

Hope for Wildlife

Dispatch Volunteer Manual

Thank you for your interest in volunteering with the Hope for Wildlife Society. As a volunteer with our organization, it is important to have a clear understanding of our mission, goals, beliefs, and philosophies. You might not necessarily agree with all of them, but as a representative of the organization it is important that you are able to promote Hope for Wildlife and its mission and goals in a professional and courteous manner when dealing with members of the public. This document is meant to provide you with the information necessary to do this.



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Abbreviations Used:

- Hope for Wildlife: HFW
- Hope for Wildlife Rehab Center: the farm, the rehab
- Hope for Wildlife Emergency Hotline (902-407-9453): the hotline
- HFW Dispatch Team: the Facebook group where HFW’s pending rescues are posted and/or the members of the HFW Dispatch Facebook group
- HFW Dispatch Staff: the staff members at HFW responsible for answering the Emergency Hotline and managing HFW rescues and volunteers

About the Hope for Wildlife Society

The Hope for Wildlife Society is a charitable organization providing wildlife rescue, rehabilitation, and environmental education in Nova Scotia. The Hope for Wildlife rehab center is located in Seaforth, Nova Scotia. Since 1997, we have rehabilitated and released thousands of injured and orphaned wild animals representing over 250 species.

In addition to the ongoing provision of care we offer, Hope for Wildlife aims to connect people to wildlife in a positive way through knowledge and understanding. Every year, we assist over 10,000 callers through our wildlife helpline, welcome thousands of visitors to our facilities for guided tours, give hundreds of offsite presentations to community and school groups, and collect a wide range of data from animals treated at our rehabilitation center.

Our Story

Hope Swinimer, Founder and Director of Hope for Wildlife, took in her first rehab animal in 1995 — a robin that had been attacked by a cat. She was working as a manager at the Dartmouth Veterinary Hospital, and the veterinarians at the hospital didn't know what to do with the injured bird, so Hope took it to her home in Eastern Passage and started researching how to care for injured wildlife.

Her knowledge grew, and veterinary staff began referring wildlife-related calls to Hope. Later that year, she took a wildlife rehabilitation course to become certified in Basic Wildlife Rehabilitation from the International Wildlife Rehabilitation Association. Hope and her friend, Lisa Butcher, then developed a plan to create a wildlife rehabilitation center in Nova Scotia.

With just a few cages in the backyard and a room in her house as a nursery, Hope rehabbed about 40 animals in her first year. By 1996, word of this grew and the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) said that what she was doing required a permit; however, such a permit did not exist in the province at that time. Hope met with Doug Archibald, a Department of Natural Resources (DNR) biologist, to figure out how she could become licensed; they used the United States as a model for the rules that would apply to rehabs in Nova Scotia.

During the process, it became apparent that the current property would no longer accommodate the growing number of wild animals in need of care. This led to Hope's relocation to Winnie's Way in Seaforth in 1997, where she finally received her Rehabilitator Permit.

The *Eastern Shore Wildlife Rescue and Rehabilitation Center* became the first privately owned wildlife rehabilitation center in Nova Scotia. As part of her mission to help wildlife, Hope focused her attention on educating the public as well. Her main audiences were children, and Hope welcomed many school and community groups to her home to spread the word about caring for and respecting wildlife in Nova Scotia.

The rehab grew quickly and Hope soon needed help. The first volunteer drive was held in 1998 via an ad in the Chronicle Herald that attracted over 30 people; of those 30, four became committed volunteers. At that time, Hope was taking in about 200 animals per year, but although the property at Winnie's Way was well equipped with a nursery, several small mammal cages, and a few larger enclosures tucked

away in the woods, the demands on the rehab quickly outgrew both the property and its neighbours' welcome.

In 2001, Hope relocated to “the farm” in Seaforth. It was a larger property that would accommodate the rehab's needs and also leave room to grow. Five years later, the *Eastern Shore Wildlife Rescue and Rehabilitation Center* officially became the *Hope for Wildlife Society* (HFW).

Hope for Wildlife's facilities continue to evolve as the demand for rehab services increases—over 4000 wild animals are now taken into care each year.

Our Mission

By connecting people to wildlife in a positive way, through knowledge and understanding, we believe that education through rehabilitation is the key to a sustainable future.

The Mission of the Hope for Wildlife Society comprises three important goals:

- Rehabilitation and Release into the wild of injured and orphaned wildlife
- Education of our children and the general public regarding the importance of conservation of various wildlife species and the ecosystems that sustain them
- Research to develop the knowledge and understanding necessary for conservation and management of wildlife resources in a complex and continually changing biological, social and political environment.

Our Rehabilitation Philosophy

The goal of wildlife rehabilitation is to provide professional care to sick, injured, and orphaned wild animals so ultimately, they can be returned to their natural habitat. Our Rehabilitation Philosophy defines our guiding principles regarding the rehabilitation and release of animals that are admitted for care:

- We believe every wild animal deserves the same level of care and treatment, regardless of species.
- The end goal for every animal admitted is a successful return to the wild. Releasable animals should be maintained in a wild condition (i.e. with limited human contact) and released as soon as appropriate.
- Animals returned to the wild must have a fair chance: an animal should not be returned to the wild if it has an injury or condition that would significantly impede its ability to survive
- We recognize that for most wild animals, a life in captivity is no life at all. An animal that cannot be returned to the wild deserves the dignity of being considered for humane euthanasia

- Any wild animal kept in captivity must be provided with a fulfilling quality of life including adequate food, appropriate shelter, and behavioural stimulation. This may include providing an educational opportunity to people or to other members of its species (i.e. by being a surrogate 'parent')

Why is education an important goal for Hope for Wildlife?

As our mission states, *we believe that education through rehabilitation is key to a sustainable future.* Hope for Wildlife recognizes the growing disconnect between humans and nature. More and more, wildlife, habitat, and the environment in general is exploited, neglected, destroyed, and forgotten. At the very core of our rehabilitation philosophy is the belief that all wildlife species are significant, playing their own important role in the ecosystem. We promote this message when we accept wildlife into care regardless of species. This idea forms the basis of our educational programs to promote awareness, understanding and respect for wildlife by members of the general public. Up to 95% of wildlife incidents are caused by humans (e.g. a bird hitting a window, an animal being hit by a car, etc.). We hope that our educational efforts will help reduce the impact of humans and ideally, the need for rehabilitation services.

What Hope for Wildlife *IS NOT*

The Hope for Wildlife Society *is not* a government agency. Hope for Wildlife is a not-for-profit, charitable organization that depends on donations, grants, and the hard work of volunteers year-round. Hope for Wildlife does not receive regular funding from the government for the operation of the center. Any government funding received by Hope for Wildlife is through funding programs to which Hope for Wildlife has applied. Funding from these programs is never guaranteed and successful applicants are chosen through a rigorous competitive process.

Hope for Wildlife *is not* a zoo or sanctuary. Our goal is to release wild animals back into their native habitats. We believe that keeping a non-releasable wild animal in captivity, in most cases, is a fate worse than death. We do have a small number of education animals which have been carefully evaluated for their suitability to living in captivity as a part of our education program.

Representing Hope for Wildlife

Once you become a volunteer with Hope for Wildlife, your friends, family, and even the general public will soon be turning to you for advice on their wildlife questions. Of course, we want you to have the right answers, but it is important to realize that it takes time and dedication to learn those right answers. New volunteers are often tempted to make guesses and offer what they think is the best advice. Please don't fall into this habit. If you don't know the answer, refer general inquiries to our email (info@hopeforwildlife.net) and urgent inquiries to our wildlife hotline (902-407-WILD [9453]). Similarly, it is important not to try and 'diagnose' an injured animal or make predictions about an animal's outcome. A wrong guess can be very upsetting to the person who entrusted the care of the animal to us, and even cause the public to lose confidence in our organization.

As a first step in arming yourself with the right answers. This manual contains a lot of helpful information, but we also recommend becoming familiar with the information available on our website at www.hopeforwildlife.net, particularly the “Wildlife SOS” section.

Understanding Hope for Wildlife’s Rehabilitation Permits

Any wildlife rehabilitation center in Nova Scotia must have both a provincial and a federal level permit.

The Federal level permit is a Scientific Permit for the possession of Migratory Birds issued by the Canadian Wildlife Service, a division of Environment Canada. It gives Hope for Wildlife permission to care for migratory bird species under the Migratory Bird Act.

The Provincial level permit is a more species-specific Wildlife Rehabilitation Facility Certificate issued by the Nova Scotia Department of Natural Resources (DNR).

Our permit *does not* include: adult white-tailed deer, lynx, fisher, otter, martin, moose, coyote, or bear. If these animals are brought to our facility by members of the public, Hope must notify DNR that these animals are in HFW possession. As a volunteer with Hope for Wildlife, it is important to act within the regulations of our permits. While we would not turn these animals away if they were brought in by a member of the general public, Hope for Wildlife is not legally allowed to go out and rescue these animals.

There are some animals that require permission on a case by case basis; please ensure that whenever you drop off an animal to Hope for Wildlife or a drop off location, that a staff member is aware what animal you are dropping off.

At Hope for Wildlife we are aware that there is still some “at home rehabbing” going on in our province. While we appreciate the efforts put in by these volunteers, Hope for Wildlife cannot allow at home rehabbing by our volunteers. Anyone who wishes to be a part of our team cannot conduct at home rehabbing as this puts HFW at risk of losing our permits as a wildlife rehab.

Hope for Wildlife’s Stance on...

Hunting and Trapping

Hope for Wildlife recognizes the historical and cultural significance of hunting and trapping in Nova Scotia as well as the positive contributions made to the conservation of habitat and species by outdoorsmen and women who participate in these activities. As such, Hope for Wildlife does not publicly advocate against these activities, and has a mixed opinion of hunting and trapping.

We believe that hunting for food, when done in a responsible manner, (in which the animal is stalked and killed quickly) is an acceptable means of procuring food and that all parts of the animals killed for food should be used fully (i.e. skins used for clothing, bones used for fertilizer, etc.) We do not believe that hunting strictly for sport teaches the same respect for nature as hunting for sustenance and are not

in support of sport or “trophy” hunting (hunting to procure animal parts (skins, bones, claws etc.) for collections or displays).

Hope for Wildlife sees the use of snares and leg-hold traps as outdated. Snaring and leg-trapping have a higher potential for prolonged suffering, as well as deaths and injuries caused from bycatch (trapping the wrong animal). We recognize that this is a common activity in the province and also recognize that many trappers practice this activity in a manner which seeks to reduce prolonged suffering and bycatch. We will therefore respect a person’s choice to participate legally in these activities, however we will seek to discourage the use of snares and leg-hold traps through education and awareness of their unintended side-effects, which are often seen at HFW.

Live-Trapping and Relocating Wildlife

Many people believe that the best way to deal with an unwanted animal is to live-trap it and release it in a remote area far away. While this is something that happens frequently in Nova Scotia, it is neither a humane nor effective solution.

Removing the animal may temporarily remove the source of a homeowner's frustration, but it does not fix the overall problem. There is a reason the animal is choosing to be there – it could be a good source of food, or a nice cozy den – if you remove the animal but not the reason it's there, the removal will only serve to open up prime habitat for another animal to move in. An open and undefended territory also gives the impression of excessive resources to any newcomers. This can result in the newcomer having increased litter sizes, and thus, more animals on your property.

During the spring and summer months, mammals such as raccoons, skunks, and foxes will choose a den to have their young. Relocating an adult, from late spring to early fall, almost guarantees that orphans will be left behind.

Animals require sufficient resources of food, water, and shelter to survive. Some animals are territorial, which means when they establish a territory with access to good resources they will defend it from other individuals. If an animal is relocated, they may not be able to compete with local individuals to gain access to these resources, which can result in starvation and/or death for that animal. Some animals rely on food stores and colonies for the winter. When these animals are relocated, they cannot survive without these previously established resources.

Moving an animal from one location to another can unintentionally transfer disease. An animal can be a carrier of disease without showing any symptoms, and when moved, can spread the disease to a new population.

Hope for Wildlife believes that promoting awareness, understanding and respect for wildlife is a more effective and long-term solution than simply getting rid of the animal. Addressing what aspect of your property is attracting an animal is much more effective than removing that animal.

HFW approves the use of live traps solely for the purpose of catching an animal with the intent to help. Many times, sick or injured animals are too shy for humans to get close enough to catch – especially foxes and raccoons. In these instances, we will set up live traps to try to catch an animal. Once that animal is caught and rehabilitated, we will release it back where it came from.

