



# What To Do Before You Rescue Wildlife

*A quick guide for keeping **you** and **wildlife** safe*

## ❶ First — Pause & Observe

Not every animal that looks alone or injured needs help.

- Watch quietly from a distance for at least 1–2 hours (unless the animal is clearly injured).
- Parent animals are often nearby even if you don't see them.
- Do not feed or offer water. This can cause serious harm.

If the animal is bleeding, attacked by a pet, hit by a car, or in immediate danger — move to the next step.

## ▢ Safety Comes First

Your safety matters.

- Use gloves when possible, a towel, or thick clothing if you must contain an animal.
- Keep children and pets away.
- Place the animal in a dark, quiet, ventilated box if containment is necessary.

## ✳ Rabies Vector Species (RVS)

Do NOT handle with bare hands. Ideally, hold off handling at all until you contact a professional for guidance. Touching a rabies vector species can not only potentially put you in danger, but it could also mean a death sentence for that animal.

Rabies vector species in the state of Rhode Island include:

- Raccoons
- Skunks
- Foxes
- Woodchucks
- Bats

➡ Call professionals immediately.

## 📞 Who To Call (Rhode Island)

### Wildlife Clinic of Rhode Island

📞 401-294-6363

Always your first call when wildlife is injured or orphaned.

## RI Department of Environmental Management (DEM)

📞 401-222-3070

- Contact DEM for adult deer, adult rabies vector, or larger wildlife emergencies.

## 🐾 Our Rehabilitation Scope

We are licensed to rehabilitate small, non-rabies-vector mammals, including:

- Squirrels
- Eastern cottontail rabbits
- Opossums

We do not directly rehabilitate rabies vector species, deer, or large wildlife.

### ✓ We CAN:

- Triage all species
- Stabilize when appropriate
- Transfer animals to the proper licensed facility

➡ **Please contact the Wildlife Clinic of RI first whenever possible, especially for species we do not rehabilitate directly.**

## ❤️ Thank You

Doing the right thing before intervening can save a life.

When in doubt — observe, don't assume, and call a professional.

Together, we protect wildlife and the people who care about them.

### Elisha Zonfrilli

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*Boulderwood Sanctuary & Wildlife Rehabilitation*