



Suggested Protocols and Guidelines for Transport of Wildlife

ALWAYS KEEP THE ANIMAL

- WARM
- DARK
- QUIET
- SECURE
- And remember SAFETY is the FIRST and most important consideration for you and the animal! Always wear the appropriate gloves: disposable for babies under 5 weeks, welder's gloves for animals capable of biting.

HEAT

- Low body temperature can indicate shock or a chilled animal.
- Supplemental heat should be provided.
- Heat can be in the form of a hand warmers placed into socks, a hot water bottle in pillowcase or a microwaved Snuggle-Safe put in pillowcase.
- The animal(s) should never touch the heat source directly. The heat source should always be covered with a fabric to prevent overheating and ample room must be allowed for the animal to move away from the heat should he become too warm! If heat is provided under a container it should only be provided under *half* of the container.

TRAVEL

- **DO NOT LET BABIES GET CHILLED OR TOO HOT!** The temperature of your vehicle alone can kill them. This means using the AC on hot days and not leaving any animals in a hot vehicle—(no lunch stops!)—and not putting them in the back of a truck or in the direct sun (even if covered) on a hot day, as temperature rise can occur quickly and kill them.
- Secure the cage in the back of the car, preferably on the floor, or in the cargo area.
- If there is not enough room on the floor, try to secure the container on the seat and secure it with a seatbelt or by tying it down.
- Never transport an animal in your trunk or in the open back of a truck!
- Do not place water bowls in the carrier during transport.

NOISE

- Keep talking low and to a minimum.
- Do not play the radio.
- Do not beep the horn.
- Never transport an animal on a motorcycle!

NO SMOKING

PROPER CONTAINERS FOR TRANSPORT

In many instances, the finder will have the animal(s) already contained. Whenever possible, avoid moving the animal(s) to another container. Moving traumatized wildlife to another container will create additional stress for an already compromised animal.

The container needs to meet the following qualifications:

- **Secure** – prevents escape.
 - **Good Ventilation** – a secured screen on top, or air vents in a box.
 - **Visual Barrier** – essential to reduce stress as daylight, movement and other unnatural stimuli is scary to wild animals.

 - **Correct Size** –
 - **Baby Mammals:** A small cardboard nest box is ideal for use inside the carrier. Turn the box on its side with flannel inside for snuggling. Also put newspaper on the bottom of the box so that when the animal(s) defecate/urinate, it can be easily cleaned.
 - **Injured Animal(s):** The container should be slightly bigger than the animal. This will prevent panicked movement that could cause expenditure of energy reserves that the animal(s) don't have, and it can help to prevent additional injury to the animal(s). It is essential to prevent an already injured animal from being further injured because of struggling in captivity.
- Baby Birds:** Ideally should be placed in a margarine tub or berry box that is lined with toilet paper or Kleenex. This will help to prop them up and prevent their legs from splaying. Place the nest inside another box for easy transport.



Cardboard Box

- Excellent choice for small birds and baby mammals – strongly recommend using cardboard boxes for transporting wild animals.
- Free and disposable, and eliminates the need to disinfect the carrier for the next transport.
- Provides darkness to reduce stress.
- Easy to create approximately 20 vent holes (pencil size for small mammals and quarter size for larger mammals) with scissors near top of the cardboard box. This must be done **before** the animal is placed in the cardboard box! Secure the box with packing tape as needed. I always have several pieces of tape pre-cut because the noise of drawing out the tape can frighten the animal(s).
- Compact storage because you can nest several size boxes inside one another. This way you always have the size that is appropriate for the animal(s) you are going to transport.



Rubbermaid latch storage tubs

- Need to drill many 3/4" inch holes towards top.
- Must disinfect after each use.



Pet Carrier

- Good for large birds and mammals that could easily chew or break a cardboard box.
- Must use towels or blankets to provide visual barrier, covering all of the areas that allow the animal to see outside the carrier.
- May need to use (unraveling) cloth padding like flannel shirt.
- Need proper disinfection between animals – which could vary depending on the species of the animal(s) last transported!

When using a pet carrier for birds, cover the wire/slats/openings on the interior side, with Plastic Screening or other breathable lightweight material that will protect feathers and prevent further injury. A pillow case can be a quick remedy for the front door.



Collapsible Pet Crate

- Strong and handy to store in cars, but difficult to disinfect. They do not come apart like most pet carriers do, and they have many small working parts with nooks and crannies.
- Extra security when you place a cardboard box inside for extra protection from potential escapees.
- Must be properly disinfected between uses.

