

**Chapter 1 : Care for Baby Bunnies - The ARC - Animal Rehabilitation Center**

*It's a Baby Opossum! (San has been added to your Cart Add to Cart. Turn on 1-Click ordering for this browser. Other Sellers on Amazon. Add to Cart. \$*

Taxonomy[ edit ] The genus *Petaurus* is believed to have originated during the early-mid Miocene period 18 to 24 million years ago , then dispersed from New Guinea to Australia where Australian *Petaurus* species diverged. The gliding membrane is visible along its side. Sugar gliders are found throughout the northern and eastern parts of mainland Australia, Tasmania, New Guinea and several associated isles, the Bismarck Archipelago , Louisiade Archipelago , and certain isles of Indonesia , Halmahera Islands of the North Moluccas. The main structural habitat requirements are a large number of stems within the canopy, and dense mid and upper canopy cover, likely to enable efficient movement through the canopy. Native owls *Ninox* sp. The eyes are adapted for night vision and the ears swivel. The sugar glider has a squirrel-like body with a long, partially weakly [25] prehensile tail. Sexual dimorphism has likely evolved due to increased mate competition arising through social group structure; and is more pronounced in regions of higher latitude, where mate competition is greater due to increased food availability. Its belly, throat, and chest are cream in colour. Males have four scent glands , located on the forehead, chest, and two paraclavicular associated with, but not part of the cloaca which is the common opening for the intestinal, urinal and genital tracts that are used for marking of group members and territory. Females also have a paraclavicular scent gland and a scent gland in the pouch, but do not have scent glands on the chest or forehead. The eyes are set far apart, allowing more precise triangulation from launching to landing locations while gliding. These opposable toes are clawless, and bend such that they can touch all the other digits, like a human thumb , allowing it to firmly grasp branches. The second and third digits of the hind foot are partially syndactylous fused together , forming a grooming comb. When the legs are stretched out, this membrane allows the sugar glider to glide a considerable distance. The membrane is supported by well developed tibiocarpalis, humerodorsalis and tibioabdominalis muscles, and its movement is controlled by these supporting muscles in conjunction with trunk, limb and tail movement. Gliders glide with the fore- and hind-limbs extended at right angles to their body, with their feet flexed upwards. This creates an aerofoil enabling them to glide 50 metres 55 yards or more. Gliding provides three dimensional avoidance of arboreal predators, and minimal contact with ground dwelling predators; as well as possible benefits in decreasing time and energy consumption [32] spent foraging for nutrient poor foods that are irregularly distributed. Entering torpor saves energy for the animal by allowing its body temperature to fall to a minimum of In the wild, sugar gliders enter into daily torpor more often than sugar gliders in captivity. They are opportunistic feeders and can be carnivorous , preying mostly on lizards and small birds. They eat many other foods when available, such as nectar, acacia seeds, bird eggs, pollen, fungi and native fruits. Four nipples are usually present in the pouch, although reports of individuals with two nipples have been recorded. Males reach maturity at 4 to 12 months of age, while females require from 8 to 12 months. In the wild, sugar gliders breed once or twice a year depending on the climate and habitat conditions, while they can breed multiple times a year in captivity as a result of consistent living conditions and proper diet. They are born largely undeveloped and furless, with only the sense of smell being developed. The mother has a scent gland in the external marsupium to attract the sightless joeys from the uterus. This allows female sugar gliders to retain the ability to glide when pregnant. Up to four age classes may exist within each group, although some sugar gliders are solitary, not belonging to a group. Within social communities, there are two codominant males who suppress subordinate males, but show no aggression towards each other. These co-dominant pairs are more related to each other than to subordinates within the group; and share food, nests, mates, and responsibility for scent marking of community members and territories. Intruders who lack the appropriate scent marking are expelled violently. Sugar gliders are one of the few species of mammals that exhibit male parental care. This paternal care evolved in sugar gliders as young are more likely to survive when parental investment is provided by both parents. Odours may be used to mark territory, convey health status of an individual, and mark rank of community members. Gliders produce a number of vocalisations including

barking and hissing.

