



You found a baby bunny - Now what?

Below are great tips to help them!



How to help Eastern Cottontails:

Eastern Cottontail mother rabbits can have three to eight kits in a litter and have three to four litters a year. In Wisconsin, kits (baby Eastern Cottontail rabbits) may be born anytime from the beginning of March through October. Nests are found in shallow depressions on the ground and are covered with soft grasses and are lined with tufts of the mother rabbit's fur. Mother rabbits are very secretive, so they don't draw attention to their nest and feeds her young only twice a day -- at dusk and dawn.

Young rabbits leave from the nest at around 21 days old. By three weeks of age, they are on their own in the wild, though are still very small -- they're only about the size of a softball.

Baby rabbits have the best chance of survival when they are cared for by their mothers.

To find a nest look for a shallow depression in the ground. The nest could be anywhere including the middle of the yard, along a building wall, under a bush, on a playground, in a garden or anywhere that the mother can dig in the dirt. The mother will generally top off her nest with some of her own fur, along with other vegetation such as dried grasses. **DO NOT RELOCATE** the nest to a place you think would be better or safer. A mother will not find her kits if you move the nest.

Healthy kits should be returned the nest. If the rabbit injured (bleeding, broken bones, puncture wounds, been in a cat's mouth, open wounds, etc.) then call the Wildlife In Need Center at (262) 965 - 3090 or your local rehabilitator.



You found a baby bunny - Now what?

Below are great tips to help them!

Important steps to reuniting kits:

1. Place the kits back into the original nest snuggled close together.
2. Cover the babies with any original nesting material and fur that remains. If no original nest material remains, collect some dried grass or other plant materials to lightly cover the rabbits.
3. If you have a trail cam or security camera, point it at nest and check the recording in the morning to watch for mom.
4. If you do not have a camera, use a bright color of yarn to make a tic-tac-toe grid over the top of the nest (photo above.) Or, if there is no chance of rain, place a ring of flour around the nest (photo above). Take a photo of the grid or flour pattern to use to compare to the following morning.
5. Keep pets, kids and people away from the nest location.
6. The following morning after dawn, check the nest. Avoid checking the babies prior to this time because your presence will keep mom away. Is the pattern you made with yarn or flour changed? If the pattern is disturbed, you can feel confident that the mother returned to feed the babies.
7. If the yarn/flour pattern was clearly not disturbed, the kits *MAY* be truly orphaned, and *MAY* need to be taken to a wildlife rehabilitator. Call WINC at 262-965-3090 or your local rehabilitator for advice before picking the babies up.

PLEASE DO NOT FEED OR GIVE WATER TO A KIT.

Information about mowing: It's a good idea to check your yard before you mow; because rabbits are in shallow nests, it's easy to mow the "top" off of their nest, possibly injuring babies. Do not attempt to mow within 10 feet of a rabbit's nest if there are babies present.

Information about protecting the nest: You can protect a nest during mowing by placing a plastic lattice laundry basket upside down over the nest and remove the basket when finished mowing. You can protect the nest from your dog, by placing a laundry basket upside down over the nest from dusk to dawn.