saving Animal Babies by Amy Shields
These heartwarming stories of animal babies, rescued and nursed back to health by caring people, will pull at the heart strings and make kids realize there’s a survivor inside all of us. Photos document the animal recoveries.

Prince William by Gloria Rand
After a tanker accident occurs near her home on Prince William Sound, Denny discovers an oil-covered, newborn seal on a polluted beach. The baby is rushed to a busy animal rescue center, where dedicated veterinarians and volunteers care for the wildlife affected by the disaster. The girl names the seal Prince William and follows his recovery over the next ten weeks. Progress is made on the beaches too, as cleanup efforts begin in earnest. Finally, Denny is present as the seal is flown to Halibut Cove and released into clean water.

The Eye of the Whale: A Rescue Story by Jennifer O’Connell
On a cool December morning near San Francisco, a distress call is radioed to shore by a local fisherman. He has discovered a humpback whale tangled in hundreds of yards of crab-trap lines, struggling to stay at the surface to breathe. In this true story, a team of volunteers answered the call, and four divers risk their lives to rescue the enormous animal.

Beardance by Will Hobbs
While accompanying an elderly rancher on a trip into the San Juan Mountains, Cloyd, a Ute Indian boy, tries to help two orphaned grizzly cubs survive the winter and, at the same time, completes his spirit mission.

Saving Samantha: A True Story by Robbyn Smith van Frankenhuysen and Gijsbert van Frankenhuysen (Illustrator)
Gijsbert and wife Robbyn team up for wildlife tale drawn from their encounters with the animal kingdom. Told in journal format and rendered in beautifully detailed artwork, the van Frankenhuysenzens give a “day in the life” view as the fox Samantha begins her journey from injured kit to independent adult living on her own. Always respecting the boundaries between the wild and the ways of people and based on years of work as licensed wildlife rehabilitators, Gijsbert and Robbyn recommend readers “do not try this at home.”
Adopted by an Owl: The True Story of Jackson the Owl
by Robbyn Smith van Frankenhuysen and Gijsbert van Frankenhuysen (Illustrator)
For twenty years the van Frankenhuysens have rehabilitated a wide variety of wild critters, from fawns, foxes, skunks, and crows to opossums, raccoons, rabbits, and owls. Some of the animals were injured adults, others were orphaned babies, but all of them were in need of a little help to get them back into the wild. Growing up on a farm, as well as Robbyn’s training as an animal technician, prepared her for many of the medical situations that arose.

I Love You Just Enough by Robbyn Smith van Frankenhuysen, Gijsbert van Frankenhuysen (Illustrator)
When her bus drops her off to begin her summer vacation, Heather is overjoyed with the promise of new adventures. While helping her dad weed the garden, she discovers a baby duckling. She begs to adopt the little fluff ball, but her father warns her about the responsibilities of raising a wild animal, particularly the difficulty of letting the duck return to its natural habitat when the time comes. The title reflects his caution that Heather can love the bird but not too much. In a gentle, compassionate voice, the text details the work and joys of protecting and caring for a wild animal.

Itsy Bitsy and Teeny Weeny by Robbyn Smith van Frankenhuysen, Gijsbert van Frankenhuysen (Illustrator)
Spring arrives at Hazel Ridge Farm that also serves as a wildlife rescue station. As a mother sheep gives birth, the author spies a smaller, almost dead lamb. This lamb is too weak to be accepted by the lamb’s mother, so the lamb is taken into the house. Meanwhile a fawn is dropped off. Two little ones are as easy to tend as one is, so into the house both of the animals go. The lamb is named Teeny Weeny and the fawn is named Itsy Bitsy. Their rehabilitation and extra canine caregivers make for an amusing and interesting telling about rescued wildlife. As the seasons change, Itsy Bitsy longs to join wild animals. At first, the caregiver wants to hold the young deer back. When Itsy Bitsy gets caught in the wire, his caregiver realizes it is time for the deer to join the wild. The book shows caring for orphaned wildlife and the need to treat wild creatures respectfully.
Books on Careers for People Who Love Wildlife:

**Careers with Animals Series: Wildlife Rescue and Rehabilitation Worker** by Ruth Bjorklund
Young readers learn what skills are needed to become a person who is trained to rescue and rehabilitate wildlife in need of help.