## Chapter 2 : Raising Orphaned Opossums

*See more Baby Mammals: It's a Baby Opossum! by Kelly Do Email to friends Share on Facebook - opens in a new window or tab Share on Twitter - opens in a new window or tab Share on Pinterest - opens in a new window or tab.*

Etymology[ edit ] The word "opossum" is borrowed from the Powhatan language and was first recorded between and by John Smith as opassom and William Strachey as aposoum. They tend to be semi- arboreal omnivores , although there are many exceptions. Most members of this taxon have long snouts , a narrow braincase , and a prominent sagittal crest. The dental formula is: By mammalian standards, this is an unusually full jaw. The incisors are very small, the canines large, and the molars are tricuspid. Didelphimorphs have a plantigrade stance feet flat on the ground and the hind feet have an opposable digit with no claw. Like some New World monkeys , opossums have prehensile tails. Like that of all marsupials, the fur consists of awn hair only, and the females have a pouch. The tail and parts of the feet bear scutes. The stomach is simple, with a small cecum. Members of the Caluromyinae are essentially frugivorous ; whereas the lutrine opossum and Patagonian opossum primarily feed on other animals. Baby opossums, like their Australian cousins, are called joeys. The young are weaned between 70 and days, when they detach from the teat and leave the pouch. The opossum lifespan is unusually short for a mammal of its size, usually only one to two years in the wild and as long as four or more years in captivity. This may ensure that flagella movement can be accurately coordinated for maximal motility. Conjugate pairs dissociate into separate spermatozoa before fertilization. Some families will group together in ready-made burrows or even under houses. Though they will temporarily occupy abandoned burrows, they do not dig or put much effort into building their own. As nocturnal animals, they favor dark, secure areas. These areas may be below ground or above. When threatened or harmed, they will " play possum ", mimicking the appearance and smell of a sick or dead animal. This physiological response is involuntary like fainting , rather than a conscious act. In the case of baby opossums, however, the brain does not always react this way at the appropriate moment, and therefore they often fail to "play dead" when threatened. The stiff, curled form can be prodded, turned over, and even carried away without reaction. The animal will typically regain consciousness after a period of a few minutes to four hours, a process that begins with slight twitching of the ears. An opossum may also use its tail as a brace and a fifth limb when climbing. The tail is occasionally used as a grip to carry bunches of leaves or bedding materials to the nest. Threatened opossums especially males will growl deeply, raising their pitch as the threat becomes more urgent. Males make a clicking "smack" noise out of the side of their mouths as they wander in search of a mate, and females will sometimes repeat the sound in return. When separated or distressed, baby opossums will make a sneezing noise to signal their mother. The mother in return makes the clicking sound and waits for the baby to find her. If threatened, the baby will open its mouth and quietly hiss until the threat is gone.

Chapter 3 : Opossum - Wikipedia

*The opossum (/ ˈɒpəˈsʊm /) is a marsupial of the order Didelphimorphia (/ dɪˈdɛləˈfɪmɔːrfi /) endemic to the Americas. It is the largest order of marsupials in the Western Hemisphere, it comprises or more species in 19 genera.*

