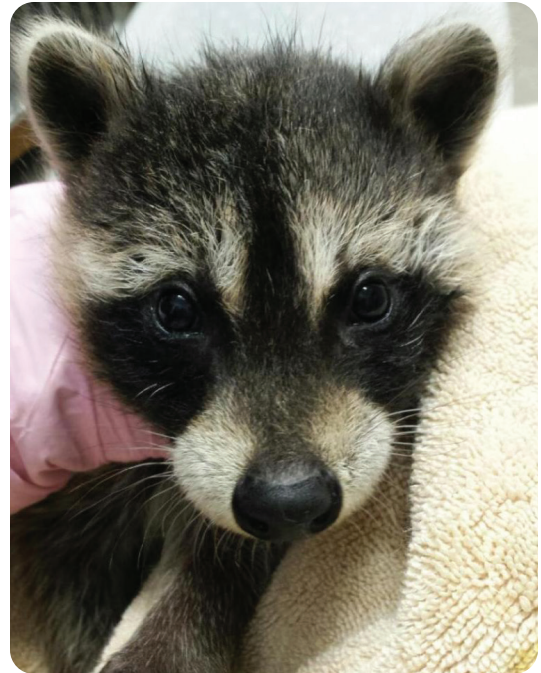




You found a baby raccoon - Now what do you do? Here are helpful tips below!



Helpful tips and information for orphan Raccoons!

Raccoon rehabilitation is a significant commitment of time and expense at the Wildlife In Need Center. Raccoon orphans are with us 4-5 months; all receive a species-specific formula and food as well as special caging to meet their care needs as well as deworming and vaccinations.

Baby raccoons are called kits, and they are typically born in early spring between March and April, but if a mother's first litter does not survive, she may give birth to a second litter as late as July.

There's nothing better than the care of a mother - we work with you to reunite orphans with their mom!

Raccoons raise their kits in small, enclosed dens. While the best locations used to be hollow trees and logs, raccoons have had to adapt to changes humans have made to their environment. Raccoons will often use areas under decks and sheds, and in attics as these tend to be warm, quiet and safe spaces to raise their young.

In these situations, it is recommended to discourage mom from those spaces so that she will move her babies to a secondary den site away from the structure. Please do not use live traps to remove raccoons from these locations, as babies are usually left behind, and the mothers are unlikely to survive translocation (based on current data).

Here are helpful tips to make sure mom and babies stay together and can relocate to a new den.



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Healthy kits should be returned to their mother!

Unhealthy, truly orphaned, or injured raccoon kits should be seen by a licensed wildlife rehabilitator right away. Some signs that a raccoon kit needs help include:

- Bleeding wounds, bruising or broken bones
- Raccoon is surrounded by or covered with many insects (flies, maggots, mites, fleas, ticks, etc.)
- Fly eggs present on animal's fur (fly eggs look like tiny, white grains of rice.)
- The raccoon is cold, limp or unresponsive
- The raccoon was injured by a cat, dog or other predator is repeatedly approaching or following people or pets
- Mom is dead or no longer around. And please note: even though you saw a dead adult or someone relocated an adult, it does not mean that adult was this mother. It's always worth trying at least 1 night to reunite babies and mom.

A few important things to know before reuniting.

- **Please do not offer any food or water to the babies - doing so can be deadly for the raccoon. Hungry babies also cry, and that can alert mom to the baby's presence.**
- The babies see us as a predator - do not play with or excessively handle them.
- A baby's best chance for survival is with the care of its mother!
- Handle the kits as little as possible and protect yourself with gloves. You can use a broom or shovel to gently scoop them into a box or container. Raccoons often have a roundworm (Baylis ascaris) which is dangerous to other species including people. Keep children and pets away from raccoons.