Cats

Hope for Wildlife recognizes that feral cats are a huge problem in Nova Scotia. There are many hard-working organizations who dedicate their resources to providing a solution to this problem, and Hope for Wildlife commends these efforts. As an organization focused on wildlife, our contribution is to provide education and promote responsible pet ownership which is to the benefit of cats and wildlife. We believe responsible pet ownership includes:

- Having pets spayed or neutered
- Supervising pets when they are outdoors. We believe that both cats and dogs SHOULD NOT be allowed to roam free outside.
- Supervising pets when outdoors reduces their own risk of injury from cars, wildlife, people, and other pets
- Providing an outdoor enclosure or leashed experience for your pets allows them to enjoy the outdoors while keeping your pet and wildlife safe

Domestic cats are exceptional hunters and prey on small mammals and birds. Feral and outdoor domestic cats have contributed to the extinction of at least 33 bird species. Estimates from well-cited scientific studies suggest that cats kill between 100-350 million birds per year in Canada¹. Studies conducted to uncover these results used fecal samples from pet cats. On average, pet cats only bring home 23% of their captured prey, which means most captures can go unnoticed by pet owners. Birds who nest on the ground, and young birds who are unable to fly, are significantly at risk of predation by cats. The best way to combat this issue is to provide education to cat owners and supervise our pets while outdoors.

There are many resources available about the effects of cats on wildlife and how to transition an outdoor cat into a happy indoor cat. Here are a few:

<https://ecologyaction.ca/issue-area/9-helpful-tips-and-resources-happy-allied-cat>

<https://abcbirds.org/program/cats-indoors/>

[http://www.keepanimalssafe.ca/learn more about the issue.htm](http://www.keepanimalssafe.ca/learn-more-about-the-issue.htm)

Answers to some “Frequently Asked Questions”

“By rehabilitating wildlife, aren’t you interfering with nature?”

Yes and No.

No: 90-95% of the animals admitted to Hope for Wildlife are directly or indirectly injured, orphaned, or ill due to some sort of human interference or activity – i.e. hit by car, struck a window, attacked by a pet, suffering from an illness secondary to a human-related injury (e.g. starving and full of parasites after being hit by a car and unable to hunt). HFW feels that it is human’s responsibility to fix the problems that we have caused. In this respect, HFW is not interfering with nature – we are reversing some of the interference that humans have caused.

Yes: in some cases, we are interfering – when a hurricane blows a wayward bird off its migratory route, we will help that bird recover and get it back where it belongs. When an owl abandons the weaker of her 2 chicks, we will rescue the chick and raise it. These cases of true “interference” are few and far between, and we stand by the conscious decision we make to help 100%. Humans interfere with nature in a negative way every day – with our pollution, destroying habitat to build homes, finding oil, mining minerals, etc. – we make no apologies for helping wildlife out, even if it wasn’t the way nature had intended. Additionally, while the number of successful releases increase every year, this is a “drop in the bucket” terms of numbers, and are too small to have a significant or lasting effect on the species or population level.

“Why do you rehabilitate [insert ‘unpopular’ species here] (raccoons, starlings, mice)?”

We rehabilitate all species because we believe in the importance of teaching people that all of nature is important, not just the “pretty” or rare species. We live in a world where nature is disposable, and this attitude is not sustainable. We are promoting respect, tolerance, and understanding of our natural world and trying to teach people to live with wildlife instead of fighting against it.

“If this animal can’t be released, can I keep it?”

No. As rehabilitators we know that for a wild animal, a life in captivity is no life at all. It is our responsibility as rehabbers to ensure that an animal which cannot be successfully rehabilitated and released be provided the dignity of a humane death which is as quick, painless, and stress-free as possible.

To take a wild animal and confine it to a cage for the rest of its life – even the very nicest of cages – is often a fate worse than death. Wild animals fear humans – through instinct and through learning to fear them from their parents. Making a wild animal live with a human means it lives in fear and stress for the rest of its life.

A permanent injury may mean permanent pain, adding another level of suffering. This is compounded by the fact that providing ongoing pain medications would be stressful to the animal as it would have to be constantly exposed to people.

Wild animals have specific behaviours and needs which are barely understood by the experts. No matter how nice a habitat someone can provide for them, it will still never be the same as the wide-open world.

On top of that, it is illegal to keep any wild animal as a pet in Nova Scotia. Hope for Wildlife has special permits, separate from our rehabilitation permits, to keep our wild education animals.

“So what about Hope for Wildlife’s education animals? Does this mean they are living a life of stress and suffering?”

No. There are always exceptions to the rule. All of Hope for Wildlife’s wild education animals have been admitted under circumstances which allow them to lead happy and comfortable lives around people. All animals were very young when they came into our care and have been raised with humans. They still exhibit many behaviours which are instinctual to their species, but they do not fear us, and in many cases are very social with humans. We have the tools, resources, and knowledge to provide our education animals with an excellent quality of life. Additionally, these animals are acting as ambassadors

for their species, which are important to help teach the public about the importance and appreciation of wildlife. We do not make the decision to keep an animal lightly, and every animal is thoroughly evaluated on a case-by-case basis.

Privacy Policy

Confidentiality

Like any professional organization, what happens at Hope for Wildlife is our private business and should be treated as confidential. This includes information about our patients and their progress as well as other staff and volunteers. Likewise, any information collected by Hope for Wildlife about our volunteers (i.e. contact information, medical info, etc.) is kept confidential.

Your contact information will only be shared with other volunteers, with your permission. We like to share this information in case another volunteer is in need of assistance with a pick-up (e.g. is in your area and needs assistance catching an animal, or can only drive the animal part way and is looking for someone to bring the animal the rest of the way). This information can include your name, phone number, and address. If for some reason you do not want to share this information, it is not required to be a volunteer with HFW but can make our dispatch process much easier!

Taking Videos and Photographs

Hope for Wildlife reserves the right to request copies of any photographs or videos taken of Hope for Wildlife patients for use in our public displays or training presentations.

Please do not share photographs or videos of rescued animals, or animals being rehabilitated on social media.

Taking videos and photographs is permitted for *personal use only* under the following circumstances:

- During a release: photos and videos may be taken of an animal as it is being released
- Education Animals: Flash-free photos and videos are permitted of our public education animals
- Free-range animals: photos and videos may be taken of any of our free-range domestic birds (geese, peacocks, etc.)
- By special request/with permission: outside of the above circumstances, please ask for permission if you would like to photograph or video a particular animal. Hope for Wildlife may also ask a volunteer to photograph or video a particular animal for identification or diagnosis.

In many cases, taking photos and videos causes a great deal of unnecessary stress and unwanted human contact for the patients in our care. For this reason, taking photographs and videos is absolutely not permitted under the following circumstances:

- White-tailed deer: WTD fawns imprint to humans extremely easily and it is therefore important to minimize human contact with them as much as possible. The only people permitted to approach and enter the WTD unit are those directly involved in their care, and only as often as

absolutely necessary. Volunteers and staff responsible for the deer are not permitted to take photographs unless specifically asked to do so by Hope.

- Non-permit species: Hope for Wildlife does not have permits to rehabilitate adult white-tailed deer, lynx, fisher, otter, martin, moose, coyote, or bear, and must notify DNR of any non-permitted animals that are admitted. In some circumstances it may take a day or two for Hope to be able to reach someone (i.e. weekends, holidays, phone tag, etc.). If DNR hears of HFW having a non-permit animal before they get the message directly from Hope, they may interpret it as HFW trying to 'hide something'. This could result in HFW losing our permits and thus we would be unable to conduct any work rehabbing animals. Video or photographs of non-permit animals are absolutely not allowed in order to avoid such misunderstandings.
- While on a Rescue: These patients are often in serious or critical condition and need to be kept calm and quiet. Also, whether they are showing it or not, they are under an incredible amount of stress. The combination of being injured, then caught and handled, and then transported in a loud humming machine (your car) can in itself be enough to cause a severe stress response. Adding a human face and a camera into the scenario can set their recovery back days or weeks, or even cause death. However, a volunteer may be asked to photograph or video a particular animal for identification or diagnosis purposes while on rescue.

Posting of Information, Photographs and Videos on the Internet

All videos and photographs of our patients should be for personal viewing only.

If you have captured a unique video or photo you would like to share, please submit it to our Facebook Administrator for posting (facebook@hopeforwildlife.net). This ensures that only appropriate videos/photos are posted online. Any postings will be fully credited to their owner and once posted you are welcome to share, tag, or comment on the video.

Posting videos of the education animals are permitted, except those which are not yet on our captive wildlife permit. Any native species which have been admitted within the past year are not likely to be on the permit as it is only renewed once per year.

As indicated in our privacy policy, what happens at Hope for Wildlife is our private business and should be treated as confidential, including information about our patients and our volunteers. We are aware that there are already thousands of photographs and posts about HFW on the internet, however as our organization grows it has become clear that it is important for us to define some specific guidelines about what can and cannot be posted. The reasons behind this are due to the public's ability to take these posts out of context and gain the wrong impression of what we do at HFW or what we are about. As a charitable organization that relies on public support and which works under specific government guidelines, our public image is **extremely** important to our continued success. We realize that it is impossible to cover every circumstance, however we hope the following guidelines will help volunteers understand what is appropriate posting.

Comments such as Facebook Posts and 'Tweets': Comments posted should focus on you personally and your experience and be positive in nature. They should not focus on other volunteers, details of a specific patient, or be negative or defamatory.

Inappropriate post: There are too many babies at Hope for Wildlife. People should stop bringing them in!!

- Explanation: We never want to discourage people from using HFW's services. Things can indeed get incredibly busy in the spring and summer, so instead put a positive spin on your post and take the opportunity to share some knowledge

Appropriate alternative: I had a busy day volunteering at Hope for Wildlife today. There are lots of babies out there right now – visit Hope for Wildlife to learn some great advice on keeping these critters out of your sheds and attics!

Inappropriate post: An eagle that came in to Hope for Wildlife from Lunenburg today caught in a snare looked awful! Trappers suck!

- Explanation: This post gives specific details about a patient and is negative towards a large number of HFW supporters (yes, many trappers support HFW!). HFW does not publicly advocate for or against trapping. Of course, it is your right to form your own opinion, but when acting as a representative of HFW it is important to represent our opinions.

Inappropriate post: A moose came in to Hope for Wildlife today!

- Explanation: Hope for Wildlife does not have permits to rehabilitate moose and must notify DNR of any non-permitted animals that are admitted. If DNR saw your post before Hope was able to call, they may interpret that as HFW trying to 'hide something'. Posts relating to non-permit animals are absolutely not allowed in order to avoid such misunderstandings.

These are just a very few examples.

When in doubt, please don't post!

Introduction to the Dispatch Team

Thank you for your interest in becoming a Hope for Wildlife Dispatch Team volunteer! Dispatch Team volunteers must meet the following criteria:

- Be at least 18 years of age
- Possess a valid driver's license
- Have access to a vehicle
- Agree to follow the guidelines outlined in this information package
- Interact with the public in a professional and courteous manner

As a non-profit organization, Hope for Wildlife depends on dedicated volunteers to help us rescue injured and orphaned animals and bring them to our facility in the cases where the public is unable to do so. Certain types of rescues are more challenging than others and require more hands-on interaction with animals. We expect our Dispatch Volunteers to use good judgment to determine whether they feel confident that they can successfully carry out the rescue. Start with a few easier rescues, such as animals that are already contained, and then move up to uncontained animals. You may want to start with catching a pigeon or songbird and progress to the larger birds and raptors as you get more comfortable handling birds. And the same goes for other animals. It's much easier to handle a mouse than it is to handle an adult raccoon.

The most important thing to remember is Don't Ever Put Yourself At Risk. Attempting to catch an animal that you are unfamiliar with can not only put yourself at risk but can also cause worse injury to the animal. Respond to the rescues that you feel comfortable doing, and if you find yourself in a difficult situation contact the Wildlife Emergency Hotline (902-407-9453) to walk you through it. There will be times when you might be the only rescuer available to complete a difficult rescue, or you show up to a rescue that turns out to be more challenging than expected! If you find yourself in this situation, please don't panic, we will gladly guide you through it. Some people may interact with a certain species for the first time during a rescue. While this can be intimidating, safe rescues of this sort have been conducted before and can be done. Use your judgement to assess a situation and your abilities. Never conduct a rescue that you do not feel comfortable with. If you need assistance or have questions while on rescue please call the Hotline. Hope has talked many people through the safe capture and restraint of injured animals!

Working with Wildlife – Policies and Expectations

When working with wildlife it is extremely important to understand that unlike domestic animals, wild animals should not be comfortable around humans. Unlike volunteering at a dog or cat shelter, there is never a wagging tail or happy purr to reward you for your good efforts. In this respect, wildlife rehabilitation can be a rather thankless task, but this is one way that we know we are doing our job correctly.

A friendly wild animal is a dead animal – either because it gets injured by getting too close to human activity or because it must be destroyed because it poses too great a risk to people.

