

Rescue & Transport Manual

This manual was written and compiled by staff and volunteers of Liberty Wildlife (LW).

Material from this book is intended to be used in conjunction with the Liberty Wildlife Rescue and Transport Training Program and is not intended for use as a stand-alone manual.

Should the reader participate in a wild animal rescue, then the reader assumes all risks inherent in any confrontation with a wild animal. Liberty Wildlife, therefore, is not responsible should any harm result to the animal or to the reader.

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Facility Info

The hotline operates from 8 AM – 8:30 PM every day of the year. The intake window is open every day from 8 AM – 6 PM, but is closed on major holidays.

The alarm at the facility is armed at 9 PM. If you are on a rescue and don't think you will make it to the facility before 9 PM, call Nathan Thrash, at 318-402-5303. Let him know by 9 PM if you're going to be there after hours.

If you have a change in availability for rescues, please contact Nathan, NathanT@libertywildlife.org, and Doug, redondoaz@gmail.com via email with your new hours and areas of rescue.

Introduction to Rescue

Telling someone how to rescue animals is like explaining to someone how to paint pictures. It is difficult to understand what it is really like until you have done it yourself. However, without the correct tools –the brushes, canvas and some basic understanding of the process – the task is an arduous one at best.

The perils of a wildlife rescue by the inexperienced can be seen clearly in this first-hand account of a rescue made by a Liberty Wildlife volunteer:

My first rescue took place nearly seven years ago on a Sunday afternoon. I had just returned from a trip, and I got a call from a Liberty wildlife Hotline volunteer who asked if I could go to Casa Grande and pick-up some kind of bird; she wasn't sure of the species. I said "sure" and off I went. I found the man easily enough, and there was a Harris' hawk, in the bottom of the box he had, with an injured wing. I closed up the top of the box, placed it in the rear seat area of my pick-up truck, and headed north.

There was a lot of traffic, and I was making good time, but just as I passed McDowell, I heard the bird moving around in the box. I thought, "no problem. Even if he gets out, he's still in the car..." The next thing I knew, his head was out of the box, and soon after, the whole bird had emerged! I was totally naïve and had no idea of the danger I was in or what was to happen next. I failed to realize that the sliding rear window was open until the bird jumped up on the box and through the open window, out onto the hard plastic cover on my truck bed. As I slammed on the brakes, he leaped to the ground, crossed the median on Scottsdale Road, and ran across three lanes of heavy traffic. I was mortified! My first rescue, and I could envision the squashed remains of this magnificent bird. They would surely never call me again.

I was stopped at the intersection on Scottsdale and Thomas, waiting for the light to turn green. When I was finally able to proceed, I pulled into a small motel lot on the corner but could not see the bird anywhere. I ran around the building and still didn't see him. Finally, I spotted him in the net vacant lot, walking and dragging his bad wing.

I chased him around for a while. Then he chased me around for a while.

At last, he backed up into a row of oleanders, leaned back, and presented me with his talons. Not knowing the first thing about raptors, I thought "oh boy, I can grab his feet and avoid that beak!" Unaware that the business end of a raptor is its feet, I reached in barehanded and grabbed his legs, while he proceeded to grab my hands. Folks, this animal was much better equipped for grabbing than I was.

As I felt his talons sink into my hands, I knew I was in deep doo-doo. Every time I moved the slightest muscle, he gripped tighter, and since I had both hands involved in this way, I was trapped. I decided to try what usually works on my Cockatiels—talking softly. I began speaking slowly, quietly, and calmly, and about three minutes later, he released one foot. I used the free hand to gently tuck one wing into his body and the other to keep up the stream of verbiage. Finally, he let go of the other hand and I was able to tuck in the other wing and carry him back to the truck, where I proceeded to secure the lid. He seemed no worse for the experience. I, however, looked as if I had been playing patty-cake with a wood chipper for an hour.

The bottom line is:

Be patient – if you are in a hurry, you will make mistakes
Be sensible- behavior of these animals is simple and logical, learn to anticipate
Be careful - No explanation needed!

How it Begins

At a busy, yet beautiful municipal golf course, a foursome has just finished playing the 18th hole and is returning to the clubhouse. Suddenly, something leaps off the cart path in front of them and disappears into the bushes. The group stops the cart and investigates. What they find is a shock to them all—an owl, a large owl...sitting on the ground, clicking and staring ferociously. The group doesn't know what to do, but recognizing it is injured, races to the clubhouse and notifies the staff.

