



Virginia Opossums



*Opossums are slow to react when confronted with danger, and are commonly the victims of vehicle strikes. As the only North American marsupials (mammals that carry their babies in a pouch), female opossums injured or killed by cars in spring and summer are often brought to Ohio Wildlife Center with up to 13 young in their pouch. Even if the mother's injuries are too severe for her to survive, a dozen or more babies can be helped by checking the pouch. **Please watch out for wildlife on the roads!***

Virginia Opossums (*Didelphis virginiana*) have done a great job adapting to life around humans. While they prefer a mix of woods, wetlands and farmlands, they do quite well in suburbs and cities. Opportunistic by nature, these animals **will seek shelter in almost any dry and safe space**. When an opossum is threatened, it can hiss or show its teeth. Additionally, they can “play dead,” an involuntary motionless response until they sense that the danger is gone.

Opossums are the only marsupials native to North America. This means the mother carries underdeveloped young in a pouch until they can live on their own. **Female opossums can have up to three litters of babies each year with an average of 9 babies per litter.** Some litters can be as high as 25. The young will stay in a pouch on the mother's belly for up to three months, until growing large enough to come out and feed on their own.

A female opossum hit by a car?

Opossums are most commonly orphaned while still in their mother's pouch. When adult females are injured or killed by cars during breeding months, it is not uncommon for the young to remain alive in the pouch. If you see an adult opossum on the side of the road during spring and summer months and there is not a lot of traffic, you can safely stop and check for viable offspring in any females' pouch. If young are present, you can transport the entire animal to Ohio Wildlife Center's hospital for help.

Opossums in your home or under your deck? We can help!



SCRAM! Wildlife Control, a department at Ohio Wildlife Center, offers a biologically-sound solution. Call 614-763-0696 for details.

SCRAM! will provide you with the only no-kill animal control service in Ohio. We use the biology of the animals in question to offer a **natural, humane and permanent** solution to deal with wildlife in and around your home or business. SCRAM! agents will work with you to safely evict, exclude and prevent wildlife from coming back into your home. Guaranteed!



Is this opossum an orphan?

Opossum babies can also become orphans as they develop and become too large for the pouch. When the mother's pouch is too full, the babies will ride around on the mother's back until they are able to live independently. It is very likely that one or more may fall off at any given time. As you can imagine, the mother would probably not notice one or two bodies missing. Mothers do not come back for lost babies. If you see the mother nearby and can place the baby close to her for reuniting, please do so. If no, the baby will need to be admitted as an orphan into OWC's hospital.



I think this opossum needs help...

If you believe that the opossum is sick, injured, or legitimately orphaned, contact your local wildlife rehabilitation facility for their hours of operation. If the animal must be held overnight before transport to a rehabilitator, keep the animal warm, away from children and pets, and **do not give anything orally** unless instructed by the wildlife rehabilitator in your area.

DO NOT offer any type of milk or formula or attempt to hand rear the infant yourself. The impromptu introduction of a strange milk or formula nearly always results in lethal digestive problems.

Because young wild animals do not have obvious methods of exhibiting fear, such as biting and flight attempts, **people often do not realize the amount of stress an animal endures when it is handled by a human**. Consequently, many infant and juvenile animals are killed by kindness.

Hours of Operation

Our wildlife hospital is located at 2661 Billingsley Road, Columbus, 43235. We are open from 9:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. Monday through Friday and from 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. on Saturday and Sunday.

Ohio Wildlife Center is not a government agency; we are a local 501(c)(3) non-profit organization. As we do not receive government funding, we rely on individual donations and grants. We would greatly appreciate a monetary donation to help with animal care.

Thank you for caring about Ohio's wildlife!