

It is that time once again. Wild mothers to be are once again seeking the place they will birth their young or lay their eggs. Some will have a mate to assist them while they nest and grow their little ones, but most will go at it alone as protector and provider, their instincts to keep their young safe stronger than their own hunger.

These animals have many considerations when selecting their nests and dens. Close proximity to food, hidden from predators and safety from weather. They are most vulnerable at this time because a wild mother will defend her young, even at her own peril, much like ourselves.

As Nature builds her nurseries, humans emerge from winter with an urge to revitalize our own habitat. We trim trees, clean flower beds, cut our grass and clean up clutter. Often times we discover that our "winter neglect" has afforded an ideal place for a wild mother to raise her brood.

First question to ask yourself when discovering a nest or den; "Can this wait?" and if so, hug yourself for me. Your habitat is now temporarily shared for a greater purpose than your own, and your patience will allow wild young to be raised in peace as Nature intended and not put at increased risk.

If it cannot wait, stop and do a bit of research before you act. Get advice from a wildlife rehabilitator. Our primary goal is to always try to keep babies with mom whenever it is safe. Pulling wild young and creating orphans for humans to raise should always be the LAST option, never the first. Often simple methods of offering an option for re-nesting are very successful, though anytime you interfere with a wild mother, you risk lives.

Even when the young are taken to wildlife rehabilitation and raised successfully, no human can take the place of a wild upbringing for a better chance at survival.

Yes, some wild mothers are inexperienced and fumble the selection of their nest and dens. Those cases are tragedies waiting to happen and we try to advise callers ways to provide back-up to mom and ensure safety to the nest whenever possible, and intake the young if not.

And this little owl right here? He has legal protection. Native migratory birds are protected from interference and the stories of the lengths many callers have gone to avoid disturbing these mothers are heartwarming. Hanging a cozy door wreath, flower baskets or a well designed porch light for nesting will afford a little mother night vision and cover from predators as you live with the "porch poopers" and potential attacks from protective parents. Think ahead of the problems and avoid inviting what you cannot tolerate. Prevention is always a kindness.

Thank you to everyone who lives with a little added inconvenience every spring so our wildlife can safely raise their little ones and move on.

Annette

Wild Heart Ranch