Liberty Wildlife receives the call. The Hotline volunteer notes the location of the animal and proceeds to call individuals listed on the Rescue and Transport volunteer list.

You are sitting down quietly before dinner, the barbeque going...and the phone rings! Your first rescue begins.

Tools of the Trade

One of the first things you need to consider before embarking on your initial animal rescue is the type of equipment you will need. You can do a respectable job with nothing more than a box, a blanket, and a pair of gloves. However, a few dollars invested (which may be deductible) will make your task much easier and safer for both the rescuer and rescue.

Gloves (required)

- You may choose to obtain several different pairs. A good pair of heavy-duty gloves can be purchased at any welding supply store for about \$10 and will last nearly forever. They should be at least mid-forearm length and have as few seams as possible. Do not get them too small, as the idea here is “function over fashion.” Welding gloves work well for medium to large raptors, such as Red-tailed hawks, Harris’ hawks and Great horned owls. These are the gloves available at training.
- A pair of small, leather work gloves come in handy when dealing with the smaller raptors and medium-to-small waterfowl.
- As a special note, the gloves used for wildlife rescue should be dedicated to this purpose and not used in situations involving educational wildlife or pets.

Carrier (required)

- Containing the animal is crucial, and a cardboard carrier, or an appropriately sized, hard-walled pet carrier, will make this easy.
- Keep your carriers clean. A good last step to every rescue is preparing your carrier for the next one.
- A carrier that is dark and well ventilated will keep the animal calmer during transport. By placing a towel, piece of carpet or Astroturf in the bottom of your carrier, the animal will be better able to keep its balance.
- Try to find out in advance what species you are dealing with. Always bring a carrier of an appropriate size, even if the call was for transport and not technically a rescue, as too large or too small a carrier can lead to further injury. One Liberty Wildlife volunteer was dispatched to pick up a barn owl and arrived to find that it was being held in a huge refrigerator box!

Blankets & towels (required)

- Blankets & towels can be used as a shield, padding, net, drape, cover, etc.

Liberty Wildlife Badge (required)

- ALWAYS have your Liberty Wildlife badge on you when doing a rescue. Not only does it give you access to the building after-hours, but it also has your permit on it. It is illegal to transport wildlife without your permit on you.

Flashlights & headlamps (required at night)

- A flashlight or headlamp can be very handy in locating animals at night or that have hidden under sheds or inside dark buildings.

Nets (optional)

- Although it looks simple, learning to use a net can be a challenge that you may opt against. The trick is to secure the animal without doing more damage.
- The size of the net should be in direct proportion to the size and strength of the animal you are attempting to catch.
- Regular landing nets with a handle extension made from PVC pipe can come in handy if you are scooping something out of a pool, or other body of water, or trying to catch a flighted bird inside a building or enclosure.
- A delicate approach must be utilized, as a bird's wings can be broken by a "strong arm" use of a net of almost any size.
- The bottom line is: *size up the situation*. The less obtrusive you make your presence, the easier your rescue will be. Do not make matters worse by using a net without due reason or if you are not confident of your success.

Field Guide (optional)

- Look for one that gives color pictures of the animals as well as a good written description. Also try to find one for your specific geographical area—that way, you won't need to waste time deciding between two possible species when one is found only in Australia!
- Taking a moment to identify your target before capture will help you to better understand the animal's behavior and any potential danger involved in its rescue.

Food

- One of the main tools for waterfowl rescue is food. Believe it or not, hard kitten food seems to work best for ducks and geese. The individual pieces are small, and all but the tiniest ducklings can eat it; it also provides the crude fat and protein lacking in bread. Additionally, kitten food scatters easily and promotes a feeding frenzy that facilitates the "feed and pounce" method of capture.
- Ducks seem to enjoy bread and certainly get plenty of it from uninformed, yet well-meaning, people. DO NOT use bread to lure in waterfowl, as it is not good for them.

First Aid

- Scrapes, cuts, bruises, and possibly bites or punctures do occur. A first-aid kit containing goodies such as Band-Aids, disinfectants, adhesive tape, and other basics should be readily available in your vehicle.
- Any type of injury should be immediately and thoroughly cleaned. If you are unsure of its severity (or for a little piece of mind), contact your doctor to see if an office visit or trip to an emergency room is recommended.
- Quite often, injuries are a result of being rushed. Not thinking a situation through thoroughly before plunging in might put you in a dangerous position. *Take your time*. Brush up on your rescue materials before each rescue. And, most importantly, *be careful*.
- *Make sure your tetanus immunity is up-to-date before you embark on any rescues*. If you are unsure of the current status of your booster or the booster duration, please check with your doctor.

