HAVE I FOUND A RABBIT OR HARE

Although similar in appearance, rabbits and hares are distinguished by differences in their anatomy and behavior.

- Hares tend to be larger than rabbits, with longer legs and feet
- Hares turn white in the wintertime
- Hares are found more typically in rural areas
- Hares are born at a more advanced stage than rabbits: covered with fur and with open eyes
- Hares have their babies in long grasses, fields, or under a bush
- Rabbits are born without fur
- Rabbits open their eyes days after birth
- Rabbit nests consists of a shallow hole covered with natural materials and fur
- Rabbit nests are commonly found in a garden or against a building in urban settings

IS THE RABBIT/HARE TRULY ORPHANED?

Once the young have their eyes open it is very common for them to come away from the nest a bit to explore. If you have found a baby rabbit or hare just sitting in your backyard, chances are it is not orphaned, and will make its way back to its nest in the evening. It is typical never to see mom tending to her babies, she comes usually once or twice a day to feed either late at night or early morning. This way she avoids luring predators back to the nest. However, if the rabbit/hare has been in the same spot for the past two days AND is easy to catch it is more likely orphaned and in need of help.

If you are uncertain, there are a few tricks you can try to determine if mom is still coming back:

- Sprinkle baking flour around the nest, if there are footprints in the flour the next morning, then mom is coming
- Place a string in the shape of an X over the nest. If in the morning the X is disturbed, then mom is coming
- If after a couple of days there are no signs of disturbance in the flour or of the X, then the babies will need to be rescued

AGING THE RABBIT/HARE

In order to properly care for the baby you have found, it is important to know its age. Consult the Rabbit or Hare development guide to assess the age.

Feeding

Orphans that have been without their mother will be suffering from chill and dehydration. They must be thoroughly warmed first, and then offered warmed rehydration solution. Pedialyte is a rehydration solution that is available in drug stores- it should be heated to body temperature and offered every couple hours for the first several feedings. Formula should be a powdered esbilac, which is a puppy milk replacer that can be purchased at a vet clinic or pet store. Mix only enough for 24hrs and keep it refrigerated. Cow's milk, human baby formulas, and most pet products (except Esbilac) are not suitable and will likely cause death. Ensure formula is well heated and kept warm throughout the feeding as cold formula will

cause diarrhea which can lead to death. Feed with a 1ml oral syringe ensuring that the feeding routine and environment is kept totally quiet. Please do not have more than one person as a caregiver and do not allow the animals to be handled by any other person. See chart for feeding schedule. Once feeding is finished, wash its face well with a damp face cloth, as formula dries quickly and causes fur loss.

* Rabbits and hares are slow and difficult to feed, so take your time and be patient, as it is essential for them to get the required amount.

HOUSING:

See chart.

RELEASE:

Should occur late in afternoon in appropriate area (where there is suitable habitat for either hare or rabbits) and where there would not likely be domestic predators such as dogs or cats. Hares should be at least 300 grams at release and becoming wild and hard to catch. While rabbits, should be around 200 grams and displaying similar behaviour.

***In some jurisdictions it is illegal to care for wildlife and you should consult your government wildlife agency.**