**Animal Helpers: Wildlife Rehabilitators** by Jennifer Keats Curtis
Young readers are given a “behind the scenes” look at the work that takes place at four different wildlife rehabilitation centers, where animals are nursed back to health and released back into the wild when possible. Includes “For Creative Minds” educational section.

**Raptor Centers** by Jennifer Keats Curtis
Even powerful birds of prey can get sick or hurt. When that happens, animal helpers at raptor centers come to the rescue! Dedicated employees treat injured, sick, and orphaned animals. They return the birds to their native environment or find homes at education and raptor centers for those that can’t survive in the wild. Follow along in this photographic journal as staff and volunteers come together to care for these remarkable birds.

**I Want to be a Zookeeper** by Dan Liebman
This book shows zookeepers interacting with the animals in their daily routines, providing an engaging look at the job. This short text also provides good quick-reference and good entertainment value for anyone. Finally, this book reads like someone’s own scrapbook.

**I Want to be a Veterinarian** by Stephanie Maze
Ideal for kids who love animals, this book explores the many interesting facets of a veterinary career. Exciting full-color photographs complement intriguing facts about the many different kinds of vets, how veterinary science began, and its future.

**Cool Careers Without College for People Who Love Animals** by Carol Hand
This book explores the job descriptions, education and training requirements, salary, and outlook predictions for careers working with animals that do not require a college education.
Not all young wild animals found without their mothers are orphans. Mammal mothers, in particular, leave their young for much of the day, and return under the safety of darkness to feed their young. Cottontail kits like the ones pictured above, are fed when their mother returns at dawn and dusk. Otherwise, they stay in their nest all day without their mother present.
Hey, I think I see a fawn over there!

Oh... that fawn looks scared...

Awww, poor guy.

I'm gonna go see if I can find the mother nearby.

Cool. My mom works for the Department of Natural Resources; I'll call her to see if we can do anything to help!

No mom in sight, and that fawn is awfully close to the road...

I couldn't find the mother. I bet this fawn is an orphan.

My mom should be here shortly, let's see what she has to say.
Here he is!

Thanks for calling, boys.

I was thinking, because we couldn’t find the mother...

Could we take him home and take care of him ourselves?

Sorry boys,

We shouldn’t do that.

That’s a wild animal,

Its best chance of survival is with its mother.

It’s not like a cat or dog.

His mom is around here, we just can’t see her.

She feeds away from the fawn most of the day to keep it safe...she’ll be back.

However, you’re right that the fawn is too close to the road...we should move it.

Can do!
What a Dilemma!
Student Dilemma Cards

Print off the following eight Dilemma Cards using two-sided printing. The front of each card poses the dilemma. The back of each card presents four possible actions that students may possibly take to resolve the dilemma. Once the cards have been printed, cut each sheet in half. This will give you a total of eight dilemma cards.

A fledgling is a young bird 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. This fledgling robin is at the stage of life when it is supposed to leave the nest. One or both of its parents is probably nearby. Parent songbirds fend for their young for a week or more once the young have fledged.
What a Dilemma!

It’s a May afternoon and you are in the yard playing with your dog. Suddenly your dog goes over to an area, sniffs and digs around a bit and comes back with a baby bunny (called a **cottontail kit**) in its mouth. It drops the kit at your feet. The kit doesn’t appear to be injured--just a bit wet from your dog’s saliva. The kit still has its eyes closed. You look where your dog had just been and find a nest of kits. The mother cottontail doesn’t seem to be anywhere around.

**What would you do?**

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What a Dilemma!

You are in your backyard playing soccer with your younger sister when she accidentally kicks the soccer ball into the woods behind your house. As you enter the woods to retrieve the ball, you discover a baby squirrel (called a **kit**) lying on the ground. The kit does not appear to be injured. It is about 3-4 inches long and its eyes are still closed. As you survey the surrounding area, you see what appears to be a squirrel nest high in a nearby tree. You don’t see any adult squirrels in the area.