Rescue Procedures

The Big Picture

Animal rescue work is largely subjective. It cannot be taught in an exact fashion as one might teach another skill. Every situation is unique, and learning will consist of a great deal of on-the-job training.

The two best attributes for a successful rescue are patience and resourcefulness. If you tend to be in a hurry and are pressed for time, your chances of coming home with your target are minimized. Likewise, if you are unable to or do not enjoy thinking on your feet and improvising, you might want to consider a different area of involvement in wildlife rehabilitation.

We get some calls about the relocation of otherwise healthy animals. Normally these types of calls do not get past the hotline volunteers. If you arrive for a rescue only to find someone who wants a relocation, DO NOT relocate the animal. Call the hotliner and alert them of the situation, and they will take it from there. Requests for the removal of ‘nuisance’ wildlife should be referred to agencies that deal with this issue. They are commercial businesses and charge for their services, but the hotline volunteers know of several that are qualified and equipped to handle such requests humanely.

Slack

Slack is required for new rescuers and will be how you take the majority of your rescues. You should get logged in during your training, but if you have any trouble with Slack or accessing it, please contact Nathan at NathanT@libertywildlife.org.

- When a rescue is needed, the hotliner will post in the channel that corresponds with the geographical area, moving from specific to general channels.
- If you are available, click on the message and hit ‘reply in thread’. ALWAYS be sure to reply in the thread. Here is a video outlining the instructions: <https://youtu.be/Q56oHICD22Y>
- The hotliners are instructed to include cross streets in their message, but don’t always do so. Don’t be afraid to reach out and ask for cross streets, asking for more information doesn’t commit you to the rescue.

The Rescue

Let’s assume you are going out on a true rescue call—meaning the animal has not already been restrained by the caller. First, reach out the caller and establish connection. You should have their info via a text or Slack DM from the hotliner. Verify the address, and see if the caller can wait there or meet you there. Ask for details such as gate codes or special instructions. You can also have them keep an eye on the animal from a distance, not too close as to stress out or scare off the animal.

Try to be very slow and methodical in your approach. Any hurried or violent motions on your part will almost certainly be regarded as threats. Also, as you approach your target, try to avoid direct eye contact; this keeps the appearance of confrontation to a minimum and prevents you from giving clues as to your next moves. Try to plan out a way to corner your target in a way that will eliminate all possible escape routes. Chances are the bird cannot fly; however, some flightless birds can run *very* fast. If you can get the animal against a wall, a line of bushes, or anything else that would block its retreat, you are in good shape. If you can get it into a corner, so much the better. If you are in an open area such as a field or a parking lot, you may need to enlist some local help. An injured animal, in fear of its life, will demonstrate an awe-inspiring amount of energy and resourcefulness.

Remember that most animals would rather flee than fight. If you can cut off their flight path, you can take them on *your* terms. A cornered raptor with no means of escape will generally fall on its back and present its talons to you in a “fight-to-the-death” posture. If you have followed the rules up to that point and have worn your gloves, the battle is won—you simply reach down to grab the bird’s legs.

If there is still some fight left in the bird, it will attempt to grab your gloved hands with its talons, creating a mutual attachment. It is important to understand that just because the bird is in your hands with its talons locked around your fingers, it does not mean that it is captured; a raptor can quickly let go of one spot and strike out at an unprotected area of the body.

To properly control a medium or large raptor, hold it by the legs, slightly above the talons. The thumb and middle finger should encircle the outside of the legs, and the index finger should be placed between the legs, providing a cushion. All three fingers should meet, and the bird should be held with a firm grip. Remember to keep the head pointing away from your body, as the beak can be a second line of defense and it is optimally designed to tear flesh. *Never attempt to retrieve a raptor without gloves.*

Another consideration in capturing birds is making an attempt to avoid feather damage. Feathers are unique to birds, and these wonderful structures serve several purposes including waterproofing, thermal regulation, and flight. Missing feathers will grow back, as will broken feather after they molt out. Yet, this process takes time, as well as energy resources, prolonging the rehabilitative process. Please take care and try to cause as little damage as possible when grabbing, carrying, or stowing birds in a carrier. If you need to carry a large bird for any distance, remember to hold its legs with one gloved hand in the manner described above. Wrap your other hand around its wings to keep it from injuring you or further injuring itself.