When discussing the level at which an animal is comfortable around humans, two terms are often used:

Imprinting is a specific phenomenon that occurs during the early stages of an animal's life. The imprinting process is what makes an animal understand who they are. When a young animal imprints on their mother they will follow her behaviors. This is how they learn what to eat, what not to eat, who to be afraid of, how to react to different animals, and ultimately how to survive as that species. Young animals can imprint on anyone. In cases where a baby has lost their mother, they can still learn these behaviors when they imprint on other individuals of the same species, for example, a litter/nest mate. Imprinting can only happen for a short period, early in an animals' development and the age and duration of the imprinting period varies for each species. Imprinting is also irreversible – once imprinted, an animal can still be taught behaviours to a degree, but many of its hard-wired instincts will be tied to the animal it has imprinted on. Some common examples of this are human-imprinted owls that display mating behaviours to humans, or human-imprinted bucks which can be extremely aggressive and dangerous towards people, especially during mating season. *In most cases, imprinted animals cannot be released to the wild.*

Habituation is when an animal has some degree of comfort around people. Wild animals may have varied degrees of habituation, and perhaps only to certain aspects of human behaviour. For example, foxes that live in the city may be more habituated to lights and noise, and associate these with food (i.e. human garbage). However, foxes that live in the country are more likely to attribute lights and noise to predators (i.e. humans). Habituation can often seem like imprinting, especially in young animals, and a very highly habituated animal has the same poor prospects for release as an imprinted one. However,

lower levels of habituation can be reversed, and the animal released successfully. Of course, this takes time. Therefore, we aim to reduce habituation potential as much as possible.

As it states in our rehabilitation philosophy, *“Releasable animals should be maintained in a wild condition and released as soon as appropriate”*. This means doing everything possible to minimize human contact – thus reducing the potential for imprinting and habituation – and make the rehabilitation process as fast as possible given the circumstances to which the animal was admitted for care.

Wildlife rehabbers should **always aim to minimize stress on the animal**. Stress alone can be directly fatal to an animal. Wild animals view humans as predators and being in captivity around humans often causes significant stress on an animal. One way that this can happen is through **capture myopathy** which is a hormonal change induced by stress that can cause tissue and organ failure. Stress can also cause behavioural changes which can slow down or interrupt rehabilitation, which can also lead to fatality. Some signs of stress include: open mouth breathing, shaking/trembling, hiding their face/eyes (common in raccoons who are trapped in garbage bins).

Always remember the golden rule: *“Less stress is best!”*. The following policies are in place to ensure that we stay true to our rehabilitation philosophy:

Don’t stare at animals – You may think you are ‘connecting’ with the animal through their eyes but what you are actually seeing is a look of terror. Predators stare at their prey and competitors stare down their opponents, so you are mimicking these behaviors when you stare at the animals.

Minimize contact as much as possible – Capture and rehabilitation of injured or orphaned animals will require some level of human contact, but it is important to reduce this contact to the bare minimum. You can reduce handling/exposure time by having everything ready (necessary equipment, people, carrier/box) before you handle the animal. By having everything ready you can capture and contain an animal as quickly as possible, which will reduce handling time and reduce the amount of stress to the animal. Once you have caught the animal, do not open the box again until it is absolutely necessary (e.g. you are checking to see that the animal is still alive, or the animal has been brought to the rehab and needs to be assessed). Please do not “show off” the animal to members of the public once it has been caught. People are often very interested to get a good look at an animal when they have taken part by phoning in/helping with a rescue, but once they understand that unnecessary exposure to humans can significantly affect an animal’s stress – and ultimately their survival – they tend to understand.

Health and Safety Practices

REMEMBER: PROPER HYGEINE IS ONE OF YOUR BEST DEFENSES AGAINST ZONOTIC DISEASES.

Hope for Wildlife is committed to providing a safe workplace for both its employees and volunteers. As a Dispatch Team Volunteer, the capture and handling techniques described later in this information package will help protect you from bites and scratches; however, there are other potential health and safety hazards associated with working with wildlife that you should be aware of.

Working with wildlife increases your risk of being exposed to a number of diseases that can be transmitted to you. Diseases that can be transmitted between animals and humans are called **zoonotic**

diseases. Working at Hope for Wildlife doesn't necessarily mean you will come in to contact with these diseases, however exposing yourself to wild animals does increase your probability of encountering them.

Your best protection against any zoonotic disease is good hygiene and common sense. A large number of harmful zoonotic diseases are passed in bodily fluids and must be ingested or inhaled to cause harm to humans. For this reason, always wear disposable or rubber gloves when handling wildlife. Afterwards, remove contaminated gloves and clothing and wash your hands.

Proper Hand Washing Technique:

1. Wet your hands with clean, running water (warm or cold), turn off the tap, and apply soap.
2. Lather your hands by rubbing them together with the soap. Be sure to lather the backs of your hands, between your fingers, and under your nails.
3. Scrub your hands for at least 20 seconds. Need a timer? Hum the "Happy Birthday" song from beginning to end twice.
4. Rinse your hands well under clean, running water.
5. Dry your hands using a clean towel or air dry them.

If you don't have access to soap and clean running water, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol. Washing hands with soap and water is the best way to reduce the number of microbes on them in most situations but if soap and water are not available, alcohol-based hand sanitizers can quickly reduce the number of microbes on hands in some situations. Sanitizers do not eliminate all types of germs and are not as effective when hands are visibly dirty or greasy.

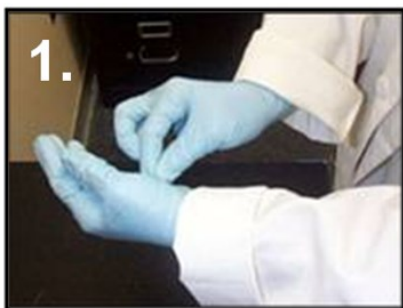
Proper Use of Hand Sanitizer:

1. Apply the product to the palm of one hand (read the label to learn the correct amount).
2. Rub your hands together.
3. Rub the product over all surfaces of your hands and fingers until your hands are dry.

Clothing: Protective clothing, such as long pants, boots or sneakers, are suggested, and gloves should be worn while working with wildlife. Sandals are not recommended as they do not provide any protection for your feet. Long pants and long sleeves will help protect you from bites and scratches.

Gloves: Disposable gloves shall be worn at all times when handling wildlife. When you are done handling an animal, remove gloves and wash or sanitize hands using proper techniques. If gloves rip, immediately remove and discard them, wash your hands, and put on new ones.

Proper procedure for removing gloves:



1. Do not touch the outside of the gloves, they are contaminated.



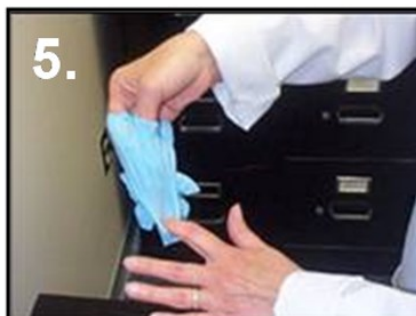
2. Grasp the outside of the glove with the opposite gloved hand.



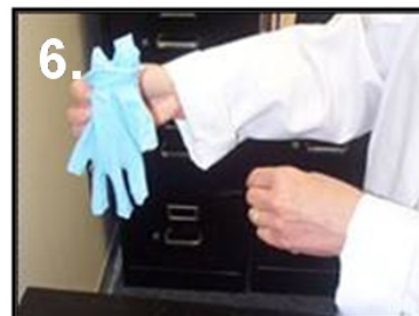
3. Peel off.



4. Hold the removed glove in gloved hand. Slide fingers of ungloved hand under the remaining glove at the wrist.



5. Peel glove off over first glove.



6. Discard gloves in waste container. Perform hand hygiene.

Minimizing contact with wildlife will also help prevent the spread of disease. Don't handle wildlife any more than required. Once an animal has been caught, keep them contained at all times. It is also very important that children **DO NOT** handle wildlife. Children are not only more likely to put their hands in their mouths; they are generally more susceptible to being affected by these diseases than adults. **Do not** take children with you while on rescues.

As a volunteer with Hope for Wildlife we do not require any specific vaccinations; however, it is recommended that people who work with wildlife should have a tetanus vaccination every 5 years. Please check with your family doctor to ensure you vaccine is current.

The best way to protect yourself, your family, and your pets, is to always ensure you wear gloves, practice good hygiene, and wash your work clothes and shoes after a shift, or keep them bagged and away from kids and pets until you can wash them. **Do not** take pets with you while on rescue.

Accidents or Injury

Ensure that any cuts and scrapes are thoroughly cleaned and cared for. Carefully wash contaminated areas. If an area of broken skin becomes contaminated, it should be rinsed with water for 10 minutes. If irritation persists, seek medical attention.

In the case of a serious injury, get to the hospital or call 911.

Never hesitate to ask questions. Never perform a task you do not feel comfortable doing.

Zoonotic and Contagious Diseases

While working at Hope for Wildlife doesn't necessarily mean you will come in to contact with zoonotic diseases, exposing yourself to wild animals does add another level of risk to the possibility of encountering them.

No matter how a disease may be transmitted, the best way to protect yourself is to practice good hygiene and follow all of our health and safety practices which are meant to protect you from these illnesses.

Zoonoses are classified in to 4 types based on their causative agent:

- Bacterioses (caused by bacteria)
- Mycoses (caused by fungi)
- Viruses
- Parasites

Hundreds of these diseases exist, and while many are host-specific (i.e. you can only catch them from one particular animal), many are not. Even though they are classed as zoonotic diseases, some of the examples below can actually thrive alone in the environment, meaning an animal doesn't even have to be present for you to catch the disease – it just means that the disease *can* affect animals and people, and it *can* be transmitted between the two.

The following examples have been identified by the International Wildlife Rehabilitation Council in their “Basic Wildlife Rehabilitation” manual. Some of these diseases are not prevalent in Nova Scotia but have been included to dispel some of the common misconceptions about them. Information specific to the disease in Nova Scotia has also been included where appropriate.

REMEMBER: the best way to protect yourself is to practice good hygiene and follow all of our health and safety practices.

1. Bacterioses: the following diseases are caused by different types of bacteria:

Leptospirosis affects a variety of rodents and small mammals. Bacteria are shed in the animals' urine and can be transmitted to another animal or human if the bacteria come into contact with an open wound. For this reason, it is important to keep wounds bandaged appropriately, and clean new wounds promptly. Wearing disposable gloves will give you an extra layer of protection on your hands. Leptospirosis can cause flu-like symptoms which resolve themselves – in about a week in most people. For more serious cases, antibiotics may be prescribed and in rare cases, hospitalization may be required.

Lyme Disease can affect any mammal but the most common reservoirs in Nova Scotia are white-tailed deer and white-footed mouse. You cannot get Lyme disease from direct contact with infected animals. The transmission of the disease-causing bacteria occurs via a bite from an infected tick, which has previously fed on an infected animal. There are several different types of ticks in NS, such as dog tick, black-legged (deer) tick, groundhog tick, and the snowshoe hare tick. Lyme disease is only transmitted by black-legged (deer) ticks, which are less common and generally smaller than the Dog Tick, which are more commonly seen on pets and wildlife. Black-legged (deer) ticks are typically 3mm long (about the size of a sesame seed), while dog ticks are typically 5mm long. Once a female tick has fed, their size will increase significantly. A key feature to identifying a dog tick is the intricate patterning near the head. Black-legged ticks are solid dark-brown color near the head with no distinct pattern.



Beside: Female black-legged (deer) tick (left) and dog tick (right)

Below: Females in various stages of feeding; black-legged (deer) ticks (left) and dog tick (right)



The tick must be imbedded in the host for almost 48 hours (until the tick has fully fed) for the disease-causing bacteria to be transmitted. The first sign of the disease can be red circular rash 3 days – 1 month after a bite from an infected tick (*picture right*), but this does not occur in all cases. Later, flu-like symptoms may develop, and, left untreated, more severe symptoms can occur anywhere from months to years after the initial infection. Lyme disease can be diagnosed through a number of tests, but it is easiest to diagnose at the early stages. It can be treated with antibiotics at any stage.



The key to prevention is to avoid tick bites. When dealing with tick-covered animals, wear disposable gloves and check your hands and arms once you are done to ensure no ticks have made their way onto you. Ticks can also be found on plants (especially long grass), so remember to check yourself if you have been in these environments. Ticks typically aim to hide in warm crevices of the body, but they can be found anywhere on the body. The best way to prevent infection is to check yourself thoroughly after being exposed to potential tick habitats or tick-infested animals.

Animals admitted to HFW that have ticks are treated with topical drops which are absorbed through the skin and into the bloodstream. The drug causes the ticks to fall off and die. In severe cases, ticks may be removed manually. To remove a tick from yourself, grasp the tick with fine-point tweezers as close to the skin as possible and pull away. Alternatively, you can use a notched 'tick spoon' to grasp and scoop the tick away. Make sure the entire tick is removed, including the head. Monitor the affected area for development of a bulls-eye shaped rash, or any other flu like symptoms. If symptoms occur, see your doctor and tell them you were bitten by a tick.

