



Found an Orphaned or Injured Baby Bunny?



Eastern Cottontail Rabbits

- Breeding occurs from February to September; females can have several litters a season. After a 28-day gestation period, babies are born into a nest in a shallow depression in the ground covered with fur, grass, and leaves.
- Mother feeds only twice a day at dawn and dusk, so you may not see her! She does not want to draw predators to her nest!
- If you find a nest, OBSERVE carefully. If the babies look healthy, leave them alone. Do not touch them; mother rabbits are sensitive to foreign smells and may abandon their young if handled by a human.
- **Please do not kidnap healthy babies!** Their best chance of survival is with their mom.
- If you are concerned about a neighbor's dog disturbing the nest during the day (around 8am to 5pm when the mom wouldn't be around anyway), you can cover the nest with a plastic laundry basket turned upside down, lifted on two rocks high enough for their mom to fit underneath (but not too high that predators could get in). Place heavy stones on top to secure it. Keep pets/kids away from the area!
- If you are unsure whether the mother is coming back to nurse her babies, you can place several pieces of yarn in a starburst pattern over the nest. Check back in 12 hours. If the pattern is displaced or pushed aside, then that is evidence the mom came back to feed her babies. All is ok!
- Bunnies grow quickly. In one week, fur begins to develop. Within 2 weeks, eyes and ears are open and they respond to sound. Leave the nest alone, and they will be gone before you know it!
- Baby bunnies typically leave the nest within 3 weeks. If you see the bunnies outside the nest and they are larger than a softball, fully furred, and ears up, they are ok on their own! Leave them be.

When to call for help. IF THE BUNNIES:

- Are not visited in the nest by mom in 12 hours
- Are hairless out of the nest, especially if caused by lawn mowing accident
- Are bleeding, have an open wound, or have a broken bone
- Have been in a cat's or dog's mouth
- Are covered in fly eggs (looks like small grains of rice)
- Are cold, wet, or crying nonstop

Always wear gloves when handling wildlife!