What To Do if The Bird is DOA

Despite our best efforts, occasionally the bird will have passed by the time a rescuer arrives. Although the sense of urgency has been removed from the situation, if you suspect the animal may have been electrocuted, you should still bring it in to Liberty and alert the hotliner. If the animal was not electrocuted and is in fairly good condition we may be able to salvage some of the feathers for the Non-Eagle Feather Repository.

Preparing for Transport

Sometimes the people who made the call will want to get photos of the animal once it has been contained. It is good to discourage this politely. Minimizing the patient's stress is of utmost importance at this time, and posing for trophy shots will do nothing to further this goal.

Any examination or treatment in the field is inadvisable. We are rescue and transport technicians, and what we do is extremely important. If we were not doing our job, this animal would probably die afraid and in great pain. Just as the Medical Services volunteers do not chase down wounded critters in the field, we should not perform medical treatments without the proper tools and training. Again, the entire rescue process is a team effort, with each part being equally important.

Before you leave the scene, have the individual who made the call fill out give you some basic information, such as their name and address, phone number and e-mail address, plus where the animal was found and under what circumstances.

Transport Procedures

Not all animals will need to be caught. Some will have been previously contained by a caring public. Whether you have just contained an animal yourself, or it has been done for you, the next topic of concern is the same – transportation.

Carrier

First of all, make sure that your carrier is secure. Be certain that the lid or opening cannot be opened if the animal decides en-route that it does not want to be contained.

If the carrier is appropriately sized, there will be a minimum of jostling of the animal inside the carrier. If appropriate, place the carrier so that the animal is *facing the side* of the car. This will make it easier for the animal to keep its balance. Place the carrier on a flat surface inside your vehicle and make sure it is secure. Also, placing the carrier toward the center of the vehicle lessens the possibility of your passenger being heated-up by sun streaming in the windows or frozen by direct contact with air-conditioning vents.

Paperwork

Paperwork on the rescue is *crucial*. When the call comes in, be sure to get *all* of the necessary information; obtain from the caller the name, email, address, phone number.

Environmental Controls

Keep the animal in an environment that is warm, dark, and quiet. Listening to the radio is appropriate on the way to the scene, but once your passenger is in the car, the radio should be turned off. If there are other passengers in the vehicle, please refrain from loud conversation and keep necessary conversation subdued.

Thermal regulation is critical when animals are ill or injured. An injured bird's internal systems will shut down in an attempt to redirect energy reserves toward the healing process. As the animal sinks closer to oblivion, thermal control may start to use up too much strength. Keeping an animal warm in the colder months, and cool enough in the hotter months, may make the difference.

A Final Note

When your charge is secure and the environment is correct, you are ready to depart. Try to make your driving smooth, avoiding sudden stops or turns. This will help to make your trip to Liberty Wildlife as low-stress as possible. Although quick care is important, delays due to tickets and accidents do not help you or the animal. *Drive carefully.*

Updates on Animals

We are not able to give updates to the caller about the condition of the animal. With over 12,000 animals in a given year, it would be very time consuming to give out updates for every animal that comes in, taking time and resources away from the animals that need our help. If you believe a caller has gone above and beyond and you would like to give them an update, you **MUST** ask staff first. **DO NOT** give updates to callers on your own once they arrive at the facility.

Check-in and Paperwork

DOA animals will need to be logged into the database. This is especially important for animals that are brought in by a utility company (APS, SRP, etc). We will discuss this in more detail in the Utility-Electrocution section.

We began using WRMD in 2022 for our intake database. This is the dashboard screen you will see on the computer.

Wildlife Rehabilitation MD 1 Alex Stofko Ask For Help

LIBERTY WILDLIFE

Your Patients

- List Patients
- Add New Patient

Search your records

Exclusive Access

- WRMD Knowledge Base

The Cornell Lab of Ornithology
Birds of the World

Recent News

- We Needed You and You Were There
- To Our WRMD Community
- Help us Reach Our Goal of \$10,000

Patients in 2022: 10 (100% (0))

Patients This Week: 10 (100% (0))

Species Admitted in 2022: 9 (100% (0))

Patients in Care Today: 10 (30% (7))

Total Patients Per Day

Date	Total Patients
Jan 01, 2022	7
Jan 02, 2022	3

Quick Search

Search your records

Limit to year 2022

Disposition pending

Recent Patients

Updated Admitted

- 22-3 Anna's Hummingbird
- 22-10 Eurasian Collared-dove
- 22-9 Anna's Hummingbird

Quick Links

- Dashboard
- Add New Patient
- List Patients
- Search Patients
- Rechecks
- Reports
- Analytics
- People
- Forum

Years in Account

2022 Change Year

You will click on 'Add new patient' to begin the intake process.