Salmonellosis is the most common zoonotic disease diagnosed and is the cause of Salmonella poisoning. Often associated with contaminated food or water, salmonella bacteria originate from animal feces. Symptoms appear 72 hours after infection and include abdominal pain, nausea, vomiting, and diarrhea. Symptoms will usually subside on their own in 2-4 days without any treatment, however severe cases may require hospitalization and fluid therapy. Proper hand washing and wearing disposable gloves will help prevent Salmonella infection.

Chlamydiosis/Ornithosis/Psittacosis also known as "parrot fever" can be found in a variety of bird species, but most commonly pigeons, ducks, and parrots. Infection occurs when either respiratory droplets of dried feces of the infected bird are inhaled or ingested. When dealing with birds, particularly nestlings and fledglings who don't yet clean themselves and are constantly shedding old feather shafts as their adult feathers grow in, be careful not to inhale these particles. If you are required to clean something containing bird feces, it is important to moisten dried feces beforehand to reduce the potential of dust particulates being inhaled. Disposable masks can be used to help decrease the risk of infection. Symptoms develop in 1-2 weeks and include fever, chills, aches, loss of appetite and headache, and can sometimes progress to pneumonia-like symptoms. Treatment is usually a long course of antibiotics.

Campylobacteriosis is caused by ingestion of contaminated meat, water, or fecal matter. When working with wildlife, infection would most likely be the result of poor hygiene practices. Fecal matter can be inadvertently ingested when your hands become contaminated while working with or around animals. Gloves are recommended when handling animals. Symptoms of infection range widely, from no symptoms whatsoever to diarrhea, abdominal pain, fever, nausea and vomiting. Some cases may require hospitalization and fluid therapy to treat severe dehydration. In most cases medications are not required for treatment; drinking lots of fluids and resting until the symptoms pass is the most common recommendation.

2. Mycoses: the following diseases are caused by different types of fungus:

Aspergillosis The fungus causing this disease grows readily in moist environments (i.e. moist hay). Animals and humans may become infected by inhaling fungal spores. Waterfowl and raptors are common hosts in the wild. Most humans are resistant to infection, but it can affect immunocompromised individuals and, in some people, it can trigger an allergic response. Respiratory symptoms are most common, but lesions of the central nervous system and eyes can occur. In birds, the disease causes respiratory trauma which can sometimes be detected with an x-ray of the lungs. If you are required to clean something containing bird feces, it is important to moisten dried feces beforehand to reduce the potential of dust particulates being inhaled. Disposable masks can be used to help decrease the risk of infection.

Dermatophytosis also known as “ringworm”, is caused by infection of the skin resulting in inflammation and irritation often appearing as red rings with raised borders. It is highly contagious, and transmission occurs via direct contact with an infected animal or its shed skin and hair. Effective treatment is usually accomplished using topical ointments. ‘Athletes foot’ is an example of Dermatophytosis. You can reduce your chance of infection by wearing gloves, not handling animals directly (avoid skin to skin contact) and washing your hands after handling wildlife.

Histoplasmosis thrives in moist environments and is often found in higher concentrations in bird and bat droppings. The disease does not infect birds because their body temperature is too warm for the disease to survive, but they can carry the disease-causing fungus on their feathers. Infection in humans is caused by the inhalation of the fungus spores. For this reason, disposable gloves are required when dealing with birds, particularly nestlings and fledglings who don’t yet clean themselves and are constantly shedding old feather shafts as their adult feathers grow in. Symptoms include fever, cough, exhaustion, chest pain, pneumonia, rash on the skin, ulcers of mouth, nose, and larynx. In severe cases, infection can result in meningitis. In most people the infection will clear up on its own, however if symptoms persist or worsen, treatment with antifungal medications may be necessary.

3. Viruses: These diseases are caused by a viral infection:

Rabies All mammals have the potential to contract rabies, but major reservoirs across North America are raccoon, bat, fox, skunk and coyote. Transmission occurs when infected saliva or nervous tissue contacts nerve tissue, an open wound, or mucous membrane of host (i.e. via a bite or broken skin). It can also be passed across the placenta and through the mammary gland. The rabies virus is quickly inactivated by heat, UV, and common disinfectants (5-10% bleach solution). Symptoms usually occur in 2-8 weeks – in cats and dogs shedding the virus, symptoms appear in 10 days; bats can shed virus for several weeks before symptoms appear – but some cases have shown symptoms not appearing for up to 1 year.

***Anyone who has been bitten by a rabies vector species – raccoon, bat, skunk, fox, coyote – MUST report this to Hope. You can do this by contacting the emergency hotline: 902-407-9453

Symptoms progress from increased anxiety and slightly increased body temperature to sensitivity to light and sound, dilation of pupils, and salivation. Late stage symptoms are marked by muscle spasms, trouble swallowing, paralysis, convulsions, and finally death. Once the disease manifests, mortality is 100%. Symptoms in animals include: “furious” rabies: aggression, attacking non-prey species; “dumb” rabies: lethargy, staring, loss of fear, incoordination, and partial loss of movement.

Bats are the only known reservoir of rabies in Nova Scotia. There are multiple strains of the virus; only the bat strain is found in NS. When an infected bat bites another animal, such as a dog, this is still considered the bat strain of rabies. There were 6 confirmed cases of rabies (all the bat strain) in NS from 1998-2012 – 3 bat, 2 fox, 1 cat. On average in the USA and Canada, only 1-2 cases of rabies in humans are identified each year². Animals exhibiting clinical signs should be considered a rabies suspect until proven otherwise. However, it should be noted that symptoms of distemper (viral diseases that affect cats, dogs, and mustelids) can mimic rabies symptoms. The easiest way to reduce your chance of contracting rabies is to not handle bats directly, especially one found on the ground, or otherwise acting strange. If you are bitten by a bat, try to contain the bat if possible, and bring in for rabies testing when seeking medical attention. Bat bites should be washed with soap and water and medical attention sought. Pre- and post-exposure vaccines are available.

Hantavirus is often the source of many peoples’ fear of mice. The primary reservoir of this virus is the deer mouse population, but it is found in other rodents as well. While the disease is a cause for concern – it has approximately a 30% mortality rate – less than 13 cases of Hantavirus are confirmed in Canada each year. All of these cases have occurred west of Manitoba, with the exception of one confirmed case in Quebec³. Hantavirus is transmitted by the bodily fluids of infected animals. Transmission occurs when these fluids are inhaled, ingested, or come into contact with an open wound of a potential host. Symptoms of infection appear at 1-5 weeks and progress from fever, chills, muscle aches, and headache, vomiting, shortness of breath and increased heart rate. Precautionary measures include wearing gloves when dealing with rodents, cleaning areas where rodents frequent often, and preventing rodents from using those areas (removing food sources, checking for, and removing nests in buildings).

West Nile Virus was initially identified in Canada in 2002, and birds seem to be the primary reservoir for the disease, with horses being another potentially significant host. The disease cannot be passed from animal to animal, or animal to human – it is transmitted when a biting insect (most often a mosquito) picks up the virus from an infected animal, then transmits it when biting a new host. Most people will have no symptoms of the virus. However, in other cases, symptoms of the disease will usually occur 2-15 days after exposure and include fever, chills, headache, stiff neck, body aches, muscle weakness, skin rash, and swollen lymph nodes. In rare instances, symptoms can progress to stupor, disorientation, coma, convulsion, paralysis, encephalitis (swelling of the brain), and meningitis (swelling of the brain lining or spinal cord). As a relatively newly emerging disease, there are many questions about transmission, diagnosis and treatment that remain unanswered – the best protection is to take preventative measures against mosquito bites such as wearing long sleeves and pants, using bug repellent, and avoid letting standing water to collect, which provides egg-laying habitat for mosquitos.

4. Parasites: these diseases are caused by a variety of parasites:

Visceral Larva Migrans is caused by a number of ascarid (roundworm) species. Humans become infected when the roundworm eggs which are passed in animal feces are ingested. The eggs hatch into larvae that penetrate the stomach and migrate via the liver to other organs throughout the body, particularly the central nervous system. Serious infections can cause damage to the eyes, central nervous system, liver and lungs, and can cause death in children.

The most well-known of the roundworms is raccoon roundworm *Baliscaris procyonis*. Others include *Toxicara canis* (canine roundworm), *Toxicara cati* (feline roundworm), and *Baliscaris columnaris* (skunk roundworm). When working with wildlife, it is important to practice good hygiene and always wear gloves when working with host species. In the case of raccoon roundworm, the eggs have to dry out for 2-6 weeks before they become infectious. However, once the eggs have dried, they are very resistant to cleaning and can contaminate surfaces and soil. Animals that have roundworm can be treated with either oral or topical medications, and routine deworming is part of regular practice for the raccoons at Hope for Wildlife.

Sarcoptes more commonly referred to as **mange**, is caused by an infestation of small mites which burrow into the skin of the infected animal causing itching and skin crusts (*pictured right*). Mange can affect any mammal, but it is most often seen in fox and porcupine at Hope for Wildlife. Mange symptoms in animals include itching, dry/crusty skin, rash, and hair loss. Mange is usually initially visible on the stomach, face, and legs. Animals admitted with mange are treated with topical drops, which are absorbed through the skin and into the bloodstream. The drug causes the mites to fall off and die. In severe cases, the animal is also treated with antibiotics to fight infection of skin lesions. Humans can get mange from being in contact with infected animals. For this reason, care should be taken when dealing with infected animals. Disposable gloves should be worn, and any towels, blankets, or bedding having come into contact with the animal should be disposed of and cages should be cleaned thoroughly with a 10% bleach solution. Mange mites do not reproduce on humans, so in the event of an infection, it will clear itself up in 2-3 weeks. Topical ointments are also available to speed the process. If you suspect an animal has mange, make sure to follow good hygiene practices and avoid handling the animal directly (no skin to skin contact).



Giardia and Cryptosporidium Both of these parasites are most commonly associated with water that has been contaminated by infected feces of animals that live in the water such as waterfowl, muskrat and beaver. Humans are infected through ingestion of contaminated water or feces containing cysts (eggs) which hatch in the digestive tract of the new host. Fecal matter can be inadvertently ingested when your hands become contaminated while working with or around animals, or by getting splashed in the face by contaminated drinking/bathing water. For these reasons, gloves are recommended when handling animals. Symptoms of an infection include diarrhea, cramps, fever, and weight loss. Some

cases may require hospitalization and fluid therapy to treat severe dehydration. In most cases medications are not required for treatment; drinking lots of fluids and resting until the symptoms pass is the most common recommendation.

A Summary of Prevention Measures:

- Always wear gloves when working with animals – never allow direct skin to skin contact with wildlife
- Wash hands frequently and replace torn gloves immediately
- Avoid direct contact with open wounds and animals infested with parasites
- Disinfect or discard blankets/towels used for handling
- Disinfect handling (thick rubber or leather) gloves after each use to prevent spread to other animals
- Thoroughly wash any carrier that has been used for wildlife with a 10% bleach solution after each use

Your Pet and Contagious Diseases

What can't hurt you COULD hurt your pets.

Many of the zoonoses listed above can also affect your pets at home – rabies, mange, and psittacosis are a few that immediately come to mind. To protect your pets, do not let your pets come into contact with rescued wildlife or your rescue equipment. Pets should **never** ride in your vehicle during a rescue. Not only is your pet at risk of contracting a disease, they also increase stress on wildlife. Pets should not be brought to Hope for Wildlife. We also do not recommend using your personal pet carriers for rescues. In the instance you have to disinfect a carrier, be sure use a 10% bleach solution.

To ensure proper disinfection of carriers:

- Wear disposable gloves when cleaning
- Remove any large bits of debris and/or feces. Animal feces should be disposed in the garbage in a sealed plastic bag
- Wash the container with hot soapy water to remove any remaining dirt, grime, and feces
- Once the carrier is cleaned, disinfect by applying a 10% bleach solution. Use cold water to prepare your disinfection solution: you want the surfaces to remain wet for at least 10 minutes and a cold solution will evaporate/dry slower
- Rinse the carrier well after disinfection

There are some diseases that are not harmful to humans but can be transmitted to your pets:

Distemper is often used as a generic term for a number of possible viral infections, including feline panleukopenia, canine distemper, and Mink Enteritis (Aleutian Disease). It is not zoonotic to humans, but unvaccinated dogs, cats, and ferrets are at risk of contracting the disease.

Epidemic viral outbreaks kill large numbers of animals when populations are high, and animals are living in close enough proximity to get the disease. An extremely high percentage of viral diseases end in death to the animal.

Canine Distemper Virus (CDV): Canine Distemper affects a wide range of carnivores, including raccoons, fox, coyote, and mustelids (ferret, skunk, martin, fisher, mink). The virus can be transmitted through direct contact between an infected and uninfected individual, or can be shed in feces, saliva, and urine.

