

How to Keep a Wild Animal Overnight

Just as stress negatively affect our health, it also affects wildlife in the same way. Being injured or orphaned is already very stressful for a wild animal, but combine that with being contained and in proximity to people can often be overwhelming for the animal. These instructions are intended to help you reduce stress as much as possible for the animal in order to give it the best chance for survival.



- 1) Remember, wild animals see you as a predator. They are not comforted by your voice or touch. **Please have as little contact with the animal as possible.**
- 2) **Place the animal in a secure, ventilated container.** A sturdy cardboard box with pencil-sized holes in the top works well for most animals. Pet carriers may be used, but wire can cause serious feather damage to birds; always cover the inside of the wire with a cloth. Be sure the container is lined with absorbent, ravel-free materials. Paper towels, newspaper, fleece, flannel or cotton t-shirt fabric all can work well. Avoid using rugs with looped fibers or bath towels as the animal's toenails can become snagged in these materials.
- 3) If the container does not have solid sides, please **cover the entire container with lightweight sheet** or blanket to restrict the visual stimuli for the animal.
- 4) **Keep the container in a warm, dark, quiet place** away from pets, children and noise (including the TV and the radio) until you transport the animal.
- 5) **Keep the temperature comfortable for the animal.** Place the container away from direct sunlight and air conditioning. If the animal is an infant, please provide an additional heat source to help keep them warm. Please 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. Place this next to the animal under a layer of the cage liner.
 - 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 HotHands or other brand of instant hand warmers under a layer of cloth near the babies.
 - Place ½ of the holding container on a heating pad set to low heat. Many heating pads have an automatic-off safety feature so you may need to turn the pad back on every few hours.
- 6) **Do not give the animal any food or water.** Debilitated animals require stabilizing care before feeding. Feeding a starving animal can cause physiological changes that may result in its death. Inappropriate foods or feeding methods can also cause serious health issues for the animal.
- 7) If you don't already have an appointment, please call Dane County Humane Society's Wildlife Center right away at 608-287-3235. The law allows a member of the public only 24 hours to transport the animal to a licensed wildlife rehabilitator, but the sooner the animal receives care the better its chances of successful treatment.
- 8) **Minimize noise** during transport to the wildlife center for your appointment. Please keep the car quiet by leaving the radio off and keeping voices low. For more information about safely transporting wildlife once contained, please click [HERE](#).