Your Patients

- List Patients
- Add New Patient

Search your records

You will be taken to the “New Patient” screen.

NEW PATIENT

Next Case Number: 2022-11 Go To Quick Admit

Case Year 2022

Date Admitted Jan 2, 2022 3:10 PM

Reference Number

Microchip Number

Species

Common Name

Number of Patients 1

The date admitted defaults to today’s date. The ‘Common Name’ of the animal needs to be selected to continue. Once you start typing in the text box, species names will appear. This is a great way to learn the full species name of the animals we get here in Arizona. And remember if you don’t know the answer JUST ASK!

New Rescuer Search

Rescuer Contact

Organization

Phone Number

First Name

alt. Phone Number

Last Name

Email

No Solicitations

Address

City, State AZ

Postal Code

Notes About Rescuer

The ‘Rescuer Contact’ is information provided by the public that has brought the animal in. We need first and last name, email, the address can be the cross streets, and the city. If you have an individual that is unwilling to give us any of this data, you can explain that it’s only for USFW statistics. If they are adamant about not giving the requested information, just put “refused” or “Not given” in the specific field.

Intake

Same as Rescuer Details

Admitted By Transported By

Address Found

City Found, State Found AZ Date Found

Reasons for Admission

Care by Rescuer

Notes About Rescue

Once you get to the 'Intake' section, you can click 'Same as Rescuer Details'. That will copy the information you entered into the 'Rescuer Contact'. In the 'Admitted By' text box, enter YOUR NAME, and in the 'Transported By' text box, also enter YOUR NAME. In the 'Reasons for Admission' text box, start typing and your selections will appear. 'Found on ground' is going to be the most common response. But there other options we see frequently as well, such as 'found in pool' and 'cat/dog attack'. It is important to select the correct situation as this will effect what treatment the animal gets. If you have chosen 'cat/dog attack', once printed, please circle whether it was a cat attack or a dog attack, as treatment might be affected by the answer. If none of the drop-down options fit the situation you can type in your own response.

What should happen after creating this record(s)?

Add a new patient

Create Record(s) in 2022

Once you are done adding the intake information make sure 'Add a new patient' has been selected from the 'What should happen after creating this record(s)?'. Then click on 'Create Record(s) in 2022'. After the record has been created it will show up on the left margin under 'Recent Patents'.

Recent Patients

[Updated](#) [Admitted](#)

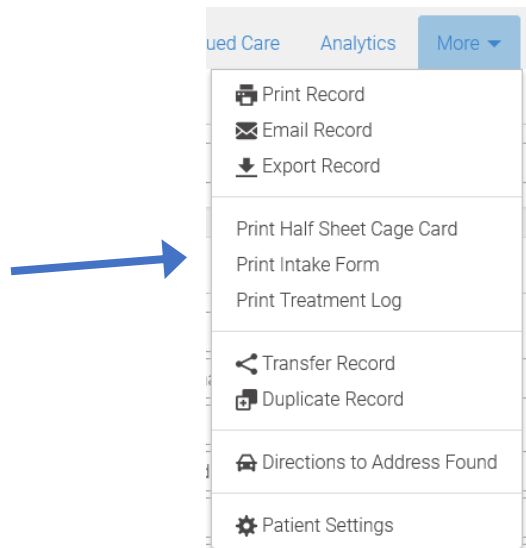
22-3 Anna's Hummingbird

22-10 Eurasian Collared-dove

22-9 Anna's Hummingbird

Click on the patient you just entered. You will be taken to the patient record.


Click on the 'More' tab and select 'Print Intake Form'




A PDF will pop up and you will then select print off of that screen. Every animal that arrives needs an intake form so if you get in a box of 10 ducklings, you will need 10 intake forms. The intake numbers are automatically assigned and in sequential order. If you have multiple intakes, at the beginning of the 'New Patient' screen in the 'Species' box, there is a 'Number of Patients' option. Select the number that corresponds to the number of animals (ONLY if they are all the same species). If the same person is bringing in multiple species, you will need to make sure to enter them as individuals.

