



## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**Contact:** Public Information Officer  
970.400.2380 (office)

### **Protect Yourself and Wild Animals by Leaving Them Alone**

**Weld County** – Wild animals can look cute and fuzzy. But as cute and fuzzy as some wild animals seem, they may carry diseases without appearing sick. These diseases can be life threatening to humans as well as to their pets. “If you see a baby raccoon that appears to have lost its mother, your first reaction is to pick it up and help it,” said Mark E. Wallace, MD, MPH, Executive Director of the Weld County Health Department, “However, by touching, feeding, or rescuing a wild animal, you may do more harm than good.” Often the mother of the baby will return for it, even hours later, and the best chance it has for survival is to be raised by its own parent in its natural habitat. The other issue is animal-borne diseases. “Wild animals can carry a variety of diseases, such as rabies, which can be fatal” said Wallace. Unfortunately, when someone takes in a wild animal in an attempt to save it, often it results in the animal being euthanized due to the human interaction.

Health officials recommend the following to protect humans, pets, and wildlife:

- Do not feed wild animals.
- Leave orphaned animals alone. Baby animals often appear to be orphaned when they are not. The parent animal may not return if people are too close.
- Always wash your hands and the hands of children with running water and soap after working or playing outside, especially in areas where wild animals are present.
- Avoid playing or working in areas where there are wild animal droppings (feces).
- Keep pet vaccinations up-to-date.

If you do find a wild animal that appears to be sick, injured or orphaned, contact your local Animal Control Officer, Colorado Parks and Wildlife, or a local veterinary office before attempting to move it.

For additional information, call:

- Weld County Regional Communications (Dispatch): (970) 350-9600
- Colorado Parks and Wildlife (Fort Collins office): (970 ) 472-4300
- Weld County Health Department, Environmental Health Division: (970) 304-6415

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**Health Administration  
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**Public Health**