**What would you do?**
**Possible Actions**

1. You put the cottontail kit back in the nest, covering it as best as you can. You then leave the area with your dog, and watch from inside the house to see if the mother cottontail returns.

2. You take your dog inside the house and tell your mom who grabs her leather garden gloves. You show her where you found the kit. She carefully picks it up with gloved hands and places it back into the nest. Then she covers the kit with the remains of the nest. She says your dog must be on a leash when outside, until the kits have left the nest.

3. You know your friends would be envious if you show them the kits, so you pick them up and carry them—wrapped in the hem of your T-shirt—into your house. You intend to raise them and keep them as pets. What a neat school science project this will be.

4. You just learned about wildlife rehabilitation in your class. You remembered that the DNR webpage has a list of rehabilitators so you go online and jot down the address of the closest rehabilitator. You then tell your parents who then place the kits in a cardboard box and drive you and the kits to that rehabilitator as soon as possible.

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**Possible Actions**

1. You leave the squirrel kit exactly where you found it, being careful not to touch it and hope for the best.

2. You take the squirrel kit inside your house, put it in a cardboard box with a non-raveling cloth (so it can’t get tangled up) and offer it warm milk using an eye dropper.

3. You tell your parents about the squirrel and ask them to call the WDNR or a licensed wildlife rehabilitator to get their advice.

4. You take the squirrel to school to show your teacher.
What a Dilemma!

It’s a lovely Saturday morning in late May. As you walk to your friend’s house in a wooded neighborhood, you hear a bird scolding near some bushes in a neighbor’s yard. You walk over and find the neighbor’s cat crouched in the shrubs with a young baby bird (called a nestling) in its mouth. Two other nestlings lie dead on the ground. You shoo the cat away. The adult bird has flown off. Searching deeper into the bushes, you locate the plundered nest with one remaining nestling inside. What would you do?

What a Dilemma!

You and your friend are walking home from school together. You are almost home when you notice a baby white-tailed deer (called a fawn) wandering around the neighborhood. It doesn’t look injured and isn’t crying. You don’t see any other deer in the neighborhood. What would you do?
Possible Actions

1. You pick up the nestling and take it to your friend’s house, where the two of you watch it for awhile. You then find a small shrub in your friend’s yard and craft a makeshift nest out of grass and leaves and place the nestling in the nest and leave.

2. You knock on the neighbor’s door and tell him about the bird nest with one nestling in it. His cat has killed two nestlings. You politely ask him to call a wildlife rehabilitator for advice and to watch to see if the parent bird returns. You also suggest that he keep his cat indoors.

3. You quickly run home and tell your mom or dad what happened. You ask your parent to go online and look for the Keep Wildlife Wild website to find the list of wildlife rehabilitators and give the nearest one a call to get advice on what to do.

   4. You take the nestling and the nest back home with you and put it in a cardboard box in a corner of the garage. You then go out and dig worms to feed the nestling. You intend to raise the tiny bird and keep it as a pet.

Possible Actions

1. Scare the fawn away. There are cars and dogs in your neighborhood, and the fawn isn’t safe here.

2. Pet the fawn. It’s really soft, and probably needs your help. It would make a really cool pet. Maybe you can talk your parents into letting you keep it.

3. Go home and tell your parents, so they can call the WDNR or a wildlife rehabilitator for help. The fawn probably shouldn’t be in the neighborhood, but you don’t know what you should do. But your parents probably know!

4. Ignore the fawn. It doesn’t look hurt, and you’ve seen deer walk through the neighborhood before. Its mom probably left it here for safety, and she will be back soon.
What a Dilemma!

One spring day, you are walking with your friends near the pond in your neighborhood park. You hear a peeping sound, and see a downy baby goose, called a **gosling**, wandering on its own on the shore, looking and sounding very distressed. You don’t see any other geese around. **What would you do?**

What a Dilemma!