Typical signs of CDV, seen in the domestic dog, include respiratory and intestinal problems such as coughing, diarrhea, vomiting, discharge from the eyes and nose, and anorexia. In wild animals however, the most apparent signs are often abnormal behaviour (i.e. wandering or laying out in the daytime) and apparent lack of fear – symptoms that can be confused with rabies. Closer examination may reveal discharge from the nose and eyes, neurological symptoms such as aggressiveness, lack of alertness, convulsive movements of the head and paws, and aimless wandering. There may be evidence of diarrhea, labored breathing and an unkempt appearance to the fur. Due to the diarrhea and vomiting, the animal may be dehydrated and exhibit excessive thirst. The progression of CDV is comparatively slower than feline panleukopenia and has a lower mortality rate.

In Nova Scotia, CDV tends to cycle through the wild population with outbreaks every 5-7 years. Subsequent mild winters have meant that CDV has remained quite prevalent in the raccoon population. In Nova Scotia rates of CDV can be higher in certain areas, but is prevalent around the province. The best way to protect your pets from this virus is to vaccinate.

Feline Panleukopenia (FPV) Also referred to as feline distemper, usually begins suddenly with a high fever, followed by depression, vomiting, anorexia, and diarrhea. These signs rapidly lead to severe dehydration. Healthy adult cats can overcome the virus, but medical treatment should be sought to help manage the symptoms and improve the chance of recovery. For individuals who are very young, very old, or have previous medical conditions, the chances of mortality are high and can occur very quickly after the first sign of symptoms. Vaccination against the virus is the best way to protect your pet.

During the summer of 2009, an outbreak of FPV in the raccoon population at Hope for Wildlife spread quickly and resulted in the death of 50% of the raccoons admitted that year. Once the virus was identified, all suspected carriers were humanely euthanized, and survivors were vaccinated to prevent further spread. Reports of FPV outbreaks in a shelter setting have caused death rates of up to 90%. FPV progresses quickly in young raccoons – deaths during the 2009 outbreak occurred as quickly as within 12 hours of the first symptoms appearing.

Outbreak Prevention and Handling Measures

Both Canine Distemper (CDV) and Feline Panleukopenia (FPV) are highly contagious and have high rates of mortality. Treatment is expensive and not always effective, and both diseases can cause permanent damage. It is for these reasons that animals admitted with these diseases are now euthanized on arrival. As a further precautionary measure, Hope for Wildlife has adopted a vaccine protocol for all raccoons admitted to the center.

During outbreak situations, volunteers are notified as soon as possible to ensure the necessary steps can be taken to protect pets at home. During the 2009 FPV outbreak, volunteers wore scrubs over their clothes and changed into clean clothing and shoes before leaving the rehab center. Scrubs were left at the center for washing, and personal clothing and shoes worn at the center were bagged and kept away from pets until they were washed. As a dispatch volunteer it is not required that you wear scrubs, but precautionary measures should include: not bringing your pet on rescues, keeping your rescue supplies away from your pets, and keeping your shoes and clothes worn on rescue away from your pet until they are properly cleaned.

As a precautionary measure, it is recommended that pets be vaccinated to protect against possible infection. The following is a suggested vaccine schedule – please discuss vaccines and their potential risks with your veterinarian.

Dogs:

DA2PP: contains the parvo virus and distemper. Vaccinate 2 years in a row and then every 3 years.
Rabies: 2 years in a row then every 3 years.

Cats:

FVRCP: contains panleukopenia. Vaccinate 2 years in a row and then every 3 years.
Rabies: 2 years in a row then every 3 years.

All pets should also be on a routine deworming schedule.

Note: just because a wild animal is out during a time of day that people wouldn't expect to see them (e.g. a raccoon out in the middle of the day), does not necessarily mean that animal has a disease/illness. Some people automatically assume that if a wild animal is moving around during the day, that this animal must be sick. That is not always the case. As humans take over more and more of our natural spaces, in some cases, wildlife have adapted to becoming more tolerant of humans, which can result in them being out when people wouldn't typically expect. There are many reasons why a *crepuscular* (an animal that typically is out at dusk and dawn) or *nocturnal* (an animal that typically only comes out at night) animal might be out, outside of their "typical" activity hours. When trying to figure out if an animal needs our help, look for additional issues that the animal might have, and do not rely solely on this aspect. If you are ever unsure or have questions while on a rescue, contact the HFW Hotline.

Preparing for Dispatch

It's important to ensure that you are ready for a rescue when you arrive on scene – you don't want to get caught without something to catch or contain an animal in! You should keep your kit handy (preferably in your vehicle) at all times and bring it with you for EVERY rescue. Most supplies are simpler than you may realize. You are responsible for making sure your kit is fully stocked.

Dispatch volunteers are suggested to have the following items in their car:

- **Blanket or towel(s)** of various sizes: to corral, cover, carry, and comfort the animal in distress. If you do not have any of these at home, you are welcome to collect some from the rehab. Ask the staff to show you where they are located.

- **A large sheet:** helpful when corralling animals or catching large birds (everything from seagulls to raptors) – also available at the rehab
- **Net:** handy for catching when an extended reach is needed – a small butterfly net is often enough to immobilize an animal long enough to throw a towel over them. Butterfly nets can be found at the dollar store.
- **Boxes of various sizes:** Cardboard boxes are preferred for birds as they won't cause any damage to their feet, beaks, or feathers. A box should be big enough that the animal can stand up and turn around, but not much bigger. Wild animals, when contained, can sometimes thrash around and injure themselves more if they have too much space to move around. Ask at retail stores for extras – they have hundreds and are happy to give you some!
- **Pet carriers or tough plastic bins/totes with air holes:** usually recommended for mammals that could chew or break through cardboard (e.g. adult raccoons). Carriers are preferred as they have much better ventilation. If using a plastic bin (e.g. large Rubbermaid containers), make sure there are holes in the container to allow plenty of air circulation. **There are plenty of carriers available at HFW that you can borrow!** We do not suggest the use of your own carriers.
- **Gloves:** **Latex** disposable gloves should be worn when handling any animal to prevent transfer of disease or parasites – especially racoons! These are available at the rehab, but can also be purchased from Canadian Tire, Dollar Store, or Walmart. **Heavy** leather, rubber, or welding gloves may be required for larger or more aggressive animals (raccoons, groundhogs, foxes, etc.). Heavy rubber gloves can be found at Canadian tire and work well because they can be disinfected after a rescue.
- **Broom or Rake:** these are often helpful when trying to capture animals and can be used to encourage an animal into a box/carrier without having to directly handle an animal
- **Hand sanitizer:** if you must catch an animal in an area where you cannot immediately wash your hands, hand sanitizer can reduce your risk of contracting a disease or parasite.
- **A first aid kit** containing alcohol wipes, Polysporin, and band-aids. If you are scratched or bitten by an animal, cleaning that area will help reduce your chance of contacting a disease. While we try to avoid this at all costs by using safe handling techniques, accidents happen, and it is much better to be prepared.
- **Pens and intake cards or paper:** intake cards are available at the rehab and are explained below
- **Tape and scissors:** sometimes you may be rescuing a larger animal (porcupine, raven, seagull, etc.) and the structural integrity of a box is not sufficient to hold that animal. Taping the bottom of the box will help secure it so the animal does not fall through when you lift the box. **ALWAYS** lift a box from the bottom, regardless if you have taped it or not.

Other equipment is available from Hope for Wildlife on an as-needed basis such as: sturdy pet carriers (really only needed for adult mammals – cardboard boxes are actually preferred for small/young mammals and all birds), live traps, large catch nets, and thick handling gloves.

*Please do not use rubber-maid or other plastic containers for transporting animals unless they are very well ventilated (have air holes in the lid and/or sides of the container) and the container is much larger than the animal. Animals can suffocate or die in these containers. Use pet carriers or cardboard boxes when at all possible.

Handling and Capture

Note: If you find yourself in a situation which you feel uncomfortable or unsure of yourself, please call the emergency line at (902) 407-9453 for guidance and to dispatch another volunteer if necessary.

Different capture techniques will be required depending on the situation:

Box-over technique: This works best for slow-moving or immobilized animals and allows a rescuer to contain the animal without having to handle it. Place a box/container over the animal. Shimmy a lid, plywood sheet, or any type of sturdy, flat material, underneath the container opening and the animal so that the animal is now fully contained. Secure the lid with rope or straps and transport the animal as is.

Broom and box technique: This technique works best for slow-moving or somewhat immobilized animals. Place a box/container on its side next to the animal. Use a broom or rake to encourage/guide an animal into a box/container. Once the animal is in, slowly tilt the box/container upright and close for transport.

Towel capture: Towels and blankets are perfect for capturing and picking up birds and some mammals. Sometimes it may be easier to first corral the animal prior to attempting capture. A group of people can encircle the animal with outstretched blankets, or one or two people can herd it into a corner. If there is a garage or shed available the animal can also be corralled into such an area and will then be easier to catch once it is in an enclosed space. Once the animal is within reach, drape the blanket over the entire animal, making sure to fully cover the face. The sudden darkness will help calm the animal. Depending on the animal, you may want to use thick rubber gloves to reduce the chance of being bitten (especially for rats, and large mammals). After you have placed the animal into the prepared box/container, carefully remove the towel/sheet you used to catch them so that the animal can move freely inside the box/container. If left in, the animal can become tangled which may result in further injury or difficulty breathing.

Note: Do NOT use towels/blankets for catching porcupines, as the material gets stuck in their quills and is painful to remove.

Net capture: use a net to extend your reach to help capture the animal. Even when they can't fly, birds can often run or climb beyond reach. Once the animal is contained in the net on the ground, use a blanket or towel to cover the animals face and detangle it from the net. Do not try to carry an animal in the net. It may become badly tangled while struggling to escape. Net capture on mammals should only be done by a trained individual.

When choosing a capture method, make sure you have a plan in place, any required materials ready, and coordinate with any helpers. Try and choose the technique that causes the least amount of stress for the animal and is the safest to attempt.

Most animals can easily be contained in a cardboard box. Adult raccoons and foxes are the exception and **should not** be transported in a cardboard box as they can easily escape. When choosing a box to contain an animal, you should consider the size of the individual. The animal should be able to stand up

and have enough room to turn around inside the box. Boxes that are too big can allow the animal to move too much and can result in them causing more damage to themselves. However, if you are in a situation where you have a limited selection of boxes, choose the larger option. If you are containing a larger animal, make sure the bottom of the box is secured with tape as they can easily fall through. Always lift cardboard boxes from the bottom.

*Please try **not** to transport birds in carriers. The feathers can get stuck in the holes of the carrier which can cause them to break. This increases the length of time the birds have to spend at the rehab while the feathers regrow.

Never forget that the animal you are transporting needs to be able to breathe. In a cardboard box you can puncture air holes in the sides, near the top of the box (keys can work for this in a pinch). If you are using a plastic container, make sure there are enough air holes (on the lid and/or the sides of the container) that the animal can still breathe comfortably. Animals can easily suffocate in a plastic container without air holes.

Wildlife We Work with and Handling Considerations

There are typically 4 different “groups” of animals that we work with: small mammals, large mammals, birds, and turtles. While this is not a complete list of animals that come to Hope for Wildlife, these are typically the most common.

Small mammals:

These animals can include American Red Squirrel, Eastern Grey Squirrel, Eastern Chipmunk, Rats, various mice species, moles, voles, and others. When working with these animals the primary safety concern is their bite. While these animals look small, they can deliver quite a strong bite, which can also put you at risk for diseases. If you need to handle these animals, use a small piece of cloth/fabric to drape over the entire animal, making sure to cover the head and face. Pick them up and place them in the prepared container/box. Handling the animal in this way will reduce your risk of being bitten. You may also use thick rubber glove (especially when working with rats and Grey Squirrels!) to help protect yourself from their bite. Prepare a box or container by placing a small towel or cloth in the bottom of the container. If you have to transport this animal a far distance, or if the animal is very active, be aware that they can chew through cardboard pretty easily, in which case you may chose to use a small plastic container or carrier. In most instances an injured animal will not have the energy to do this, but it can happen.



Eastern Grey Squirrel



American Red Squirrel baby



Eastern Chipmunk

Large Mammals:

These animals typically include foxes, raccoons, porcupines, skunks, groundhogs, and others. All of these animals have a very strong bite and can cause injury if not handled properly. Also be aware of the animal's claws, as they can be very sharp. Always wear thick gloves (heavy rubber or leather) if you are handling these animals. For most mammals – **not porcupines** – a piece of fabric/cloth can be used to line the bottom of the box/container to make it more comfortable for the animal.

