

GIVING WILD THINGS A CHANCE



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Every year, thousands of baby animals are left to die when people trap and relocate a nursing mother, block her access to an attic or soffit or remove her babies in the hope that she will take them some place else.

The spring is a challenging time for a mother – cold, rain, high winds and predators force females to seek out shelter closer to our homes as a safe spot to have their young when the newborn babies are most vulnerable.

Those leaf nests that squirrels normally occupy high up in trees would offer little protection against either the elements or predators. It explains why females, come March, are so desperate to get into an eave or attic or, for a raccoon mother to choose a chimney. Skunks and groundhogs will select holes under steps or sheds

because they too need to find a safe spot for their young.

Remember, the good news is that it is a **TEMPORARY** situation. The safest and most humane option during the birthing season from April to July is to give a brief grace period until the babies are weaned and coming out with mother, when the family will move to a natural area. You can then undertake the necessary animal-proofing.

It is also in a homeowner's best interest to resist taking wildlife problems into their own hands as abandoned hungry babies in an attic are often in inaccessible areas and can fall between walls, requiring expensive drywall removal or, if they are under steps, die and create bad and long-lasting smells.

Never risk barricading an animal as they can cause damage in trying to get back to their young or in

trying to escape. Do not smoke an animal out of a chimney. Babies would not be able to escape and you could cause a chimney fire.

Even wildlife removal companies that say they offer a humane service can give you no guarantee they won't end up creating orphans and, with limited help available for wildlife, it is wise not to take this risk. Besides, it is illegal under the Ontario Fish and Wildlife Conservation Act to relocate any wild animal beyond 1 kilometer from where it was found which makes trapping quite pointless.

Research all your options before taking any action. An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure when it comes to wildlife concerns. Take advantage of the experienced advice at www.wildlifeinfo.ca and keep this site handy for all your wildlife questions throughout the year.