NEW PATIENT

Next Case Number: 2022-11

 Go To Quick Admit

Case Year	<input type="text" value="2022"/>	
Date Admitted	<input type="text" value="Jan 2, 2022 3:10 PM"/>	
Reference Number	<input type="text"/>	Microchip Number <input type="text"/>

Species

Common Name	<input type="text"/>
Number of Patients	<input type="text" value="1"/>



If you have selected 5 of the same species (for example Mallard ducks), then the system will create 5 intake numbers and patient forms. You will need to print one out of each animal.

Species Specifics

Following is merely a sampling of the many species you will encounter during your course as a rescue and transport volunteer. If you are unsure of the type of animal you are encountering, or are rescuing an animal not listed here, please contact Liberty Wildlife for further information and assistance.

Waterbirds

Great Blue Heron

The first feature you will notice on a Great blue heron is its beak. This well-designed instrument is created for the challenge of stabbing fish. In addition to using the beak as a tool to skillfully capture food, it is also used as a mechanism of defense which can be manipulated with great accuracy. *Be sure to wear protective eyewear, as they can go for your eyes.*

Your first mission is to gain control of the beak or head. Because the beak is very sharp on the inside, it might be easier to grab the neck, right below the head. Wrap your other arm around the body to pin down the wings. The legs are long and the talons are surprisingly sharp. With your arm that is wrapped around the body, try to keep the legs folded underneath the bird.

The carrier should be a size appropriate for this large bird. A cardboard carrier will work for short transport, but do not keep the animal in this type of container for long periods of time. You will find that great blue herons do fold up easily, but they can *unfold* quickly as well. To prevent a potential disaster, be sure the lid is secure!

Small Herons, Egrets, and Wading Birds

Follow the same procedure listed above. These birds behave in a similar fashion; yet, being smaller in structure, they are less powerful than the Great blue heron.

Canada Goose

The Canada goose is *strong*, so be prepared! Being one of the heaviest wind-loaded birds flying, they require immense muscle mass to remain in flight, justifying their strength. They do bite, which can be very painful. They also have nails on the ends of their toes that are rather sharp. Like most waterfowl, they will usually defecate (on you) during the rescue, so watch out!

Coots

These birds are *fast!* They can bite, and their toenails are deadly and sharp as well.

Ducklings

Young ducks can be scooped up with a net. To prevent escape, be certain that the net holes are smaller than the bird. Be sure to check the holes in your carrier as well. Do not be fooled by the deceptive size of the down; under all the fuzz, they are tiny and extremely swift creatures!

Ducks

Ducks may not be the sharpest tools in the shed, but they are not stupid either. Hence, you may have to employ the “flying tackle” method of duck capture—sans net. Masters of two different mediums, ducks are at ease in both the air and on water; unfortunately, you cannot catch a duck when it is in the air or on the water. The trick is to get them on the ground, as far away from the water as possible. Walk up with a bag of small-sized cat or kitten food and encourage them to participate in a feeding frenzy. While they are furiously eating and rather unaware of what is happening in their surroundings, place yourself between the ducks and the water. If possible, just reach out and snatch the bird. If not, get as close as you feasibly can and then dive for the target. If you do not think you can dive and accomplish your intended goal, do not try; instead, leave and try again later.

As a special note on pool rescues, a duck parent will devotedly guard its babies. Because of this, it is a good idea to target the mom first—net her and the babies will be easy to capture. If you miss her and she flies away, you can leave and try again later once she returns. If you need to complete the rescue immediately, scoop up the babies and take them to a rehabilitator—ducklings *cannot* be left on their own.

Birds of Prey

Raptors

Although birds of prey may be biters, be concerned with the *feet*, as a raptor's sharp, strong talons are its main defense. As the principal rescuer, avoid eye contact with the bird you are attempting to capture. It may be beneficial to corner the bird first. Then, ask an additional assistant to simultaneously make direct eye contact with the raptor while distracting it with noise and motion from another direction.

Barn Owls

Although Barn owls exhibit the typical raptor defensive posture, they may also jump at your face in an attempt to intimidate you *Therefore be extremely careful!* Hold both hands out in a high- low pattern as you approach.