An early morning spring storm with high winds causes a big old tree in your yard to fall down. No one is hurt, but when you go outside after breakfast, you find three baby raccoons, known as **kits**, on the ground next to the fallen tree. They are small and do not yet have their eyes open. There is no mother raccoon in sight. **What would you do?**
Possible Actions

1. You and your friends rush after the gosling and catch it. You then tell your friends that you’ll accept the responsibility to take the gosling home to raise it by yourself. You know your mother wouldn’t mind.

2. You quickly go home and tell your parents what you’ve found and ask them to call the Wisconsin DNR or a licensed wildlife rehabilitator for advice on what you should do.

3. You and your friends shoo the gosling out into the water where you think it will be safer.

4. One of your friends reminds you that the local petting zoo is nearby, so you take the gosling there and ask the zookeeper to raise it so it can be on display when it reaches adulthood.

Possible Actions

1. You pick up the kits and bring them into your house. Then you go online to see what to feed them so you can take care of them until they are older.

2. You decide to leave them where they are and tell your parents what you’ve found, and ask them to call the WDNR or a licensed wildlife rehabilitator to get advice.

3. You go back inside your house, and watch out your window from a distance to see if the mother raccoon returns to her kits.

4. You call your friends to come over so you can show them the kits. Each of your friends picks up a kit and cuddles and pets it. They are so small, you know they appreciate the extra warmth and attention.
What a Dilemma!

It’s a great May morning and you are playing Pokemon Go in your yard with some friends when you find a mother duck sitting on eggs in a nest under some shrubs. You call your friends over to see and the mother duck flies away. One of your friends touches one of the eggs. What would you do?

What a Dilemma!

It’s June and spring cleaning time. One of your chores is to clean the fireplace. It is full of dust and spider webs. While cleaning, you hear noises coming from inside the chimney. It’s too dark to see so you grab a flashlight and look up. You are startled to see many eyes shining back at you! Panicking to get away from the multi-eyed monster, you quickly find a parent. Together you check out the mysterious creature and find that the eyes belong to a family of raccoons whose mother has decided your chimney makes a great nursery for her babies, known as kits. What would you do?
Possible Actions

1. You've heard that once a person touches an egg or a baby animal its parents will reject it, so you take the eggs home to try to hatch them.

2. You and your friends leave the area right away so the mother duck will feel safe enough to return to her nest.

3. You gather up all the eggs and the nest and move them to a place that you think is safer.

4. You and your friends each pick up some of the eggs and hold them in your hands to try to keep them warm until the mother duck returns.

Possible Actions

1. You decide to wait until the kits have grown and they will naturally leave on their own. You tell your parents about the situation. They decide to bar the opening of the fireplace with plywood. Once the raccoons have left, your dad will put a cap on the chimney to prevent any animals from coming back.

2. You tell your parents you learned what wildlife rehabilitators do. You ask your parents to contact Wisconsin DNR to get the phone number for a local rehabilitator. The experienced rehabilitator will probably give you good advice on how to handle the situation.

3. You figure that smoke will chase the raccoons away and encourage them not to come back. But, you don’t want them to inhale a lot of smoke all at once, so you start a small fire, then make it bigger for more smoke.

4. You believe you can lure the raccoons out with a treat. You grab some sandwich meat from the fridge and hold it in the fireplace to see if the raccoons will climb down and take it from your hands. You'll wash your hands after you've moved them out.
What a Dilemma!
Possible Actions--Teacher Info Cards

Refer to the eight Teacher Info Cards (pages 56-63) that give background information relating to each of the four possible actions for each of the eight student Dilemma Cards. Each Teacher Info Card has a small graphic icon that will help you correspond it to the appropriate student Dilemma Card. As each team leader reports his or her team’s response to the four actions, you, the classroom instructor, should read through the information presented on the corresponding Teacher Info Card. If the team leaders do not give the appropriate answers, use the Teacher Info Cards to share the correct answers with the classroom.

