



COTTONTAIL RABBTS

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Baby Bunnies

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Here are some general guidelines if you should get a call on bunnies:

- If there are two or more bunnies in a slight depression in the ground, it is a nest. Leave it alone.
- If the nest has been disturbed, use the crossed stick (12 to 15 inch-long twigs) procedure below. There are no two bunny nests that look alike. Some are in the middle of the yard, some are beside a bush, some are under a woodpile, some are in tall grass . . . the possibilities are endless.
- If you find a single bunny with its eyes closed on flat ground unprotected, - it may have been dragged from the nest by a cat, dog or bird. Carefully check the area for other bunnies. Put baby(s) in a box with towels or blankets, keep warm and bring it to a licensed rehabilitator. Baby bunnies can jump surprisingly high. Keep a lid on the box at all times. Many times they jump out and are then injured.
- If you find a bunny whose eyes are open and it hops around....and can run fast, then leave it alone. This bunny is probably ready to leave its nest. It should be about the size of a tennis ball or larger. If it doesn't hop away from you, that does not necessarily indicate there is a problem. Bunnies have a “freeze” instinct. When danger approaches, the bunny freezes in place to keep from being detected. A rabbit that freezes like this is extremely frightened. Leave it alone.

If you find a nest that has been washed out by rain water it may be best for the caller to talk to a rabbit rehabber before putting the babies back in the nest.

Most of the bunnies brought to wildlife rehabbers should have been left in the nest. If a person finds a rabbit nest, he/she should leave the area alone. The young will not take long to leave the nest... about four weeks if they are

found as newborns. If a family pet finds the nest, protect the area by restraining the pet or placing a wheelbarrow or other object over the nest site (remember to leave space where the doe can easily get in and out). **It is important that the caller know that they need to keep children (best is not to tell any children), cats and dogs away for a couple of weeks**

Crossed Stick (Twigs) Procedure:

Sometimes the mother rabbit does not return to the nest and this is usually because she is dead. A rabbit will return to a nest that has human scent on it as long as the nest itself has not been destroyed.

If the nest has been disturbed, have the person place all material back in the nest. Place two or three 12-15 inch twigs in an "X" over the nest. The **next morning**, check the X. If the sticks have moved at all, the doe returned to feed her young, so leave the nest alone. The caller will most likely never see the mom coming or going from the nest.

If the nest has not been disturbed and the caller feels certain the mother is not returning.....have the caller talk to a rabbit rehabber before removing the babies. The rabbit rehabber will ask the caller to check for dehydration and also check for any parasites, flies and ants before deciding whether to bring them in immediately.