

RESCUE NOT NEEDED: *Young are usually OK*

BY JOHN N. FELSHER

The more time you spend outdoors, the more likely you are to eventually encounter a wild animal that appears to be in need of rescue. If you discover wildlife that seems to be in need, the first thing to remember is that, despite appearances, this is very rarely the case. Many mammals leave their young alone for the majority of the day, and fledgling birds are on the ground for a period of time being fed by their parents before they take flight. This means that a young, uninjured bird or mammal is not in need of rescuing.

The best thing to do in these instances is to leave the animal where it was found. If it has already been moved from its point of origin, it is still OK to return the youngster to its capture site, even hours later. The notion that a mother will reject babies after being touched by humans is a myth.

Many people make the mistake of monitoring the baby animal to see if mama returns. If you can see the area, this means that the parent can

also see you, and will not return because of your proximity. Leave the area and keep in mind that some species are only visited by their mother twice in a 24-hour period. This is normal, and not cause for alarm. If the animal is at risk from dogs or cats, it is the responsibility of the pet owner to control domestic animals — this is not an acceptable reason to remove wildlife from nature.

If you discover injured wildlife and feel the need to assist the animal, it is important to be aware of the legal and practical issues involved in “rescuing” wildlife.

Native wildlife cannot be held in captivity, even for the purposes of medical assistance, without proper permits. There are licensed wildlife rehabilitators throughout Alabama, and these individuals and facilities



This fawn is alone, but probably is not in need of help.

have the experience and enclosures necessary to tend to and house convalescing wildlife. Wounded and ailing animals must be transported as quickly as possible to those with a permit, and may not be kept in the care of the finder or even a local veterinary clinic which lacks a Wildlife Rehabilitation Permit. For a complete list of permitted persons and their contact information, organized by county, visit www.outdoorsala-

bama/current-wildlife-rehabbers. All native wildlife, from backyard birds to rabbits and deer are covered by this regulation.

A truly injured animal (hit by car, etc.) may be a candidate for transport to a licensed Wildlife Rehabilitator. Even then, the mortality rate for these animals is often very high. Wildlife generally birth large numbers of offspring in their lifetime to compensate for losses and for natural predation. An injured animal that dies is a food source for other wildlife, and is also often best left to its natural course of life and death.

Leaving nature to her natural cycles of birth, growth and renewal is an appropriate way to appreciate wildlife. Allowing the natural parents of a young animal to care for their offspring is the best way to ensure its healthy development and avoid the violations and fines sometimes associated with unlawfully possessing native wildlife. If you find a fawn, rabbit or other species alone in the woods, remember that they are right where they belong. Leave them as you found them.

HOWARD CUSTOM LUMBER

Specializing in Cedar, Cypress, Poplar, Ash & Heart Pine Flooring, V-Joint, Beaded Panels, Molding & Log Siding

Call NOW For Pricing And Availability!!

1782 Boyd Willie Parnell Rd.
Tibbie, AL 36583
251.847.2334
www.howardcustomlumber.net



Window & Door Molding,
Crown, Base and
Various Molding



Rough Cut Cypress



New Heart Pine Flooring



#2 Pine Log Siding



Poplar V-Joint