It’s important for your students to understand that they should NEVER chase, touch or pick up a wild animal, even if it is a “cute baby.” Wild animals are well-adapted for survival and they know how to kick, scratch and bite. Some, unfortunately, may carry diseases that may be transmitted to people or pets. Your students should ALWAYS alert an adult and request that they contact WDNR or a licensed wildlife rehabilitator for advice.
Possible Actions--Teacher Info
Cottontail Kit Dilemma

1. No! Children should never pick up a wild animal by themselves, especially with bare hands. Touching a wild mammal with bare hands is a bad idea because wild animals MAY carry diseases or parasites that may be transmitted to people and pets. Young wild mammals are capable of kicking, scratching and biting. Since cottontail mothers return usually at dawn and dusk, watching from a window may prove frustrating and fruitless.

2. This decision has some good points. Taking your dog inside the house and keeping it there is wise because once a dog finds a nest, it will keep pestering the nest and likely harm the kits every time you let your dog out. Keep your dog leashed until the kits have grown and left the nest. Involving your parents is a good thing, too. Children should never try to rescue a wild animal on their own. In this case, the mother knew enough to use leather gloves. Even though she didn't contact a wildlife rehabilitator for advice, she must have learned, somewhere, how to handle cottontail kits.

3. Science project or not, this is definitely NOT a wise decision! It is illegal to keep wild animals as pets. Wild animals do not make good pets. They have special diets difficult to duplicate under captive conditions. As young animals grow up, their defensive behaviors emerge and they become capable of kicking, biting and scratching. Also, sometimes wild animals carry diseases or parasites (even fleas!) that may be transmitted to people and pets.

4. There are some pros and cons to this answer. While trying to locate the nearest wildlife rehabilitator is a great decision, the best decision would be to call the rehabilitator FIRST rather than just assuming the rehabilitator will automatically accept the cottontail kit. Not all rehabilitators accept all wild animals. More importantly, if the kit's mother is alive and nearby, she normally would try to return to the nest to care for its young. If you move the kit away, you've reduced or eliminated the possibility of the kit being raised by its rightful mother. Call the rehabilitator first, and he or she may well direct you to the information provided in decision #2, above.

Note: For further discussion, ask “How can you tell if a mother cottontail is attending her kits overnight?” Answer: The best way of monitoring a cottontail nest is to place long strips of dried grass, small twigs or even construction paper strips in a crisscross pattern over the nest. In the morning, if the pattern has been disturbed but the kits are still in the nest, mother cottontail is taking care of her young. If the pattern hasn’t been disturbed, the mother may have died and the child’s parent should call the local rehabilitator for advice.

For more information, visit dnr.wi.gov
search keyword “Keep Wildlife Wild” or “Rehab”
Possible Actions--Teacher Info
Squirrel Kit Dilemma

1. This is a legitimate option if the weather conditions are mild. However, if it is cold and/or raining, then it would be best to call the WDNR or a licensed wildlife rehabilitator to get their advice considering the specific conditions.

2. Unless directed by a wildlife rehabilitator, it would be best to leave the kit outside near the tree/nest where it has a better chance of being found by its mother. The kit should only be taken inside if directed to do so by a wildlife rehabilitator and with the assistance of an adult. Feeding the kit cow's milk can cause diarrhea, dehydration and even death.

3. Overall, this is the best approach to take. What will the WDNR or a licensed wildlife rehabilitator tell your parents to do? Have your students read the Squirrel Kit Wild Card. They’ll learn that their parents should find a shallow cardboard box and place a non-raveling cloth in the bottom. Then, with gloved hands, they should place the squirrel kit in the box and leave it at the base of the tree that has the nest in it. Everyone can then go inside and observe from a distance to see if the mother returns. Since squirrels are active during the day, it is very likely that you will see the mother squirrel return.

4. No! This option is simply wrong and would not be the correct thing to do under any circumstances. However, if you and your parents follow the steps in #3, you could take a quick photo of the squirrel kit in the box or create a poster describing the steps you took to reunite the kit with its mother. Then you could share the experience with your classmates to help them learn how to Keep Wildlife Wild.

Note: For further discussion ask “What should be done if the mother squirrel does not return after several hours?” Answer: The parents should call the WDNR or a licensed rehabilitator to get further instruction.