Our opossums are approximately life-sized, which helps to give that illusion. The mother opossum is 11 inches long from nose to rump, and her bare fabric tail adds another 12 inches when you pull it out straight. The tail is made to curl, and will pop right back into position. Also looking extremely real, the baby opossum is stitched right onto her back. The ears of both opossums have soft fabric inside and out. All parts are non-toxic and surface washable. Check out our other opossum toys and gifts. To find our other stuffed toy animals from Fiesta, or see our entire inventory of stuffed animals, stuffed beanies and plush hand puppets, check out our Stuffed Animals Page. About Opossums The hang-tag on our stuffed opossum pair says, "The opossum hideouts are located in a variety of areas including stumps, haystacks, vine tangles, attics, garages, road culverts, hollow trees, rock piles, crannies, under buildings, and in the abandoned burrows of other animals. Opossums are not territorial and do not maintain separate home ranges. They are exceptionally non-aggressive and non-destructive. They will not harm people or pets. They are more immune to many diseases than the other animals and are far less likely to carry rabies. Opossums are beneficial to the environment because they eat insect pests, snails and slugs. Opossum do not hibernate, and they are active at night. Didelphimorphia is the order of common opossums of the Western Hemisphere. They are commonly also called possums, though that term is also applied to some Australian animals. The Virginia Opossum is the original animal named opossum. The word comes from the Algonquian language. Opossums probably diverged from the basic South American marsupials in the late Cretaceous or early Paleocene. Their unspecialized biology, flexible diet and reproductive characteristics make them successful colonizers and survivors in diverse locations and conditions. Originally native to the eastern United States, the Virginia Opossum was intentionally introduced into the West during the Great Depression, probably as a source of food. Its range has been expanding steadily northwards, thanks in part to more plentiful, man-made sources of fresh water, increased shelter due to urban encroachment, and milder winters. Its range has extended into Ontario, Canada, and it has been found farther north than Toronto. As with other small marsupials, the gestation period of an opossum is only about 12 to 14 days. They live and feed inside her pouch until they are weaned at about 70 to days. Opossums are omnivorous, eating small animals such as insects, frogs, birds, snakes, small mammals, and earthworms. They eat carrion as well as garbage, but some of their favorite food is fruit. This is a completely involuntary response. The lips curl, the body stiffens, and a foul-smelling liquid is released, so a human or other animal might really believe the opossum is dead and leave it alone. It can even be picked up at this time and will resemble a dead animal. After a few minutes or hours, the opossum will again become animated and run away, hopefully having eluded the danger. Baby opossums will open their mouths, show their pointed teeth, and make a hissing noise if they feel threatened. An adult opossum will use its tail as a brace or an extra limb when climbing trees. They are usually solitary, will temporarily take over abandoned burrows, and prefer protection from the dark or dark areas, becoming active between dusk and dawn, and rarely coming into view during the day. Although many people consider opossums disgusting or a nuisance, they are essentially harmless, and many people find them very cute. They are extremely interesting small mammals.

**Chapter 4 : Help for Baby Opossums – Walden's Puddle**

*Animal Medicine Opossum Wild Animals BABY ANIMALS Animal Rescue Mammals Baby things Adorable Animals Baby pets Forward This is a great picture of a two-month old orphaned possum that came to us a few years back.*

Opossums; Why We Love Them! You are here 16 Aug. Often that fear or dislike is based on misinformation. They happen to be special because they are the only marsupial animal native to North America. Marsupial animals or non-placental animals raise their babies in a pouch, just like kangaroos do. When the baby opossums are born, they are furless, blind, and about the size of a honeybee. Once they are attached, the nipple swells and the baby becomes attached. As with other pouch-raised babies, the baby opossums remain in the pouch as they continue to grow and mature. They first venture outside of the pouch when they are between two to two and a half months old their eyes open and they have fur at about two months of age, at which point they are about the size of a mouse. Opossums are very good mothers and they are very protective of their young. Once the babies emerge from her pouch, they often ride along on her back while she forages for food, and they begin to eat solid food at this point about three months old. Once the babies are weaned, about six inches long without their tail, and their ears are almost solid black, they are old enough to fend for themselves. They move from place to place in search of good food sources and a comfy place to sleep. They are attracted to carrion and can often be spotted near roadkill, which is helpful to us to keep diseases at bay. As omnivores, opossums also eat grass, nuts, fruit, and they will also mice, insects including roaches, worms, slugs, and snakes including venomous ones. They are beneficial for helping to control the overpopulation of snakes, rodents, and insects. Speaking of venomous snakes, opossums are immune to snake venom! Experiments are being done to see if scientists could mass produce the substance and use it as an inexpensive and universal anti-venom for human snake-bite victims. Opossums are fastidiously clean, similar to cats in their grooming routine. If they find a tick in their fur, they lick it off and swallow it. It is estimated that in one season, an opossum can kill and consume about 5, ticks. More than 90 percent of ticks on an opossum end up being groomed away and eaten. This could have implications in preventing certain tick-borne diseases including Lyme disease in domestic pets and humans. In areas with a healthy opossum population, they can help to control the overpopulation of ticks, thereby keeping the ticks off of us and our pets! The opossums do not seem to be affected by these tick-borne illnesses. This feature makes them much less susceptible to other diseases that can affect wildlife animals such as distemper. So although they have a reputation of being dirty and disease-ridden animals, that is really not the case. To clear up a couple of myths about opossums; adults cannot hang from their tails. They do have prehensile tails similar to chameleons which they use to help grip and balance when climbing trees. This state can last from several minutes to several hours. It may even appear that rigor mortis has begun. Opossums have a relatively short life span for an animal of its size. In the wild, they generally only live an average of three years. Many are killed by cars, dogs, owls, and larger wildlife. Now that we all understand a little bit more about how unique and interesting opossums are, as well as how they can be beneficial to have around, we hope that more people can learn to live in harmony with these often misunderstood animals. Now, if only they could hop!

