

**FIVE GOOD REASONS TO LEAVE THEM IN THE WILD**

1. They're not abandoned.

Bird and animal mothers will leave their young while they search for food during the day. This is the time when the young are most vulnerable to well meaning humans. Young fawns, for example, are quite safe when left alone because their color pattern and lack of scent help them to remain undetected until their mothers return. The adult animal is probably waiting for you to leave so it can return to care for its young.

2. It's illegal.

Picking up young animals is against the law. Both the Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks and the Kansas Department of Health and Environment have regulations against such activity. Fines can be up to $1,000 . State permits are required to legally possess most species of wild animals. For some species, federal permits are required and fines are more severe.

3. They may carry disease.

Even though they may look cute and fuzzy, wild animals carry a number of potential health threats. Rabies can be transmitted from a bite or saliva contacting an open would. Distemper and rabies are the most common illnesses that household pets acquire from wild animals. Ticks and fleas borne by some animals carry lyme and other diseases. Wild animals may also carry bacteria, roundworms, tapeworms, mites, and/or protozoans that can cause diseases in humans or their pets.

4. They're not pets.

Although young animals may be cute and cuddly, they are wild animals. Many well-meaning people have taken young animals home, and then quickly learned that they're not equipped to handle the animal as it matures. "Adopting" young wild animals may be an irresistible urge for some people, but wild animals typically make poor pets as adults. Many people have been injured by animals that initially seemed easily tamed.

5. Good intentions can be deadly.

Many animals taken into captivity soon die. Those that don't are denied the opportunity to learn how to survive in their natural environment, so they seldom develop the skills necessary for them to survive when they are eventually returned to the wild. Their ability to find natural foods is hindered, and the natural wariness that is learned in the wild is impaired. Young wildlife raised in captivity often develop an attachment to humans. Upon their release to the wild, they may have little fear of people and return to make nuisances of themselves, or put themselves in danger of traffic, or attack from domestic animals. Further, when released to the wild they may be thrust as unwelcome intruders into the home range of another member of their species. And you might relocate an animal with disease into a population that did not have the disease.