For more information, visit
dnr.wi.gov
search keyword “Keep Wildlife Wild” or “Rehab”
Possible Actions--Teacher Info

Songbird Nestling Dilemma

1. No! This is NOT wise. Children should NEVER pick up a wild animal. Nestlings are fragile and can easily be injured. Wild animals may have diseases that people and pets may catch. Moving a nestling or a fledgling from the area in which you found it will make it nearly impossible for the wild parents to locate their young. Moving a nestling (or a fledgling) to a new area may well mean the death of the young bird.

2. Under certain circumstances, this might be a good decision, but only if you know the neighbor very well and your parents would be OK with you approaching him on your own. Ideally, you should involve one of your parents first. It would be wonderful if the neighbor would take your advice to keep his cat indoors. Cats that are allowed to roam kill billions of birds and other small wild animals in the U.S. each year, and many die young. It’s best to leave the area so the parent bird can feel safe enough to return to tend to its young.

3. This decision is wise. Involving adults (parents or teachers, for instance) is a very good idea. Then they may contact a licensed wildlife rehabilitator for helpful advice. If your parents know the neighbor well, they may be willing to suggest that he keep his cat inside so both the cat and wildlife will be safer. With a little effort, domestic cats can readily adapt to life indoors and live a long and happy life.

4. No! This decision is definitely not a good idea. Children should NEVER touch a wild animal because they may carry diseases, parasites or fleas that can spread to people or pets. Most people are inadequately trained to care for a young animal, particularly an infant animal that requires extra special handling and feeding.

Note: For further discussion, ask “What's the difference between a nestling and a fledgling?”

Answer: A nestling is 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. They need assistance and cannot fend for themselves. A fledgling is an older baby bird that has most of its feathers, though its flight feathers may not be fully formed. Fledglings are supposed to leave the nest, often when they are not fully prepared to fly. The act of leaving the nest is called “fledging.” Fledglings will remain on the ground or in tree branches and flap their wings, as they learn to fly. Their parents are busy finding food to keep their fledglings full. If a predator lurks nearby, parent birds will often make noise, flap their wings rapidly and act as though they are injured to try to draw the predator’s attention to them and away from their young. Fledglings usually do not need your help.

For more information, visit

dnr.wi.gov

search keyword “Keep Wildlife Wild” or “Rehab”
Possible Actions--Teacher Info  
Fawn Dilemma

1. This is not an option. Scaring the fawn from the area where its mother placed it in the first place could mean that the mother doe won’t find her fawn.

2. This is not an option. It is illegal to keep wild animals as pets, and it’s not in the best interest of the animal. A wild animal has specific needs that people cannot meet. A young animal’s best chance of survival is with its mother. Also, although you should never handle a wild animal, particularly with your bare hands, it is a myth that a mother will abandon her baby if she smells human scent.

3. This is an option, but not the best option. It is normal for a doe to leave her fawn unattended for long periods of time; keeping fawns hidden and alone is actually an adaptation to protect them from predators. A wildlife rehabilitator or the WDNR will tell you to leave the animal alone.

4. If the fawn is quietly walking around and is not in immediate danger, this is the best option. The mother doe left the fawn in a protected areas and fawns will sometimes get up and move around. The fawn will find its way back to that protected spot. However, if the fawn is in immediate danger from cars or pets, you may get an adult to help you slowly, quietly and gently guide the fawn away from hazards and back to safety, being careful to watch out for your own safety as you do so.

Note: A final point for class discussion is, “What should be done if the fawn seems injured or is making loud crying noises?” Answer: Your parents should call the WDNR or a licensed wildlife rehabilitator for further instruction. If a fawn is obviously injured or has been wandering and making loud crying noises for more than an hour, the fawn may be orphaned. Remember: only a licensed wildlife rehabilitator has the knowledge to care for an orphaned wild animal!

