



You found a tree squirrel - Now what?

Below are great tips to help them!



How to Help Eastern Gray Squirrels and Red Squirrels:

Tree squirrels nest twice a year, in late winter and summer. They commonly have litters of three or six pups. Babies' eyes open at four weeks of age and the young are often starting to explore outside the nest at six weeks of age. They are typically weaned and ready to be on their own at 11-12 weeks of age.

A baby squirrel has the best chance of survival when it is cared for by its mother. Sometimes healthy young squirrels found on the ground are not orphans -- they need help being reunited with their mothers. Often, mother squirrels will "rescue" their fallen or displaced healthy babies by carrying them by the scruff back to the nest.

Healthy babies should be reunited with mom!

Unhealthy babies with wounds, large numbers of fleas or ticks, fly eggs (which look like tiny, white grains of rice), or live maggots, or babies that are cold, limp, or unresponsive should not be reunited. If your pet has injured one or more of the babies, or if a baby has been injured after falling from the nest, those babies need to be seen by a wildlife rehabilitator. Uninjured babies can be reunited with their mothers. If you're not sure if the babies are healthy, contact WINC at (262) 965 - 3090 or your local rehabilitator.

Mother squirrels will generally have a second nesting location available to her if she needs to relocate her babies. If her nest was destroyed or tree was cut down, there is still a good chance that the mother will return to retrieve her babies and take them to her secondary location. Squirrels are good moms, and will often go through extreme measures to move their babies to safety.



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Steps to reuniting baby tree squirrels:

- 1. Be sure the babies feel warm to the touch. Mom will not retrieve a baby that is cold. To warm the babies, 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. It usually takes 2-3 minutes depending on the power of your microwave
 - Fill a plastic soda or water bottle with hot water. Wrap the bottle in a soft cloth or put in a sock. Place it next to the babies.
 - Use instant hand warmers under a layer of cloth near the babies.
- 2. Find the nest: return the squirrel to its nesting tree** - this should be a tree in the immediate area where the squirrel was found. If you don't know which tree the squirrel's nest is in, or if the nest was destroyed, then choose a tree closest to where the squirrel was found. Squirrel nests can either be in tree cavities, or in "dreys" - the big balls of dried leaves at the tops of trees.
- 3. Make a reuniting cardboard box/basket/bucket without a lid.** The container should deep enough so the baby squirrels cannot climb out.
 - Line the bottom of the container or box with a soft cloth or Fleece.
 - 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. This will help keep them warm.
- 4. Place the reuniting container in or under the tree in the area the baby was found.**
 - Securing the container in the tree a bit off the ground will make the babies safer from ground predators during the reuniting attempt.
 - If you are unable to secure the container in the tree, set the box next to the base of the tree on the ground.
 - If it is raining, the babies will need shelter to prevent them from getting wet. To do this, you can put the reuniting box inside an open plastic tote, tipped on its side.
- 5. 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.
- 6. Check the box at dusk.** The babies should never be left out after dark.



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7. If all of the babies are all still in the reuniting box at dark:

- Please bring box of babies in house and keep them warm, dark, and quiet overnight and do not feed them.
- Put them back outside first thing in the morning and give mom until afternoon to retrieve her babies.
- If by afternoon of the second day mom has not come, please call WINC at (262) 965 - 3090 or your local wildlife rehabilitator. In the meantime, reheat the heat source and be sure the babies are still warm.
- If one or more babies are gone, but some remain, mom is likely in the middle of moving the babies. If it is not dark yet, allow mom another 1 - 2 hours to finish moving the babies. If possible, avoid taking trees down between March and September during breeding season.

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