Great Horned Owls

Great horned owls have earned the nickname *Tiger of the Sky* for a reason--they are extremely strong and powerful. They usually exhibit the typical raptor defensive posture of leaning back on their tail with their talons presented forward and extended; this actually makes them quite easy to pick up.

To capture a Great horned owl, first try to grab one foot in each hand. Next transfer both feet to one hand. Finally, with your free hand, hold their wings folded close to their body.

If you are using a top-loading carrier, place them in the carrier on their back. This allows you to get your hand out before the animal can get to its feet and jump out. It also allows the bird to feel secure. Close the top securely around your arm and quickly pull your hand out. *Make sure the top is secure!*

If you have a front-facing carrier, load the animal face first and pull your hand out quickly. Again, make sure the door is secure.

Small Owls and Raptors

Small owls and small raptors collapse in a death feigning or stress reaction, making them easier to capture. Remember to check the size of the holes in the box to be sure the animal cannot escape. Additionally, use an appropriately sized box so they won't thrash around. This limits their movement and prevents further injuries.

Red-tailed Hawks

Red-tailed hawks exhibit the typical raptor defensive behavior. Limit your eye contact and load the bird onto its back or facing away.

Harris' Hawk

These birds display typical raptor defensive behavior. Be sure to limit your eye contact. The leg span is wider on the Harris' hawk than most other hawks, and therefore, it is necessary to hold both legs securely. Load this bird onto its back of facing away.

Coopers and Sharp-shinned Hawks

These hawks will dodge away quickly and are very comfortable squeezing through even the smallest spaces. Cornering them works, but be prepared for them to dart directly at you, diverting at the last moment and slipping under or around your gloves.

Falcons

Falcons do bite. The smaller varieties have sharp talons that are not particularly powerful, but can cause punctures that are still painful and deep. Additionally, be forewarned that they have the propensity to dart through small spaces.

Kestrels

Yes, they can bite! They also have small, extremely sharp talons, which have a gift of finding your cuticles! Additionally, they have a talent for squeezing themselves through small openings.

Ferruginous Hawks

These hawks are extremely aggressive. They have short, powerful toes and often strike their legs independently in defense; this may make it difficult to grab both legs at the same time. These hawks can aggressively fly straight at your face. Therefore, it is important to take them seriously and be certain you have the proper protection before attempting to capture one.

Eagles

DO NOT RESCUE AN EAGLE! If you go on a rescue and it ends up being an Eagle, immediately call the hotline back. They will send out someone who is trained to handle eagles. They may ask you to stay and assist, but do NOT try and rescue an eagle without proper training.

Ravens

Beak, beak, beak, and smart, smart, smart. Corner it if you can and then capture it with a blanket or net. They are very tricky so be sure to use clothespins on the corners of your carrier.

Turkey Vultures

If a Turkey vulture is on the ground, you still have a problem—they run away and they are quick to boot! The secret is to corner them if possible. Sometimes, when cornered, they will continue to move their legs as if they are running, even though they aren't moving anywhere at all! When you are close, just reach around and encircle their body with your arm, capturing their wings. Be sure to hold their face away and allow them to throw up before boxing them. It is a defensive technique they use, and once you smell it, you will know why it is so effective!

Roadrunners

First of all, yes, roadrunners fly—they are extremely fast on the ground as well. Additionally, they will poke at you with their beak. For these reasons, they can be one of the hardest birds to catch. The best method of capture is to corner them with a net.

Passerines

The easiest way to capture a small passerine, or other small bird, is with a net.

Final Thoughts

As a brief summation, here are a few words about rescuing animals in general:

It is a task that is rarely convenient, sometimes painful, and almost always more time-consuming than you expect. You will spend a lot of your own resources, energy, and money attempting to help some creature that will try to reward your thoughtfulness by biting, scratching, and clawing you with all its strength. It will involve long hours and no pay. It is also the most rewarding pastime you could possibly imagine, being as heart-warming as it is heart breaking. Although you may feel like you are spitting into the wind at times, just remember the following story and it all makes sense:

A young man was walking on the beach one day. He was following an older gentleman who would reach down and pick up a stranded starfish, gently placing them back into the ocean. He approached the old man to chide him about the foolish waste of time. "Do you think, old man, that saving that starfish's life makes any difference?" The old man looked into those brash young eyes, cupping a small starfish in his gnarled hand and said "To this one it does."

Liberty Wildlife appreciates your help and concern on behalf of the creatures that deserve the second chance you are affording them. You can make a difference.