For more information, visit 

dnr.wi.gov
search keyword “Keep Wildlife Wild” or “Rehab”
Possible Actions--Teacher Info
Gosling Dilemma

1. No! This decision is not a good one because children should NEVER touch, chase or capture wild animals, particularly with bare hands. Wild animals may carry diseases, parasites and fleas that can spread to people and pets. Only wildlife rehabilitators or adults under the direction of a licensed wildlife rehabilitator should try to capture a wild animal--once it has been determined that the animal is truly in need of help. Chasing wild animals stresses them, and depending on the animal, it may feel cornered or trapped and may turn on the chaser to defend itself. Also, keeping the gosling as a pet is illegal in Wisconsin. Only licensed wildlife rehabilitators may legally keep wild animals in captivity with the goal of raising young ones to maturity or healing sick or injured wild animals so that all may be returned to the wild.

2. Calling for help is an excellent decision. Even better is to first check out the Wisconsin DNR Keep Wildlife Wild webpage which has links to Wisconsin’s licensed wildlife rehabilitators who can provide expert advice. The DNR webpage also has downloadable pdf files that discuss how to handle a situation in which you find what you think is an orphaned bird, mammal or fawn. If information cannot be obtained from the website, then call WDNR at 1-888-WDNR-INFo for additional help.

3. Chasing wild animals is never a good idea as mentioned in #1, above. In addition, there is no guarantee that the family group to which the lone gosling belongs is even in the area. So getting a gosling to the relative safety of water may not be all that is needed to save it. You should call WDNR or a licensed wildlife rehabilitator for advice.

4. The zoo may not want the animal--then what? At a minimum, the person finding the gosling should CALL first before just capturing it and taking it to the zoo. The zoo may or may not have a licensed wildlife rehabilitator on staff. Licensed wildlife rehabilitators are best trained and equipped for handling truly orphaned animals and they have the goal of releasing the animal back to the wild as soon as the animal is able to successfully care for itself. A life in the wild is a much better ending than being held captive in a zoo.

**Note:** A final point for class discussion is, “What if the gosling is limping?” **Answer:** You should run home and ask your parents to call the WDNR or a licensed wildlife rehabilitator for further instructions. You should not try to pick up the injured gosling or care for its injury. Only licensed wildlife rehabilitators have the training and experience to treat injured wildlife.

For more information, visit
dnr.wi.gov
search keyword “Keep Wildlife Wild” or “Rehab”
Possible Actions--Teacher Info  
Raccoon Kit Dilemma

1. This decision is not a good one. You should never pick up a wild animal and bring it into your house. This is very stressful to the animal. Only licensed wildlife rehabilitators are certified to care for sick, injured or truly orphaned animals. You cannot learn enough about caring for a wild animal by merely reading some information you find on a website; it takes training and experience. Also, Wisconsin law says you have only 24 hours to have a wild animal in your possession. This allows you enough time to transfer the animal to a licensed wildlife rehabilitator who is expertly trained and experienced.

2. Telling your parents about the situation and asking them to contact WDNR or a licensed wildlife rehabilitator for advice is a good decision. Wildlife rehabilitators have the experience to be able to decide the best course of action.

3. Watching a wild animal from a safe and respectful distance is a good decision. However, you may be waiting a LONG time if you anticipate the mother raccoon’s immediate return. She may do so, but only after dark. Contacting a licensed wildlife rehabilitator and asking their advice would be best. They can provide guidance on what to do if you don’t see the mother return.

4. This alternative is not a good decision. You should NEVER pick up a wild animal, particularly with bare hands. Not only can wild animals kick, bite and scratch you, they also may carry diseases or parasites that you, your friends or your pets could catch. Since mammals do recognize human scent, picking up the young raccoon puts it at risk that a predator may smell your scent and discover--and attack--the young one.

Note: A final point for class discussion is, “What if one of the kits is clearly injured?” Answer: Your parents should call the WDNR or a licensed wildlife rehabilitator for further instructions. You should not try to pick up the injured kit or care for its injury. Only licensed wildlife rehabilitators have the training and experience to treat injured wildlife.