For porcupines, their quills are their best defense. It is commonly believed that porcupines can “shoot” their quills, but this is not true. A porcupine's tail is covered with quills, and they will swing it around to try and defend themselves. When capturing or preparing a box/container for a porcupine **DO NOT** use fabric/sheet (e.g. to corral the animal or line the bottom of the box). This will result in the fabric getting tangled up with the quills and removal will require tearing out a lot of quills, which is painful to the animal. Make sure the bottom of the box is taped! Typically, a box-over or broom-and-box technique works best for these animals. Do not directly handle a porcupine unless you have been trained how to do so.

Skunks main defense is their scent, but they also have a strong bite and sharp claws. While skunks can produce a foul odor through their scent glands, this is usually a last defense. When working with skunks, do not “sneak up” on the animal. You can do this by softly talking or humming as you approach the animal. If you see a skunk stomp their feet or start to lift their tail, stop in place and wait for this behavior to stop. Once the animal has relaxed, you can continue to approach them. Move slowly when working with skunks and be extra careful not to scare these animals, as this will reduce their chance of spraying.

For adult raccoons and foxes ALWAYS use a carrier/ plastic container for transport. These animals are very smart and can escape from a cardboard box easily if they have the energy. Be VERY cautious when handling adult raccoons and foxes as they have a very strong bite and have the ability to move their head quite far to turn to bite.

Different capture techniques will be required depending on the situation. The best techniques to capture large mammals will vary based on the animal's energy level and injury. Assess each situation and make a plan based on the state of the animal. Broom-and-box and box-over techniques are the

easiest for slow moving mammals. If you have to use the towel capture technique for a large mammal, make sure you understand the proper handling techniques. What appears to be an immobilized animal can still put up quite a fight to try and avoid being captured. Always wear thick rubber or leather gloves when handling large mammals. To pick up a large mammal (not porcupines!), drape a towel/sheet over the entire animal, making sure to cover the head and face. For raccoons and foxes, use one hand to grab the scruff (the skin on the back of their neck) of the animal. You can use your other hand to support the backside of the animal if required. For small baby raccoons, it is often easiest to not use a towel for the capture of the animal, but thick gloves should still be worn. For a skunk, you can grab the scruff with one hand, and use the other hand to hold down the tail to reduce the chance of spraying. For a groundhog, you should aim to grab right behind the shoulders of the animal with both hands. Have your prepared box/container ready and nearby before picking up an animal to reduce handling time. If you have any questions or concerns, call the hotline before attempting to handle an animal you are not familiar with.



Baby Raccoon



Red Fox



Groundhog/Woodchuck



Baby Porcupine



Stripped skunk

Birds:

There are a wide range of birds that we come across at HFW, and different handling techniques required for each of the following groups:

- Songbirds and Pigeons
- Crows, Ravens, and Gulls
- Geese, and Cormorants
- Birds of prey

While this is not a comprehensive list of all of the birds we see, these species cover the typical body plan and thus, handling techniques, that are required for all birds.

Typically towel capture works best for birds, but you may need to corral them into a corner or enclosed area to be able to get close enough to capture them. Nets are also helpful to extend your reach to immobilize a bird. Never touch a bird's feathers directly with your hands (i.e. use a towel and/or rubber gloves). Human hands have natural oils that can affect the waterproofing ability of bird feathers. Always remember to remove the towel you used to capture the bird from the box, as they can entangle themselves in the towel, which can restrict their breathing.

When transporting birds, you can line the bottom of the box with a piece of cloth to make them more comfortable and protect their feet from the cardboard. For birds that cannot stand (geese, cormorants, or birds with a leg injury) the fabric should be thicker and provide more cushion for the animal. Birds, like humans, need to be able to expand their chest to breathe. Birds who cannot stand and are forced to sit on a hard surface, have a harder time breathing. By adding the extra cushioning, it makes breathing much easier. Please try not to transport birds in pet carriers as their feathers can get caught in the holes and break.

Songbirds and Pigeons: These birds are typically smaller and thus, easier to handle. When working with these animals you must be very gentle as some of them are quite tiny. While they can grab you with their beak, or scratch you with their claws, they do not typically pose much of a risk to the handler. When handling these animals, use a small piece of cloth (slightly larger than the bird) to drape over the bird. Make sure that the cloth is covering the entire bird, including the head and face. Pick the bird up by placing your hands on either side of its body, making sure the wings are tucked into the body in a natural position. If a bird has a wing injury that restricts the wing from folding in properly, place your hand on the side of the body, under the injured wing. Place the bird in the prepared box/container.



Dark-eyed Junco



Mourning Dove



Song Sparrow

Crows, Ravens, and Gulls: These birds are typically larger and more aggressive. These birds can cause injury with their sharp beaks and claws if not handled properly. When handling these birds, make sure that the towel you use to capture the animal is much larger than the individual. You need to be able to cover the beak of the animal to avoid being bitten. Drape the cloth over the animal, making sure to cover its head and face completely. Pick the bird up by placing your hands on either side of its body, making sure the wings are tucked into the body in a natural position. If a bird has a wing injury that restricts the wing from folding in properly, place your hand on the side of the body, under the injured wing. Place the bird in the prepared box/container.

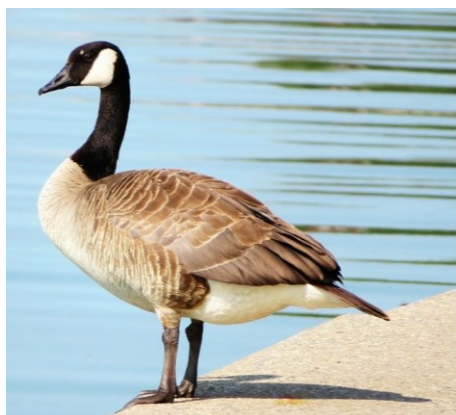


Great Black-backed Gull



Ring-billed Gull

Geese and Cormorants: These birds have a different body plan than the previous birds mentioned. These birds have a long neck and legs set towards the back of their body. These birds have a sharp beak and a strong bite. Be very cautious when working with these animals as their beaks can cause serious injury to the handler, especially to the eyes. Goggles can be worn when handling these animals to reduce the chance of injury. Geese can use their wings to 'slap' predators/humans to defend themselves. When handling these birds, use a towel/sheet that is much larger than the individual, and make sure their head and beak is completely covered. Once the fabric is draped over the animal, position yourself so the bird is sitting beside you. With the wings tucked in, wrap your arm around the side of the body so that you are holding the wings in place. With your other hand, use your thumb and first finger to loosely grab the neck, near the head. This will allow you to control the birds head. Once secure, stand up and place the bird in the prepared box/container. These birds should have extra cushioning to help them breathe easier, as it is harder for them to remain standing in a car due to the positioning of their legs.



Canada Goose



Double-crested Cormorant

Birds of Prey: These birds include eagles, hawks, owls, and falcons, and are easily identifiable by their sharp talons. These, along with their sharp beaks, are the birds best defense. When handling these animals, controlling their feet is essential. Use a large sheet/towel that is larger than the animal and make sure their head and face is completely covered. Position the animal in front of you and reach around the sides of the body. Use your arms to keep the wings tucked into the body, and grab the legs at the ankles, right above the feet. Be careful not to let the birds grab you with their talons. Once you have a good grip on the legs, you can lift the bird and place them in the prepared box/container.

If a bird does grab you with their talons (referred to as being “footed”), remain calm. Slowly lower the bird to the ground and place the bird with their back on the ground. Cover the birds face and eyes with a towel or blanket and keep whatever part of your body the bird has grabbed very still. Wait for the bird to release their talons before moving. Do not try to pry the talons from your body as this will cause the bird to grip more tightly. Being footed is very uncommon when birds of prey are handled correctly.



Barred Owl



Great Horned Owl



Red-tailed Hawk

Oiled Birds:

Any bird that has oil or other substances on their feathers needs to come to the rehab to receive medical care. A bird’s feathers must be free of any foreign substances to allow the bird to maintain the correct body temperature and allow the bird to be waterproofed. Birds also preen (clean) their feathers, and if there is oil or other substances on the feathers, they can ingest the substance, which can make them sick. A bird that is covered in oil or other substances should be given a heat source during transport to help keep them warm – see “babies” section for warming methods.

Turtles:

Turtles are very common at Hope for Wildlife. The two most common species of turtle at HFW are Eastern Painted Turtles and Common Snapping Turtles. While all turtles can bite, a snapping turtle bite is typically much stronger than a painted turtle bite. Snapping turtles also have sharp claws that can be used in defense. Turtles are smart animals and will often return to the same area each spring to lay their eggs. This can be a dangerous journey and may involve crossing roads and highways, which can lead to turtles getting hit by cars.

A turtle that is found on the side of the road, uninjured, (no cracks in the shell, no blood, or obvious injuries on body) often just needs a chance to cross the road. Turtles should only ever be moved in the direction they are facing. Otherwise, it is likely that after you are finished, the turtle will turn around and head back out onto the road to try and get back to their nesting site or water source. If you stop to help a turtle cross the road, keep safety in mind, for you, the turtle, and the other motorists. Turtles can be moved off of the road to safety, but never place a turtle directly into water. Do not relocate turtles far

distances, only to the closest safe location. If a turtle is injured the animal needs to come back to the rehab to receive medical care.

Methods for handling turtles will depend on the size, species, and injury of the turtle. These can include: the broom and box technique, the box-over technique, or direct handling. The broom and box technique can work for animals that are still mobile or are small enough to be gently pushed into a box/container. However, a severely injured turtle may not walk into the box/container. The box over technique is great for animals that have a cracked shell and are not mobile enough for the broom and box technique. Be careful when sliding the flat material under the turtle, as their skin is easily damaged.

To directly handle a turtle, you should first assess the size, species, and injury of the animal. If you are going to directly handle the animal, make sure their shell is sufficiently intact. If the shell is severely cracked, other containment methods should be attempted first. Baby turtles (smaller than the size of your palm) can be handled easily but are still capable of biting. If the turtle is larger than a dinner plate, other containment methods should be used. If the turtle is smaller than a dinner plate, and is **not** a snapper, you can grab the animal on either side of the shell (between the front and back legs) and gently place it in a box/container. If the turtle is a snapper and smaller than a dinner plate, you can grasp the hind end at the top of the shell by placing your fingers inside the back-leg sockets, then lift the animal into the prepared box/container. Plastic containers are preferred for turtles, but if there is only a cardboard box available, a towel should be placed in the bottom of the box to protect the turtle from cutting its skin on the cardboard.



Common Snapping Turtle



Eastern Painted Turtle

Babies:

Babies of any species should be placed in a box with more fabric/cloth to help keep them warm. Many babies are often unable to maintain their own body temperature – however this varies depending on the size and species of the baby. When transporting a baby over long distances, a heat source should be used for babies who cannot maintain their own body temperature – typically baby rodents and unfeathered baby birds. It is easiest to tell if a baby is too cold or too hot by touching them – they should be similar to your natural body temperature, if not slightly warmer. Heat sources that can be used are a heating pad, a hot water bottle, or hand warmers. However, each of these tools should be used with caution.

- Hot water bottles and microwavable “heat bags”: when using these, make sure they are not too hot. You should be able to hold them in your hand comfortably. Make sure there is a piece of fabric between the baby and the water bottle/ heat bag. An easy way to accomplish this is to place the water bottle/ heat bag in a sock. After some time however, these heat sources will

cool down, which will also cool down the baby. These will need to be refilled with warm water/ reheated once they cool down. For this reason, try to avoid using this method for animals that are high stress (changing the heat source multiple times will increase stress on the animal) or are high risk for escape (changing the heat source will increase opportunities to escape).

- Heating pads: heating pads need to be plugged in. This means that you either need a 12 volt plug (i.e. a plug that can fit in the cigarette socket), or an adapter. Heating pads MUST be set to LOW. Any higher setting will “cook” the baby. Heating pads should be placed underneath the box/container. Heating pads are the easiest method to use as they are maintained at a constant temperature.
- Hand warmers: these are packets that once opened, and exposed to air, will heat up – most need to be shaken to fully heat up. If you use this method, make sure that the baby is not directly on the hand warmer (there is a piece of cloth between them) and that the baby cannot chew the hand warmer, as the chemicals inside would be toxic if ingested. This can be achieved by placing the hand warmer outside and underneath the box/container used to contain the baby.

If you do provide a heat source for a baby, make sure that there is enough space for the baby to move off of the heat source if they get too warm. If a baby is injured and cannot move themselves from the heat source, check periodically to make sure they are not getting too warm, and remove the heat source if necessary.

If you are transporting more than one baby animal from the same litter or nest, always keep them together so that they can share body heat. If you have the mother as well as the babies, the mother should be contained in a separate box/carrier. If you arrive on scene and they are already contained in the same box/carrier, they should be left this way as to decrease disturbance and handling. If the mother is in a separate box/carrier, then make sure mother CANNOT reach the babies. She will attempt to bring them to her and could crush them in the process of trying to pull them through the cage.