**Chapter 5 : Rainbow Wildlife Rescue and Wildlife Rehabilitation in Texas - Found Baby Opossums?**

*See photos of baby opossums at different stages.. Opossums are North America's only marsupial. The female carries and nurses her young (up to 13 at a time) in her pouch until they are about months old.*

Hand feeding an orphaned opossum. Click on the image to view an enlarged version. If you are interested in wildlife rehabilitation and raising orphaned opossums then volunteer with OSUS or a local wildlife rehabilitator. Check with your state regarding training and licensing. These training tools are a MUST for any rehabilitator regardless of level of experience. Please see our gift catalog for ordering information. Temporary orphan care until help can be found: Warm by wrapping in a soft ravel-free towel and place near but not directly against a heat source that has been covered with towels heating pad set on low, hot water bottle, etc. You may offer Pedialyte diluted 1: Then you gradually introduce Esbilac puppy milk substitute over the next 24 hours. Feed with a dropper or syringe. Opossums do not suckle. They must lap at the formula being dispensed. Infants must be stimulated to eliminate either before or after feeding by gently rubbing genital area with a warm moistened cotton ball. Long term hand feeding can result in dietary deficiencies. Contact OSUS for more info. Offer water in a shallow bowl or jar lid and kitten chow moistened with water. Some orphans may still require hand feeding as described above. Opossums defecate in water bowls. Replace with fresh water as needed. These are young juveniles. Unless sick or injured they do not require assistance. Opossums can become heavily infested with parasites, especially ectoparasites such as fleas. It is important to remove fleas from the opossum or life-threatening flea anemia and death may occur. This is particularly critical in young opossums. Fleas can be removed safely by wrapping the opossum in warm towel and allowing fleas to jump from the opossum to the towel. Replace with warm towels as needed until fleas are gone. An immediate flea bath is not recommended because it can cause an already compromised opossum to go into shock and die. Orphan care can not be learned over the Internet. The above diets are for temporary feeding only until help can be found. Long-term use will result in dietary deficiencies. Contact OSUS for more information. Contact your local Opossum Society of the United States member, state department of wildlife, veterinarian, wildlife rehabilitator or animal control. Make sure animal control will not euthanize all opossums. This opossum is not dead. Click on the image to see an enlarged version. This opossum is not dead. This may last from 40 minutes to 4 hours. During this time, the opossum lies on its side, becomes stiff, the eyes glaze over, the opossum drools, the tongue lolls out the side of the mouth, and green anal fluid may be seen. This fascinating defense mechanism helps the opossum survive an attack from a predator because many predators give up the attack if they believe the opossum is already dead. Leave the area and give the opossum a chance to recover and move on. The opossum will not respond to prodding or poking. When the opossum is about to recover, the ears move very slightly. Rehabilitation is possible, please do your part to help. If you see an obviously dead female opossum and detect movement in the pouch area, have the body and infants transported to the nearest wildlife rehabilitator or veterinarian. Please speak with your veterinarian about medical issues. Contact the Opossum Society of the United States for other information. OSUS has a list of veterinarians willing to assist or advise wildlife rehabilitators and veterinarians. Please ask and make sure they do not have a policy of euthanizing all opossums! We will be happy to assist you in locating a wildlife rehabilitator by email if you provide your city and a list of cities near you. Please be advised that we are volunteer based and so there may be delays in answering email. If immediate assistance is needed then do not wait for a response from O. To find a local wildlife rehabilitator please click the link to search the contact list by state, under small mammal rehabilitators.

