



California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) **GUIDANCE – WILDLIFE AND FIRE EVENTS**

Fire events often leave many concerned citizens wondering what they can do to help displaced or injured wildlife. The CDFW appreciates every person who wants to help wild animals in California. The following information provides guidance on how to best help wildlife during emergencies:

WHO TO CONTACT

Leave wild animal rescue to trained professionals. If you find an orphaned, sick, or injured wild animal after a fire event, contact a licensed wildlife rehabilitator for guidance. These wild animals often have serious injuries that require intensive care and treatment by a trained wildlife professional.

- **California Wildlife Rehabilitation Facilities:** wildlife.ca.gov/wildliferehab
- **South Coast Region (Region 5):** R5WildlifeReport@wildlife.ca.gov

DANGERS AND RISKS

- **Wild animals can be dangerous.** Wildlife that are fed by humans often lose their natural fear of people and can become more bold or aggressive. Do not attempt to capture or handle a wild animal.
- **Wildlife can cause injury or harm.** Any displaced or distressed wild animal can cause injury to humans and pets. If you encounter a wild animal, provide an escape route, and move to a safe location. It will likely leave on its own.
- **Feeding wildlife can cause them harm.** Providing unnatural food and water sources may encourage a wild animal to stay in burned areas. This places them at risk for burns, injuries, exposure to harsh chemicals, and smoke.
- **Feeding wildlife can spread disease.** Many wildlife diseases are transferred through close or direct contact between animals. Wild animals that gather around feeding stations or artificial water sources can spread diseases to each other. Wildlife can also transmit diseases or parasites to people and pets.

PREVENTING HUMAN-WILDLIFE CONFLICT

- **Do not provide food or water to wildlife.** Feeding wildlife does more harm than good. Certain wildlife species such as black bears, bobcats, coyotes, deer, and mountain lions can be displaced into urban areas after a fire.
- **Do not attempt to rehabilitate wild animals if you are not a licensed wildlife rehabilitator.** This places humans, pets, and wildlife at risk. An untrained person may unintentionally prolong suffering and reduce the chance of the wild animal being able to return to the wild.

HOW CDFW IS HELPING

- CDFW is actively monitoring the intake of sick, injured, and orphaned wildlife.
- CDFW is providing support and coordination to wildlife rehabilitation facilities affected by fire events.
- CDFW is responding to public inquiries directly regarding potentially displaced wildlife.

HOW TO HELP

- **Volunteer** at a licensed wildlife rehabilitation facility. Contact individual wildlife rehabilitators to determine if they need volunteers.
- **Donate** directly to a licensed wildlife rehabilitation facility.
- **Contribute** to the Native California Wildlife Rehabilitation Voluntary Tax Contribution Fund using California state tax form (Line 439). All funds are provided to eligible wildlife rehabilitators. <https://wildlife.ca.gov/Tax-Donation>
- **Use the CDFW Wildlife Mortality Reporting System** to report dead wildlife wildlife.ca.gov/WHL
- **Use the CDFW Human-Wildlife Conflicts Toolkit** for information on how to minimize human-wildlife conflicts at <https://wildlife.ca.gov/HWC>

