



## FEATURES



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## Nature News: Helping Wildlife Battle The Heat



Animals such as this alligator lizard may benefit from water dishes on the ground or access to shelter.

By Angela McLaughlin - Ramona Home Journal • Thu, Jul 12, 2018

As we enter into the warmest season, thoughts turn to keeping ourselves and our pets cool. But local wildlife can benefit from our added concern, as well. The summer months are notoriously warmer and drier, offering fewer resources and more dangers for animals.

So how can people help?

The easiest first step is to offer a consistent water source. For songbirds and birds of prey, an elevated bird bath that is filled regularly can be a lifesaver. Placing it at a higher level will also help to protect smaller birds from becoming prey.

To offer hydration to other animals, consider adding a water dish at a lower level — a height that is accessible to ground-dwelling animals such as rabbits, squirrels, lizards and more. It is important to regularly clean the container and change the water to prevent the spread of disease and prevent it from becoming a breeding ground for insects.

Water is essential, but it can also be hazardous. Large, unnatural bodies of water, such as horse troughs and pools may pose risks for animals who attempt to hydrate themselves. To prevent accidental drownings, Christine Barton, director of operations at the Fund for Animals Wildlife Center, recommends utilizing a FrogLog, which can offer animals an escape route. For deeper water bowls, she says a large rock may be used in place of a FrogLog.

Water might be the number-one way to help, but don't forget about offering supplemental food. During the warmest months, worms burrow their way deeper underground, making it difficult for birds to find them. Providing seed and other foods year-round can help birds stay nourished — not to mention the enjoyment you'll get from watching them at the feeder. Keeping the plants in your garden watered will also help, as the insects that are attracted are a meal source for many critters.

If offering food or water, remember that it is important to be consistent. When animals come to rely on a specific place as a source for nourishment, it can be detrimental to suddenly take that away.

Make sure that whatever assistance you are providing is sustainable for you to continue. Set yourself and the animals up for success by planning ahead.

Shelter is another important factor in wildlife survival. Creating places for animals to escape the intensity of the sun can be a big help. For small animals such as snakes and lizards, turning over a flowerpot and cutting a hole for a door on one side can be a simple and cost-effective solution. For those looking to add owl boxes or bat houses, make sure to place them in a shady area so they do not get too warm inside.

The summer months can be brutal for everyone — take a moment to consider how you can help your local wildlife. If you find an animal that may need assistance, do not intervene until you contact your local wildlife resource with questions.

The Fund for Animals Wildlife Center may be reached at 760-789-2324 or [wildliferehab@fundforanimals.org](mailto:wildliferehab@fundforanimals.org). Visit [www.fundforanimals.org](http://www.fundforanimals.org).

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