Chapter 6 : The Schuylkill Center - - - -

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If you found an orphaned Opossum: Seriously injured babies should be taken to a veterinarian that day. Warm the baby quickly if it feels cold Heating pad: Set temperature on low. Place the heating pad half under a closed box the baby has been placed inside of along with ravel-free cloths to snuggle with. Use a plastic soft drink bottle or other plastic bottle. Fill it with hot water. Wrap it with a towel or other cloth. Place it inside a box with the baby. Make sure that it will not roll around possibly hurting the baby. Place it in the bedding in the box with the baby. Give fluids by mouth using a 1 cc syringe, eye-dropper, or pet nurser. Offer the fluids at room temperature hourly for up to 6 hours. Do not exceed 12 hours. Any of the following fluids may be used and can be purchased at the grocery or drug store: Cool the water to room temperature before offering it to the baby. Give it a warm box or pet carrier. Provide consistent source of warmth such as a heating pad on a low temperature setting. Place it half under the box or pet carrier. Begin offering dilute formula. Make the formula as indicated in the diet section. Offer diluted formula every 2 hours using a 1 cc syringe, eye-dropper, or pet nurser. Syringes are better because there is less chance of aspiration. If the baby does not develop diarrhea or bloat offer full strength formula at the recommended amounts and frequency for the age. Provide food and housing as described below.

**Chapter 7 : It's a Baby Opossum! (SandCastle: Baby Mammals)-ExLibrary | eBay**

*If you have found a baby opossum that is smaller than 7 inches, this baby still requires its mother's care. Mother opossums cannot count and often do not know when they lose a baby. Often baby opossums are found after the mother has been hit by a car or attacked by a pet.*