When using a collapsible pet crate for birds, cover the wire/slats/openings on the interior side, with Plastic Screening or other breathable lightweight material that will protect feathers and prevent further injury.

IF YOU NEED TO OPEN A CONTAINER OR YOU NEED TO TRANSFER AN ANIMAL always wear latex gloves to prevent direct contact with animals and use heavier gloves with older babies to prevent bites and scratches.

SPECIES SPECIFICATIONS

SONGBIRDS

- Perching bird: Place baby blanket or t-shirt material in bottom of container and can add a very low perch (1"). Be sure to secure the perch if one is provided!
- Pad the sides with cloth that doesn't unravel.
- Avoid feather damage – the container should be large enough to not damage feathers, and small enough to prevent excessive movement. No wire cages for birds, please!

WATERFOWL (DUCKS, LOONS, SWANS, GEESE)

- Ducklings need to be in a very low box/container with venting holes no larger than pencil size. They cannot have enough room to jump. They will jump themselves to death!
- Place baby blanket or t-shirt material in bottom of container.
- Avoid feather damage – the container should be large enough to not damage feathers, and small enough to prevent excessive movement. No wire cages for birds, please, unless you cover the inside of the wire cage with appropriate padding!
- Pad the bottom for keel sensitive species.
- Do not place water bowls in carriers with baby waterfowl. Their feathers are not yet waterproof and they can develop hypothermia.

SEABIRDS (HERONS, GULLS)

- Volunteers should NOT transport herons (goggles would be required), egrets or loons unless the wildlife is already contained and secured by an experienced rehabilitator, or the transporter is fully trained in the handling of these species.
- Pad the bottom for keel and feet sensitive species.

RAPTORS

- Volunteers should NOT transport raptors unless the wildlife is already contained and secured by an experienced rehabilitator, or the transporter is fully trained in the handling of these species.

TURTLES

- Always wear appropriate gloves when handling turtles (disposable gloves for babies and welding gloves for older turtles). This is especially important when working with the Eastern Box Turtles, because they can get fatal infections from us, and we can get salmonella from them.
- Mark and document the exact place the turtle was found so it can be returned there.

RABIES VECTOR SPECIES (RVS) RACCOONS, SKUNKS, FOXES

- Welder's gloves are recommended to prevent bites. If you are bitten by a mammal, the animal will need to be euthanized to test for rabies. Protect the animal by protecting yourself!

OPOSSUMS

- When found with a dead mother - make sure the mom is actually dead and not just injured or "fainting".
- Open the pouch flap and remove the babies by holding the muzzle and untwisting them from the teat similar to how you would unscrew a jar top, and never pull from the body or tail.
- Check the pouch carefully because moms can have as many as 13 babies. Check the surrounding area to see if any babies were knocked out of the pouch or crawled out on their own.

- Listen for clicking and hissing noises which is how they communicate. This will help to locate stragglers.

OTHER MAMMALS

- Welder's gloves are recommended for any animal capable of biting.
- Line the bottom of your carrier container with a fleece baby blanket or tee shirt material and add extra cloth to cover the animal(s) and provide them with a place to snuggle. Pad if necessary.
- Use packaging tape to secure the container if needed. Many animals are escape artists! Depending on species and age, some mammals can chew out of a cardboard box or crate rather quickly, such as a woodchuck.

CONTAINERS, BEDDING, COVERS AND ANYTHING USED IN TRANSPORT MUST BE DISINFECTED OR DISCARDED AFTER EVERY USE!

If you have ever seen an animals suffer and die from diarrhea, distemper or parvo; you would never think of reusing a container without first disinfecting it.

When transporting raccoons and skunks, use disposable containers ONLY and dispose of after each use. This will prevent the transfer of diseases such as roundworm, parvo and distemper.

Disinfection protocols when using non-disposable container and/or bedding:

- Wash the container well with soap and water until all organic material has been removed.
- Rinse.
- Soak with a solution of 1-part bleach in 9-parts water for at least 10 minutes.
- Rinse and allow to dry well.

ITEMS YOU SHOULD HAVE ON HAND

- Cardboard box
- Old flannel shirts, pieces of fleece, cotton diapers
- Bleach
- Paper towels
- Latex gloves
- Gardening gloves
- Heavy welding gloves
- Heavy packaging tape
- Scissors
- Portable heat sources (hand warmers, Grabber Warmers 48 hours, Snuggle-Safe, bottle filled with hot water)