

# SO YOU FOUND A BABY RABBIT...

AWARE Wildlife Center  
4158 Klondike Rd  
Stonecrest, GA 30038  
[www.awarewildlife.org](http://www.awarewildlife.org)

## DO ANY OF THE FOLLOWING APPLY TO THE RABBIT?

- The baby is injured, was caught by a cat, or was caught by a dog in an unfenced area.
- The mother has been found dead in the nest.
- The baby is skinny, dehydrated, or barely responsive.
- There are parasites (fleas, ants, maggots, etc.) on the baby.

YES

## CONTACT THE AWARE HELP DESK

[AWAREWILDLIFE.ORG/CONTACT](http://AWAREWILDLIFE.ORG/CONTACT)

or find another rehabber at  
[awarewildlife.org/rehabbers](http://awarewildlife.org/rehabbers)

NO

## HAS THE NEST BEEN DISTURBED?

YES

- Put **everything** back:
  - All babies and bedding returned.
  - OK to CAREFULLY handle babies, mom doesn't mind!
- **Location** is vital!
  - Mom has GPS, can't find nest if different spot.
  - Rebuild nest in **original** spot.
  - Even if destroyed by pet/lawnmower/thunderstorm.
- Mom uses her own fur to line the nest,
  - Do not be alarmed if rabbit fur scattered around a disturbed nest.

NO

## THIS IS A HEALTHY BABY RABBIT NEST

Cottontail rabbit nests commonly look abandoned. Mom only visits the nest 1-2x to feed, typically between dusk to dawn, and is easy to miss. There are signs to know if mom returns to nest overnight (see yellow box below).

## MONITOR THE NEST

- Check the babies' bellies:
  - At dusk, bellies should be flat and empty.
  - At dawn, bellies should be round, full of mama's milk!
  - If bellies are flat at dawn, check again next morning.
- Check their activity levels:
  - Rabbits have a very fast metabolism, babies will quickly show signs of stress after missing 1-2 feedings.
  - If the babies are active and responsive, they most likely are being cared for.
  - If the babies are barely responsive and extremely weak, they need help.



## IF RENESTING BABY ISN'T POSSIBLE

### FIRST

- Bring baby inside and put in a small, secure box
- Add padding
  - Bedding from nest
  - Soft rags w/no holes, fringe, or strings.
- Add a heat source
  - Heating pad on LOW placed under HALF of the box.
  - Microwave a sock until warm
- Wrap heat source in rag (no holes/fringe/string) so that it won't burn baby.

### NEXT

- Keep baby in box somewhere warm, quiet, and dark.
- Keep **away** from children, pets, and excessive handling.
- **Do not** feed or give water.
  - Only exception is 100% pesticide free grass misted with water.
  - If unsure if grass is pesticide free, **do not** give.

## IMPORTANT!

- Rabbits are **sensitive** animals and can **die from stress** very easily.
- Baby rabbits **best** chance to grow up is with their mom!
  - Babies have a very **low survival rate** in rehabilitation.
  - Every effort should be made to reunite the baby with mom.
- Risk from outdoor cats and dogs is not a good enough reason to remove babies from the nest. If worried:
  - Leash-walk dogs and keep cats inside.
  - For add'l advice on protecting the nest, contact us at [awarewildlife.org/contact](http://awarewildlife.org/contact).
- Please note that there is a disease going around among rabbits called Rabbit Hemorrhagic Disease (RHD).
  - Poses risk to **domestic rabbits**, no risk to humans or other domestic pets directly.
  - Highly contagious, often asymptomatic disease.
  - If you have pet rabbits: contact your veterinarian about **RHD vaccinations** and **do not handle** your rabbit after being in contact w/wild rabbit.
  - Dispose of anything that came in contact w/wild rabbit.





## RABBIT AGE OF INDEPENDENCE



### Newborn

Little to no fur, eyes closed, ears back and closed.

Age: ~1wk

Size: ≤ 35g

### Infant

Eyes still closed but starting to open, ears back but also starting to open, smooth coat.

Age: ~2 wk

Size: 35 to 60g

### Fuzz Stage

Eyes open, ears still back, fully furred with fuzzy coat, more alert and curious.

Age: ~3 wk

Size: 60 to 80g

### Juvie

Eyes fully open, ears start to come up, fully furred, more shy towards humans.

Age: ~4-5 wk

Size: 80 to 100g

### Independent

Eyes fully open, ears fully erect, fully furred, shows freeze response to humans.

Age: ~6 wk+

Size: 120g+