I saw an opossum on the road. What should I do? If safe to do so, pull over and move the body to the side of the road. If alive then seek immediate assistance. If it is a deceased female then check the pouch for any live young. If found then wrap in a soft, ravel-free towel and transport to a wildlife rehabilitator immediately. Young opossums can not survive long outside the pouch environment. Back to the Questions Question: I think there is a dead opossum in my yard. What do I do? Give the opossum the benefit of the doubt. It may not be dead! They will appear dead. If found then leave the area, put dogs in the house and give the opossum a chance to recover. It may take anywhere from a few minutes up to 4 hours. Generally, the ears will start to wiggle when the opossum is about to revive. Please do not immediately place the opossum in a plastic bag or garbage can. If after 4 hours there is no movement or signs of life then contact animal control for disposal. How do I prevent an opossum from drowning in my pool? Many opossums fall into a pool as they attempt to drink water. If unable to climb out then the opossums will drown. There are several things you can do to prevent drownings. If possible, keep swimming pools and hot tubs covered at night. Also, try placing a bowl of water nearby so that the opossum will not be tempted to drink from the pool and fall in. Attach these items to the top of the pool by tying to a pool ladder, tree or other firmly anchored item or clamp to the side of the pool. Sinkers or a weighted object will help hold the opposite end of lightweight mesh netting under water. You can also place 2 inch by 4 inch planks of wood in the pool, leaning out onto the side of the pool. Styrofoam kick boards or rafts can also be placed in the pool. The opossum may be able to climb on one and float until found. View information on the Skamper Ramp at [www](http://www). Opossums make my dog bark! A dog will bark at anything it sees or hears. This will prevent the dog from injuring or killing the opossum. If not possible then confine to the garage or a run. Also, read the answer below. Opossum Pooping in yard Answer: Keep your yard clean of leaves and debris. Keep the opossum from entering your yard at all. Keep all trees and shrubbery trimmed away from the fence. Some people have suggested placing mothballs around, mothballs are toxic and if left outside will seep into the soil and into the ground water system, polluting the environment. Visit your local zoo or animal exhibit and ask for a small amount of fox, coyote, mountain, bobcat, etc. My dog kills opossums. What can I do? Keep the dog indoors at night. This way the dog will not be able to injure or kill the opossums. If not possible to keep the dog indoors, then confine the dog to the garage or a run from dusk to dawn. If again not possible, then place a few large PVC pipes 8 inch diameter, feet in length in the yard. This will provide the opossum with a place to escape, should an attack occur. Remove pet food and other attractants from your yard to encourage opossums to move on. My neighbor kills or tortures animals. Whether it is an opossum, a dog or a cat this is animal abuse and is illegal. Be persistent if you have to. OSUS will be happy to assist you. However, the initial complaint must be filed by you, the witness. I see an opossum sharing a food dish with my cat. Opossums are very opportunistic animals. If food is available, they will eat. We receive numerous pictures of opossums sharing a bowl of cat food with an outdoor cat. Adult cats and opossums seem to tolerate each other. Feeding wildlife is not recommended. Will an opossum attack my pets? It is more likely that a dog will injure or kill an opossum. A cat may attack and kill young rat-sized opossums. Adult opossums and cats seem to have a mutual respect and leave each other alone. In general, opossums are docile, non-aggressive animals and will not attack your pets. They prefer to escape and avoid confrontations, if possible. Will an opossum bite my children? Children should be taught not to attempt to feed or touch a wild animal. Opossums are nocturnal, that is they sleep during the day and come out at night, so the chance that a small child will come into contact with an opossum is slim. Opossums prefer to sleep in dark, secluded places. If your children play in this type of an area then there is greater danger of being bitten by a poisonous spider or snake. I heard horses could get EPM from opossums. The infective form of the parasite is passed in the feces. If a horse eats contaminated feces then it could develop neurological signs. It should be noted that the majority

of opossums are probably not shedding the infective parasite and that of the horses exposed to the parasite, very few will develop EPM. There are steps you can take to reduce the risk of EPM. Keeping all animals away from horses is advised. Do not kill or trap opossums. This will not work. Unless you remove what is attracting opossums and other animals to your yard then more animals will come. The best thing to do is to encourage animals to leave the area on their own by removing the attractants. This is usually food. Do not leave food outside. Do not leave food for the barn cats at night. Feed cats during the day. Pick up fallen fruit. Do not allow horse to feed off the ground. Place feed in troughs above the ground. Remove animal hiding places such as dense shrubs and woodpiles. Opossums eat the fruit off my trees. How can I stop them? Opossums prefer to eat the rotting fruit that has fallen to the ground. Keep opossums out of fruit trees by cutting branches away from the ground, fences and roof. Cover the trunk with heavy plastic sheets or thin metal sheets obtained at hardware stores and secure with duct tape. This will prevent the opossum from climbing. A cut-up plastic trash can will work. I think opossums are digging holes in my roof or yard. The damage is not likely to be caused by opossums. Opossums have soft, delicate hands with nails that are easily ripped out.