Fledglings:

Fledglings are juvenile birds who have left the nest but are unable to fly (nestlings are baby birds that have not left the nest). A fledgling will typically spend several days to a few weeks on the ground, learning how to fly while they are cared for by their parents. Often fledglings are mistaken as injured birds, when really, they are healthy juveniles experiencing a natural period of development. Fledglings are easily distinguished from an injured bird by looking for the following: fully feathered (they may still have a few naked spots under their wings), are able to walk and hop around on the ground easily, but are still unable to fly, and have short stumpy tail feathers (when compared to an adult of the same species). In crows and ravens, a fledgling can also be identified by the presence of blue eyes – adults have black eyes. If a bird has a wing injury, you can often tell by looking to see if the wings are symmetrical. If one wing does not pull into the body, or hangs lower than the other, this is an obvious sign of an injury.



Fledgling crow (note blue eyes)



Fledgling Sparrow



Nestling Pigeon

A healthy fledgling will often have parents nearby, but not always. An easy way to distinguish if a fledgling is being cared for by their parents is to conduct a “poop test”. A poop test is done by placing the fledgling in a container or box with a piece of paper towel or light-colored fabric lining the bottom. After an hour, if the bird has pooped in the box, you can be sure that the baby is being cared for by its parents. At this point, the baby should be returned to where it was found. If the baby has not pooped after 1 hour, you can assume the baby is not being cared for and will need to come to the rehab until it is old enough to be on its own.

Whether or not a bird is a healthy fledgling or an injured bird that needs our help can sometimes be difficult to distinguish over the phone. There may be times when you arrive at a rescue for an injured bird and realize that it is just a fledgling. If there is no obvious sign of injury, the bird appears healthy, with no open wounds or other obvious issues, and the parents are present, or the poop test confirms that the baby is being cared for, the fledgling should be left to be cared for by their parents. If, however, the fledgling is in an unsafe area (e.g. the nest was built on an overpass and the fledgling is hanging around the side of a highway) the fledgling should come to HFW until they are able to fly. If you are ever unsure about a situation you can call the HFW hotline.

Death and Humane Euthanasia

Working at Hope for Wildlife is not always an easy job. By the time animals need our help, they are not often in the best condition. Whether or not an animal looks like their condition is severe or not, we cannot always see the full extent of their injuries just by looking at them. Unfortunately, death is common in the rehab setting. We do not always know why an animal has died, and in a lot of cases, we won't ever know. This is part of the job when working in a rehab.

Humane euthanasia is also something that is very common at HFW. Our staff are well trained to recognize when an animal is not a candidate for rehabilitation (based on the severity and type of injury/illness). Once an animal has been fully examined, our team will assess the probability of a successful release. If a successful release is highly unlikely, and the animal is not a good candidate to become an education animal, we will humanely euthanize the animal. Keeping a wild animal in human care for prolonged periods with intensive physical therapy can cause more stress on the animal and can ultimately result in death. At HFW we recognize that in these instances, it saves the animal a lot of pain and suffering to humanely euthanize instead of forcing that animal to undergo intensive rehabilitation.

We do not take the decision to euthanize lightly, and our ultimate goal is to provide the solution that is most beneficial for the animal.

Transporting a Wild Animal

ALWAYS transport animals in a box or carrier - NEVER on your lap. Not only is it less stressful for the animal, it is much safer!

A captured animal is a stressed animal. Every animal can act in different ways depending on their stress and severity of their injuries. Some animals, once they get used to the movement of the vehicle, may become more or less active depending on the individual. If an animal can see light through the box/container, they are often more active. To reduce this, use a light sheet/pillowcase to block the light. Covering any light will also reduce the stress of the animal. Reducing stress for an animal is essential for successful rehabilitation.

Always be aware of the animal you are transporting, as they may escape from their box/container. If this happens while you are driving, remain calm and pull over as soon as possible. Re-capture the animal and place them back in the box. If this is not possible (e.g. they have destroyed their box), place them into a more secure container. It is not uncommon for an initially quiet animal to become active once getting used to the movement of the car and escape from their box if they are not well secured. In these instances, you can just add a little tape to the top of the box to keep it sealed. Make sure that the box/container is still well ventilated. Use your best judgement based on the situation and call the HFW hotline if you have any questions or concerns.

Place the box/container in your vehicle so that it remains upright and flat. The best place to place the box is on the floor behind the driver or passenger seat. If this is not possible, place the box as close to center of the car as possible to minimize the impact of sharp turns and rough road surfaces.

Do not transport an animal in the open bed of a truck.

To minimize stress, turn off the radio, or anything else that could make noise, and keep the windows closed. Wild animals perceive humans as predators and thus our voices can increase their stress levels. Being captured, confined to a box, and transported in a car, is very stressful for wild animals. Therefore, volunteers should aim to reduce stress as much as possible during transport.

Always drive safely and obey all traffic laws.

On cold days, try to keep the animal warm but not too hot. On hot days, do not let the animal overheat (Ensure plenty of ventilation in the container! Especially if it is a plastic tote).

Once you have an animal contained, proceed directly to drop off location. Animals should not be confined to a box/carrier for any longer than is absolutely necessary!

Drop-off Location:

Hope for Wildlife:
 (The Farm / HFW / Hopes)
 Phone: 902-407-9453 (please call only if necessary)
 Address: 5909 Hwy 207, Seaforth
 Hours: Anytime!

Understanding the Dispatch System

The primary means of dispatch of pending rescues and pick-ups will be through the Hope for Wildlife Dispatch Team Facebook Group. Generally, the posts will be for wildlife that needs rescuing, however, there may also be posts for extra help on the farm and odd jobs. The process is basically the same for any request posted.

The HFW Dispatch Team is a Facebook group.
 The HFW Dispatch user account is Hope's Facebook account for posting on the HFW Dispatch Team Facebook group.

Note: Please do not post on the HFW Dispatch Facebook Page if you have questions about a rescue, as it may go unnoticed for some time. Call the hotline if you have questions while on a rescue (902)407-9453

***Please note that HFW Dispatch (user account) Facebook messages and homepage are not monitored

The Process

- A call comes in to the HFW Emergency number (902)-407-9453
- HFW Dispatch staff will discuss the situation with the caller and ask a number of questions to determine whether or not the animal needs rescuing.
- If the animal needs our help, HFW Dispatch staff will post the details on the HFW Dispatch Team Facebook Group. Due to a number of reasons, these posts can range from detailed to very minimal information provided.
 - It is the responsibility of the rescuer to collect any information necessary that isn't already listed (find more details on this later).
- Sometimes it can be difficult to properly assess the situation over the phone. If the Dispatch staff is unable to determine over the phone, they will post for an experienced volunteer to go look into it.

If you arrive on scene and are unsure of whether the animal actually needs to be collected (i.e. fledgling birds can look injured but generally don't need our help!), then please remain on scene and phone the hotline for advice – (902) 407-9453.

Note: ALL dispatch calls MUST come through our hotline. If you hear from a friend or family member that there is an animal that may require our help, please refer them to our emergency hotline (902) 407-9453.

Accepting a Rescue

If you have a smart phone with Facebook capabilities, you can set it to notify you when a post has been made to the HFW Dispatch Page. However, Facebook does not always notify you if a new post or an update to a post has been made. Please refresh your Facebook app before commenting on a post. If you do not have a smart phone then it will be *your responsibility to check the Dispatch Page for new postings.*

When a rescue is posted and you feel that you are able to complete that rescue in a timely manner (leaving within 15 minutes), you can accept that rescue by writing a COMMENT on the initial post indicating that you will be handling that rescue. **Please comment first before contacting caller.**

Once you have indicated that you are accepting a rescue, it is your responsibility to complete that rescue and follow through with any actions required immediately.

If for any reason you are unable to complete a rescue that you have accepted you must notify HFW Dispatch staff IMMEDIATELY so that the rescue can be reposted (902-407-9453).





 HFW Dispatch ► HFW Dispatch Team
 Admin · 1 hr · 

Injured pigeon
 Contained
 Jim: 902-123-4567
 123 South Street, Halifax

 Like
  Comment

Seen by 28 people


 Hfw Dispatch 
 Calling
 1h Like Reply


 Hfw Dispatch 
 On my way to pick up
 Just now Like Reply


 Hfw Dispatch 
 Picked up bringing to farm
 Just now Like Reply


 Hfw Dispatch 
 Done
 Just now Like Reply


 Write a comment...
 


Posting on the HFW Dispatch Page

In order for us to efficiently track each rescue please adhere to the following guidelines. This is VERY important when things get busy in the spring/summer! And it is in the best interest of the animals if we can all follow the same rules.

The following is an example of a typical dispatch post:

Posts will typically give the callers name, phone number, and address, whether or not the animal is contained, and what type of animal needs to be picked up.

When you have decided to accept the rescue, comment “calling” to let other volunteers know you will be taking on this case. PLEASE comment BEFORE calling to reduce confusion.

Once you have made arrangements with the caller, comment on the post to let the dispatch team know. If you called and were directed to the caller’s voicemail, leave a detailed message

addressing who you are, why you are calling, and a number they can call you back at. In this instance, also make a comment that you have left a message.

When you've completed a rescue, make another comment stating what the outcome of the rescue was. This could include that the bird flew away, the animal was dead on arrival, or typically, that you have the animal and where you plan to bring it (e.g. the rehab, or if you plan to relay to another volunteer). This will let the dispatch staff know where the animal will end up.

Once you have dropped off the animal, comment "done" so that the dispatch staff can remove the post.

Some commonly used short forms:

- The Farm or Hopes or HFW – Hope for Wildlife facility (5909 Hwy 207, Seaforth)
- MAEC or Emerg – Metro Animal Emergency Clinic (201 Brownlow Ave. unit 32, Burnside)

PLEASE:

- Keep all comments brief and about the rescue.
- Every time someone makes a new comment on a post, it brings the post back up to the top of the page. This can cause other posts to get lost or forgotten about at the bottom of the page. It can also get complicated for the Dispatch team to follow how a rescue is going if there are numerous comments on it.
- Do not "like" posts (while this may be tempting, "liking" it can bring it up to the top of the page which can cause other posts to get lost at the bottom)
 - You can however "like" comments on posts, without affecting the position of the post
- Comment under each post that you are carrying out (if you are completing more than one, be sure to comment separately under every post)

You have confirmed that you are undertaking a requested rescue, now what?

Call the contact person (the caller) who reported the injured animal and confirm the following details:

- State your name and that you are a Hope for Wildlife volunteer.
- Give a phone number where you can be reached, as you never know what could happen!
- Confirm the condition and whereabouts of the animal
 - Is it contained? Sometimes callers will tell the dispatch staff that the animal is contained, when in fact it is not. If you are not comfortable catching an animal, politely tell the caller that some one else will be in contact to rescue the animal and update the Facebook post to let the dispatch team know that the animal is not contained.
 - Is it alive? Sometimes when an injured animal calms down after being caught, their adrenaline can decrease allowing them to succumb to the full extent of their injuries. Asking a caller to check to make sure that the animal is still alive can save you an unnecessary drive. If the caller tells you the animal has died, please comment and update on the Facebook post.
- Confirm where you will be meeting the contact for pick-up. Get a civic address if possible, and any nearby landmarks. Give an estimated time of arrival, allowing for traffic, travel, etc. In some

cases, there won't be a contact person at the rescue site when you arrive, so it is important to have as much information as possible.

- Make sure you have all details written down and with you before departing!
- Ensure you have any necessary supplies with you. Refer to the inventory list above
- Proceed to the indicated pick-up location.
- Greet the contact person if they are available. Remember, you are representing Hope for Wildlife, so please be polite and courteous, and please no gum chewing as this can look unprofessional. Introduce yourself and offer identification if asked and thank them for calling Hope for Wildlife.
- Collect the injured animal. See “Capturing and Transporting” section for details.
- Ask the contact to fill out an intake form (explained below). If there is not a contact on site, fill out the intake form with the information you have.
- THANK THE CONTACT AGAIN. It is important for people to know we appreciate their help and that they can trust us with this animal’s care.
- Deliver the animal to the drop-off location.
- Post an update comment on the original Facebook post to let the dispatch staff know the rescue has been completed, and indicate the final result (i.e. dropped at farm, animal not found, etc.).

Often the person who reports an animal to HFW will have already caught the animal. In these instances, they may have used some of their own items – carrier, blankets, towels, etc. Please make sure to ask the contact if they need any of these items back. If they do, return these items right away. This may require you to place the animal in a box or carrier of your own. DO NOT take items that people want back. When an animal comes into the rehab, it is very difficult to track what happens to the items that they arrived with. Furthermore, we would have to arrange to have the items delivered back to their owner. It is much easier to return the items to their owners while you are already there with them. When you return the items, make sure to tell the contact that they need to clean any equipment before using it again. This should be done with soap and water and a 10% bleach solution for carriers (as outlined above) and wash all fabrics with soap and warm water. If the contact is willing to let us keep the item(s) they have used to catch the animal, thank them for their generosity.