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Steps to reuniting baby raccoons:

1. If the baby still has its eyes closed, it will need a heat source. The raccoon should be warm before reuniting is attempted. To keep the babies warm, use one of the following methods:
 - Fill a sock with uncooked rice. Microwave the sock in 30-second increments until it feels warm, but not scalding hot
 - Fill a plastic soda or water bottle with hot water. Wrap the bottle in a soft cloth or put in a sock.
 - Use hand warmers or a heating pad on low under the container.
2. Make a reuniting box. The container should be deep enough so the raccoons cannot climb out. Small, inactive kits can go in any cardboard box large enough to hold them, with an open lid for mom to climb in.
 - Line the bottom of the container with a soft cloth or natural materials. Fleece, a t-shirt or other materials without loops work well.
 - Place the heat source in the box with the babies. Reheat first if necessary. Be sure the heat source is not in direct contact with the babies by using cloth as a buffer between them and the heat source.
 - If there is more than one baby, be sure they are snuggled together.
 - Larger kits that will crawl out of a box can be placed in something taller, like a laundry hamper or kitchen trash can. These containers are small enough mother raccoon will be able to tip them over to collect her babies.
3. Place the reuniting box in the area the kits were found. If the kits were in your home, place them just outside the house where the mother raccoon has been gaining access into the building. Make sure the access point is securely blocked off before attempting reuniting.
 - If it is raining, the babies will need protection from the elements to prevent them from getting wet. Slide the box inside a trash can on its side, use a trash can lid or storage container lid to partially cover container and hold loosely in place with duct tape or a bungee cord.
 - Leave the area and keep pets and kids away from the reuniting box. You may keep an eye on the box from inside your house, but do not repeatedly go out to check on the box as this will also keep mom away.
4. **Raccoons are nocturnal, so the babies should be left in the reuniting box overnight to give mom the best chance of coming to find them.**
5. If one or more babies are gone, but some remain, mom was likely in the middle of moving the babies. Due to the size of the babies, mom raccoons can only move one baby at a time. If the remaining babies are still warm, allow mom a little more time to finish moving the babies and call your local raccoon rehabilitator for further advice.



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If the babies are all still there in the morning, call your local wildlife rehabilitator for further instructions. In the meantime, reheat the heat source and be sure the babies are still warm.

Please do not attempt to raise the raccoon yourself. It is illegal to do so, and they require very specific care to be successful if released back to the wild. They do not make good pets. Also, they may have parasites or diseases that could be transmitted to you or your pets. Please follow the advice given by your local raccoon rehabilitator or the Wisconsin DNR at 1-888-936-7463 or to find a rehabilitator in your area visit their online directory <https://dnr.wisconsin.gov/topic/WildlifeHabitat/directory.html>.

You can save the lives of baby raccoons by checking for den sites before you cut down or trim trees. If possible, avoid taking trees down between March and September during breeding season. If the tree is a danger and must come down, check for babies in any hollows or cavities before you cut down the tree, and then try to reunite them with mom after the work is done.

What if the mother raccoon nested in my house or RV?

- Encourage mom to move the babies herself by making the current site less appealing.
- Sound deterrent: Play a loud talk radio as close to where the animal is staying as you can. When you see the animal in your yard, make a racket by clapping your hands, yelling or banging on a pan with a wooden spoon.
- Sight deterrent: Reflective objects that move are best, so try shiny streamers or pinwheel that blows in the wind outside the entrance to the animal's den.
- Smell deterrent: Used cat litter, a whole box of moth balls, ammonia soaked rags, synthetic fox, or coyote urine all suggest to an animal that a predator has marked this territory. Especially when refreshed every day these can be very convincing in getting an animal to find a new home.
- Light deterrent: Eliminate the darkness in the den area by adding a shop light or some other bright light source near the entrance to the den.

Once excluded, permanent changes to the habitat are important to prevent another animal from moving into the space. The use of welded wire to close off spaces under a shed or deck, or in the soffit of your roof to prohibit re-entry is key to mitigating future problems.

Thank you for taking the time to humanely evict unwanted visitors in your home or yard.