**Chapter 8 : Possum Attacks Python, Wins Back Her Baby**

*How to Take Care of a Baby Possum As cute as they are to look at, baby possums are not too easy to care for. It involves a lot of delicate handling, patience, and a working knowledge of these marsupials.*

If at any time the infant develops diarrhea or bloating, cut back on the concentration of formula until the situation clears up. If such problems persist for more than 36 hours, seek medical advice. Use a 1 cc syringe to feed formula. Wrap the baby in a cloth to keep it warm and secure. And hold it in a sitting-up position. Opossums rarely suckle a syringe but will lick from it. As soon as the babies are used to the formula, you may pour some in a shallow dish. Opossums learn to lap from a dish quickly. However, any baby not drinking well from the dish should continue to be hand fed until it is lapping from the dish and gaining weight. Stimulating urine and feces: This should be done for babies whose eyes are closed or just opening. Use a slightly damp cotton ball or tissue to gently stroke the genital area. The baby should produce urine within a few seconds. Babies may not urinate or produce feces every time. Once the opossums teeth have fully emerged begin offering the self-feeding diet. The base chow Science Diet should be soaked in water to make it soft and easier to eat until they reach about 12 weeks of age when it can be offered dry. Formula should be poured over the soaked chow until the babies have been weaned from formula at 10 weeks of age. Two shallow dishes of water should be offered. One dish for drinking and one for defecating. Purina puppy chow or Canine growth Science Diet soaked in water until the opossums are older. Fruits and vegetables cut in dime to nickel size pieces. Any fruit or vegetable may be used. Insects such as crickets and worms, dead mice cut up at first then left whole as babies get closer to release age. Add as many natural food items to the self-feeding diet as are available. Releasing hand-raised opossums Opossums should be ready for release at 20 to 22 weeks of age. Prior to release, your opossums should have been in a large outdoor cage for at least two weeks, preferably longer. They should be acclimated to weather changes, outdoor noises and the sights and sounds of the world. They must be familiar with their natural foods. The release site should be outside the metropolitan area, on land with appropriate shelter, a constant water source and abundant natural food resources. There should be other opossums in the release area but it should not be overcrowded with them. Since opossums are nocturnal active by night , it is best to release them in the late afternoon to early evening. Release when good weather is forecast for at least days and the last chance of freezing temperatures has passed. Ideally, their nestbox should be left at the release site, under some bushes, and back-up food provided for days until they have located their natural food sources. Zoo and Wild Animal Medicine, 2nd Edition. Harrison, Kit and George. Simon and Schuster, Inc. American Wildlife and Plants: A Guide to Wildlife Food Habits. Substitute Milk Formulas for Opossum. Wildwood Farm FM International Wildlife Rehabilitation Council. As babies, they are cute in an awkward way and will respond to their caregiver with affection. They are still wild animals though. Individuals raising orphaned babies must not treat them as pets. A baby opossum should be raised with at least one other opossum of similar age. This will aid in helping it revert to its true wild nature after being weaned. You must obtain permission from your county game warden to legally possess any wild animal even for a short period of time. Wash your hands after handling the babies and cleaning the cage. Wash bedding and dishes separate from your own. Disinfect bedding and dishes using 1 part bleach to 30 parts water. Allow bedding and dishes to soak for at least 15 minutes then rinse. The information in this paper is brief and intended for raising healthy orphans. If problems develop or you have questions, please contact the Alabama Wildlife Center. Natural History Information The Virginia Opossum belong to the order Marsupialia along with many other familiar animals such as kangaroos and koalas. Marsupials are mammals that raise their young in abdominal pouches. The Virginia Opossum is the only marsupial in North America. In Alabama, opossums are found across the state 6. Virginia Opossums are also unique in many other ways. The ends of their tails are prehensile which means they can grasp limbs of trees with it. However, they never hang by their tails. They have opposable thumbs on their hind feet which also aids in grasping and climbing. Opossums have 50 sharp teeth which is more than any other mammal. Despite the fact that they are well armed, opossums tend to be shy and docile. A characteristic trait of opossums is a behavior called death feigning or