For more information, visit
dnr.wi.gov
search keyword “Keep Wildlife Wild” or “Rehab”
Possible Actions--Teacher Info

Duckling Eggs Dilemma

1. No! Taking a duckling egg home to raise is not an appropriate action to take. It is not true that a wild animal mother will automatically reject an egg or baby animal if a person has touched it, leaving his or her scent behind. Most birds have a poor sense of smell. Sometimes inexperienced waterfowl may leave their nest if they sense their nest has been disturbed, but experienced mothers will generally remain faithful to their nest. The other inappropriate behavior is touching the egg in the first place. When dealing with wild animals, it is always best to observe from a safe and respectful distance to determine if help is needed. If a young animal truly needs help, then the person should contact a licensed wildlife rehabilitator as soon as possible. The list of rehabilitators may be found at the website listed below.

2. This decision is best. A wild mother usually remains committed to her nest—if her nest has not been disturbed. It is very likely that she will return if people leave the area as soon as possible.

3. This decision is not logical. The mother duck knows where she put her nest. She wouldn’t have a clue where to look if you move the nest. In addition, by picking up the nest and eggs, you are leaving your scent behind, and while birds usually cannot detect your scent, a prowling predator like a raccoon, fox, or opossum could be inclined to check out the interesting new scent. Leave the nest where it is.

4. This decision is unwise because the mother duck will not return if you are in the area. Also, leaving your scent on the eggs will likely attract a ground predator to the nest. Also, there is increased risk of injuring the eggs if you pick them up.

Note: A final point for class discussion is, “What if you find a lone mallard duckling?” Answer: If you see a lone duckling or multiple ducklings without their mother, stop, look and listen for the mother and other siblings. If the rest of the family is not nearby or does not find the duckling(s) within an hour, please do not attempt to place a duckling with another duck family in the wild. If it is not the duckling's own family, the new “substitute” mother will reject the duckling and may even harm it by trying to drive it away.

For more information, visit

dnr.wi.gov

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Possible Actions--Teacher Info
Raccoons in Chimney Dilemma

1. This action would be a good idea for several reasons. One, there is no direct interference with the wild animal. Two, telling an adult is always right and proper. Three, barring the fireplace with plywood keeps the raccoons from entering the house. Once your wild visitors have left the chimney from the top, then dad or another adult can put a cap on the chimney so no more animals can get in.

2. This is the best idea. Wildlife rehabilitators can offer the best suggestions in terms of encouraging your wild visitors to leave.

3. Not a good idea. Smoking the raccoons out may cause more problems in the long run. Even if mom can get out of the chimney, her kits might not be able to escape and they may die from smoke inhalation or overheating. Sometimes, the adults can’t make it out either and may die trying to escape or by helping their kits to escape.

4. This is not a good decision for a few reasons. First, you are reaching your hand into a raccoon’s personal space. When any animal feels threatened, their first instinct will be to protect themselves, usually in the form of biting. Not only will this hurt, but it may also spread disease! Raccoons are known to carry many diseases, including zoonotic diseases (transmissible from animals to people) such as rabies. Special note: 70% of adult raccoons and 90% of juvenile raccoons carry an intestinal parasitic roundworm, known as Baylisascaris procyonis (pronounced BAY-lis-AS-car-is, PRO-sy-OH-niss). Raccoons living in chimneys often drop their feces onto the floor of the fireplace. Such feces contain the eggs of this roundworm. It is rare for people to become infected with this parasite. However, ingesting the microscopic eggs of this parasite (in contaminated soil or raccoon droppings) can cause serious health problems. Reported disease has primarily been in children and almost all cases were a result of the ingestion of contaminated soil or feces.

Note: For further discussion, ask “What would you do if you woke up one morning and found a very young raccoon kit lying on the floor of a cold fireplace?” Answer: Contact Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources for the list of a local wildlife rehabilitator. The rehabilitator may suggest you place a large piece of plywood against the interior opening of the fireplace and then wait an hour of two. If the mother is alive and well, she will likely climb down and try to retrieve her kit.

For more information, visit
dnr.wi.gov

search keyword “Keep Wildlife Wild” or “Rehab”