In some instances, where the animal has already been contained, the caller may be willing to meet you to reduce driving time. In these instances, make sure that the following is clear for both parties:

- What is the exact meeting location (e.g. where in a parking lot, which gas station)?
- Does the caller have a cell phone? Will they have it on them and will you be able to contact them if needed? Do they have your number?
- What color/ type of car are they in? Do they know what color/type of car you are in?

While these seem like obvious points, sometimes assumptions can be made, or things are unclear, and if you are waiting in the wrong location and the caller does not have a cell phone, this can make a rescue much more difficult and frustrating for both parties.

Sometimes when you complete a rescue, the contact will offer to make a donation to Hope for Wildlife. If the contact offers to make a donation, thank them for their generosity. We accept all donations and can provide a tax receipt for donations exceeding \$10. If they would like to receive a tax receipt, please make sure that you have their full name, mailing address, and phone number. Once you arrive at the drop off location, make sure the staff know if you have a donation and if the contact would like a tax receipt.

Intake Forms

Intake forms are Hope for Wildlife's primary means of keeping track of the information associated with a new animal. Any information we can collect from a rescue can help us form a better plan for that animal's rehabilitation. This information is also crucial for release of that animal. To survive in the wild, animals need access to readily available food, water, and den sites. By returning an animal to where it was found, the animal will already know where these resources are located.

This is what the intake form looks like and with an explanation of each section:

Front side

ADMISSION FORM ID#3245

Date: _____ Time of Pick Up: _____

Species & Quantity: _____

Name: _____

Phone number: (_____) _____

Address: _____

Email address: _____

Would you like us to email you our **yearly newsletter**? Y N

OUTCOME REQUEST ID#3245

Thank you for caring about Nova Scotia's wildlife!

Every year at Hope for Wildlife we take over 4000 wild animals into our care. Due to high volume and limited resources, we are unable to give updates on sightings, red squirrels, and raccoons. For all other animals, a final outcome can be requested after ten weeks has passed (the average length of stay for patients). If you would like to know the outcome of a patient, please contact us **by email only** ten weeks after a pickup/ drop-off.

Our email address is: outcomes@hopeforwildlife.net
In your email, please include the ID # at the top of this card.

Back side

Rescue team member name: _____

Original location/address where the animal was found: _____

Relevant notes (food/water given; how long did the contact have the animal in care, etc.): _____


Presenting problem & Initial Treatment: _____

SUPPORT

Caring for injured and orphaned wild animals involves significant expenses in food, housing, medical supplies, fuel, and utilities. Hope for Wildlife is a registered charity that relies on donations. Donations can be made by mail, by phone, or online:

Hope for Wildlife, 5909 Hwy 207, Sealforth, NS B0J 1N0
902-407-9453
hopeforwildlife.net

Thank you for your support... because they matter.



Important when things get busy as cards can get mixed up, and this helps make sure the right information stays with the right patient

Contacts name – Important in case there are questions about the patient/rescue

Contacts phone number – Important in case we need to ask questions about the patient/rescue

Contacts address – not the address the animal was found!!!

ADMISSION FORM ID#3245

OUTCOME REQUEST ID#3245

Rescue team member name: _____

Original location/address where the animal was found: _____

Relevant notes (food/water given; how long did the contact have the animal in care, etc.): _____

Presenting problem & Initial Treatment: _____

SUPPORT

HOPE for WILDLIFE logo

Your name – Important in case there are any questions about the rescue process

Important to be able to release the animal where they came from after they have recovered

Important to know how long the animal has been in captivity, if they've received water/food (and what type of food), as this can change the intake process

Important to know why the contact believed the animal needed our help so we know what to look for and what treatment plan to follow

Break this off and leave with contact. Using this ID# is the only way we can offer them the option to find out about the outcome of the patient

Intake forms are available at the rehab. If you do not have an intake form with you on a rescue, please record all required information outlined on the intake form and transfer it to an intake form once you arrive at the drop off site.

Please fill out each section as best as possible. The more information we have, the better we can help the animal.

Please indicate if the animal you are bringing in did or may have come in contact with a cat or dog. These animals need to be treated with antibiotics, and without this information, it can be very hard to tell if an animal has been attacked by a cat/dog.

Please note that we do offer the option for people to find out the outcome of the animal they have reported. However, the only way we can do this is by using the ID number located on the intake form. Once you have filled out the form, break off the bottom part and leave it with the contact. Explain to them that if they are interested in finding out the outcome of the animal, they **MUST** follow the directions on the card **AND** have the ID number. However, due to the high volume of starlings, red squirrels, and raccoons, that come to HFW, outcome requests are more difficult as they are often kept together in groups once they have been medically treated. Thus, we try our hardest to provide updates, but their identity is hard to keep track of.

Organizations We Work With

Department of Natural Resources

PLEASE NOTE: If Department of Natural Resources (DNR) is on scene, they are **IN CHARGE** and you are expected to be polite and follow their instructions. Be sure to introduce yourself and offer assistance. Please however, do not discuss any HFW business with them, as it can be very easy for miscommunications to occur.

DO NOT contact DNR to assist on a rescue. If you feel that DNR needs to be involved in a rescue, contact the hotline and Hope will contact DNR. To avoid miscommunication, all DNR contact **MUST** go through Hope.

Veterinary Hospitals

Sometimes people will drop off wild animals to veterinary hospitals. In these instances, the vets will contact HFW to come and pick the animal up. Veterinary hospitals are volunteering their resources by keeping these animals for us. Please be courteous to any veterinary staff you encounter. You may ask if they have collected any information regarding the animal or person who dropped the animal off. If they do not have any information that is OK. Please record if any medication was given (type and amount) and alert HFW staff when dropping off of the animal. Always thank the veterinary staff for their help.

Common Questions that *You* Might Be Asked

As a representative of Hope for Wildlife, you may be asked questions regarding the care of the animal(s) you are picking up or their condition. Please use the following guidelines for answering questions from member of the public:

What is wrong with this animal?

DO NOT MAKE GUESSES!! We can never be 100% sure of what may be wrong with an animal or what could be causing its condition just by looking at it. It can be very harmful/ misleading to make guesses or "play doctor" when it comes to diagnosing injured wildlife. A good response would be, "We will have to wait for our doctor to examine this animal before we can be sure what the issue is, but we will do whatever possible to help."

What will happen to him/her?

Many people will want to know what is going to be done with the animal once it has been picked up. You can respond with, "The animal will be thoroughly examined and assessed by our staff and medical team. Please be assured that every animal we receive is provided the very best of care. We do everything possible to help every animal."

Are you going to put him/her down?

It is not necessary to bring up euthanasia *unless the contact specifically asks*. It is the mandate of Hope for Wildlife to provide every animal with an equal chance of survival and release. We make every effort to provide the best possible care for every animal that comes to us. In the cases of severely injured or ill animals we feel it is our responsibility to provide the animal with the dignity of a humane euthanasia if it cannot be saved or rehabilitated to a releasable condition. You can respond with "Our medical team will assess the animal, and if his/her injuries are too severe that the animal will not recover to a releasable condition, we will give him/her the dignity of humane euthanasia so that the animal does not suffer unnecessarily."

What will happen when he/she is ready for release?

Whenever possible, we make the effort to return the animal to the location where it was found. Exceptions will be made in cases of: migratory animals that need to be released on a migration path; herd animals (such as deer) that are released as a group; animals that were picked up in locations that are unsuitable/ unsafe for release. *Please Do Not promise they can have the animal back*. If the contact asks to be involved in the release, make sure you include this on the intake form and we will try our best to coordinate with them.

Will you let me know how he/she is doing?

Due to the high volume of animals we receive at Hope for Wildlife, we are unfortunately unable to provide continuous updates on every animal that enters our care. However, we do have an update email for requests and will do our best to respond in a timely manner. During the busy summer months, this may take 4-6 weeks. Update requests can be made by emailing outcomes@hopeforwildlife.net, as outlined above. Instruct the inquirer that the ID number is the easiest way that we can ensure they find out about the animal they have helped. Please advise them NOT TO CALL. The wildlife emergency number is extremely busy and should be focused on rescuing animals in need.

I have this (insert problem species) causing me problems around my yard/house. Will you guys take it away?

No. Wild animals are typically on a person's property because it has something that they want. This could include food, water, or shelter. Explain to the person that we do not take healthy animals, and finding the reason that animal is on their property to begin with is the easiest way to resolve the issue. You can also inform the person that live trapping and relocating can often exacerbate an issue as it can leave orphans behind or make room for a new animal to move into the undefended territory. Tell the

person that they can contact our hotline if they would like to know how to go about resolving a wildlife conflict.

Important Notes

At Hope for Wildlife we realize that you are donating your time to pick up animals, and we appreciate this! We do not want to see volunteers that want to help miss out because they can't afford the gas money to pick up animals. This is why we will reimburse you for any gas you use on a rescue. Please keep track of how much you gas you use driving to and from a rescue. To reimburse your gas money please choose one of two options:

- Take a picture of your gas receipts and email them to Hope – hope@hopeforwildlife.net. Make sure you include if you would prefer a cheque (can be picked up from the rehab or mailed) or etransfer (include the email address associated with your bank account)
- Bring your gas receipts to the rehab, with your name and information regarding payment (cheque or etransfer)

If you are not interested in being reimbursed for your gas, you can still receive a tax receipt for any gas used on rescues. Please follow the same methods outlined above, but include that you are only interested in receiving a tax receipt instead of payment. For tax receipts we require your name, address, and phone number.

Please try to bring in gas receipts no more than once per month. Receipts are required for HFW to reimburse you for your gas!

Our staff at HFW are extremely grateful for all of our volunteers. Without dispatch volunteers especially, we wouldn't be able to help these animals. However, the staff at HFW are often very busy. While staff are always willing to help when necessary, there is a lot of work to get done at the rehab, and often we do not have time to chat for long periods. Please try to direct your questions to the right place so that we can help you in a time efficient manner:

- Emergency questions – call/text the emergency hotline 902-407-9453
- Non-emergent questions – email danny@hopeforwildlife.net

Please **do not** respond to a post unless you are able to complete it right away (i.e. do not post that you will “do it later”). Sometimes the HFW Dispatch Staff will tag specific people they think may be nearby in a post, or comment on a post looking for anyone available (they will do so by simply commenting on the post “anyone?”). At this point, you may comment on a post that you are not able to do right away.

Comment first on the post, and THEN contact the caller (this is important to avoid multiple people contacting one person, which can appear unprofessional)

In the instances where you have to use a non-HFW carrier, please make sure that the owners full name and phone number is written directly on the carrier! There are a lot of supplies that come through HFW and if the contact details are not on the items, we can not guarantee that they will make back to the owner!

Important Tips:

- DO keep the animal contained in a dark, quiet place.
- DO provide a source of heat for cold, oiled and baby wildlife.
- DO NOT attempt to feed animals. Feeding a cold, dehydrated orphan can be fatal; offering incorrect foods can make animals ill.
- DO NOT unnecessarily open the container or handle the animal – this only causes more stress.
- DO NOT let children handle wildlife – even the babies can carry harmful diseases or give a nasty bite.
- DO NOT take pets out with you on pickups. It is stressful for the rescued animal and puts your pet at risk of exposure to harmful contagious diseases
- DO NOT put an animal directly on a heat source. Wrap a towel around hot water bottles, and make sure there is enough space in the container for the animal to move away from the heat.

If you run into any problems while on a rescue contact our emergency hotline at (902) 407-9453

Manual Review Questions

Please Email your answers to danny@hopeforwildlife.net

- 1) You take on a dispatch call for an injured raccoon. You were told the caller had already contained the animal, but when you arrive you realize the animal is not contained. What do you do?
- 2) You arrive at a dispatch call to collect an animal. The caller asks you what you think is wrong with the animal, what you will do with the animal, and if they can come visit the animal at the rehab. What do you tell them?
- 3) After reading this manual, is there anything else that you think would be helpful to your success as a Hope for Wildlife Dispatch volunteer?

References:

¹Blancher, P. 2013. Estimated number of birds killed by house cats (*Felis catus*) in Canada. *Avian Conservation and Ecology* **8**(2):3. <http://dx.doi.org/10.5751/ACE-00557-080203>

²Tuttle, M. 2018. Merlin Tuttle's Bat Conservation: Rabies in Perspective. <https://www.merlintuttle.org/resources/rabies-in-perspective/>

³Drebot, M. A. et al. 2015. Hantavirus pulmonary syndrome in Canada: An overview of clinical features, diagnostics, epidemiology and prevention. *Canada Communicable Disease Report* **41**(6). <https://doi.org/10.14745/ccdr.v41i06a02>