playing possum. In death feigning, the opossum under threat and without a route of escape, will become very still. If the threat continues, it will fall over as if it suddenly died. During this phase of the death feign, an opossum will sometimes drool and give off a foul odor. After the threat has passed, it will recover and continue on its way 2. The adult Virginia opossum is almost exclusively nocturnal active during the night. Activity begins approximately at dusk and peaks between During the cold weather, activity is reduced, but opossums do not hibernate 6. Virginia Opossums are one of the few animals that can live almost anywhere. They are commonly found on farmland, in cities, in suburban areas, forests and swamps. They are also one of the few animals that have been able to successfully coexist with humans. Optimal habitats for opossums are forested areas near streams or swamps 2. Opossums will live or den in old hollow logs or trees, abandoned woodchuck burrows, bush piles, wood piles, rock crevices, and drain pipes 6. Adult Virginia opossums will eat almost anything. Their natural diet includes terrestrial and aquatic invertebrates, insects, grubs, carrion dead animals , and young birds or eggs. Opossums also eat plant food such as acorns, fruits, such as persimmons, wild cherries, and muscadines. Opossums are transient and have a loosely defined home range. They will have multiple den sites and will not necessarily return to the same den site each day 6. The relationships between opossums tends to be passive except during the mating season, and territories are not usually defended as is common with many animals 2. In Alabama, the breeding season for the Virginia opossum may begin as early as January and last until September. Studies indicate that mating does not occur during October, November and December. Females can have two to three litters with as many as 11 babies in each litter. Gestation is only 13 days. At birth, the young are less than one inch long. Inside the pouch, the young will attach to a nipple and will remain there for the next two months. There are 13 nipples inside the pouch but only a certain number will produce milk. The number of functional nipples varies per individual but usually ranges from 7 to 11 2. Is the baby responsive to touch? Level of Dehydration skin turgor, mouth color: If the patient is a normal, healthy baby skip straight to dilutions. If not, continue fluids hourly and repeat sub-Q fluids. Teeth not look sleepy. Thicker fur developing present yet. More active, lots of vocalizing. Body less than 6 inches long excluding tail.

Chapter 9 : Volunteers for Wildlife | Baby Mammals

*A pair of animal activists try to bring an abandoned baby possum back to its Mother.*

Please use a towel or other soft cloth to cover the baby. Do not attempt to feed the baby anything! This will typically cause more harm. Place the baby or babies in a small cardboard box, uncovered, so the mother can see into the box. Place the box under the tree where you believe the nest is or close to where the mother was seen. If you are unsure if the squirrel you have found needs help, call us at [503-325-2253](tel:503-325-2253). Please send a photo to [info@wildlifevolunteers.org](mailto:info@wildlifevolunteers.org), if you are able. Please use a towel or other soft cloth to cover the animal. Mother opossums cannot count and often do not know when they lose a baby. Often baby opossums are found after the mother has been hit by a car or attacked by a pet. Place the box in a warm location or half on a heating pad set on low. Then contact us for assistance. As marsupials, opossums carry their babies in their pouch. Checking for babies not for you? You can put the dead opossum in a box gently with a shovel and contact us. Unless this individual is injured, it does not require help. If you are unsure if an opossum is old enough to be on its own, contact us. Please use a towel or other soft cloth to cover the animal. If so, follow the instructions above. Cover the nest with grass. Mother rabbits will only visit the nest twice a day: This leads people to believe that the babies in the nest are orphaned. They are usually not! If you are concerned that the babies may be orphaned, place several twigs on top of the nest in a criss-cross pattern. If the twigs have been moved after 12 hours, the mother is still feeding the babies. Please let them be, and keep pets and children away from the area until they are old enough to leave. It is always best that the babies remain with their mother outdoors rather than being hand raised in captivity. If the mother does not return, contact us. While it is still covered, place the baby in a thick cardboard box or plastic container with tiny air holes poked in. Then contact us for further assistance. For the most part, re-nesting one of these animals is not an option. Please contact us if you have found what appears to be a healthy baby rodent.