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## How to deal with wildlife the right way

Have you ever found a raccoon digging through your garbage, or an abandoned baby squirrel in a park, or an injured bird on your lawn and wondered what to do? You're not alone.

Local wildlife centres

field thousands of calls every year about these types of situations, but say they often don't have the resources to quickly answer every request.

"Common misconceptions about handling local wildlife can cause more harm than good in these types of situations,<sup>2</sup> says Mary Desjardins, the executive director of TD Friends of the Environment Foundation (TD FEF). "That's why Canadians should educate themselves on what to do if they encounter wildlife so they can avoid

potentially dangerous scenarios.'

TD FEF supports thousands of grassroots projects dedicated to preserving Canada's environment, says Desjardins. In the last 20 years, the foundation has provided funding for more than 20,000 projects that protect local and endangered wildlife. Take a look at a few tips for dealing with the most common local wildlife scenarios:

• If you find an animal digging through your garbage: Do not feed it. Limit food sources by keeping your outdoor areas clean of food and keeping garbage indoors. This will ensure

wild animals don't view humans as a potential food source and will encourage them to forage for natural food sources that are better for their systems.

• If you find a sick or injured animal: Reduce their stress by minimizing noise levels and avoid handling or looking at the animal. If you feel safe to do so, try to confine it in a box or carrier in a quiet, warm and dark area. Call your local wildlife hotline and avoid offering food or drink until you have spoken with hotline staff first.

 If you find a dead animal: This is best left to the experts. Call your local animal services organization or the public works departments in your town.

More information, including how to donate, is available online at www. tdfef.com.

—www.newscanada.com



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