



How to Help Animals Stuck on Glue Traps

Tragically, glue traps are commonly used for the control of mice and rats. Target and nontarget species frequently fall victim to these cruel devices. An animal will struggle to free himself, resulting in fur and skin tears, broken bones and worse. Eventually, the animal will die of dehydration, starvation, injuries and/or stress.

Any live animal stuck on a glue trap is a wildlife emergency and is best handled by wildlife experts. In this document, we provide guidance on:

1. Things to do immediately upon finding an animal on a glue trap
2. Finding expert assistance
3. What to do if expert assistance is unavailable

Things To Do Immediately

NOTE: Never touch a wild animal with bare hands. If possible, wear durable, flexible gloves.

Prevent Further Sticking

Cover any exposed areas of the glue side of the trap with cornstarch*, paper towels, newspaper or other nontoxic items. Use caution to avoid getting anything in the animal's eyes, nose or mouth.

* Alternatives to cornstarch include cornmeal, grits and breadcrumbs.

Reduce Stress and Shock

Place the animal (and trap) in a secure container and move him to a warm, dark, quiet location. Keep companion animals and children out of view and earshot.



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Find Expert Assistance

Use www.AnimalHelpNow.org (or www.AHNow.org) to immediately connect with wildlife experts near you. *Animal Help Now is also available as a free app for iPhone and Android.*

On the main page of the app, click or tap **Wildlife Emergency**. Here's a quick [How-to Video](#) in case you need guidance.

Optional: Use SEARCH BY ANIMAL (highlighted in screen cap below) to narrow down your results by animal type (e.g., a mouse would be "Small Mammal").

The screenshot shows the Animal Help Now website interface. At the top, there is a red header with the logo and navigation links: HOME, RESOURCES, IN THE NEWS, BLOG, ABOUT, CONTACT US. Below the header is a "YOU ARE HERE" address box containing "450 Serra Mall, Stanford, CA 94305 USA" and buttons for "DONATE" and "VOLUNTEER". A note below the address box says: "If the YOU ARE HERE address box is empty or wrong, click/tap it and then type in your zipcode or address. Click here to reset the address field to your location." The main content area features three large buttons: "Wildlife Emergency" (highlighted in red), "Wildlife Conflict", and "Other Animal Issue". To the right, there is a "Results Map" section with a "SEARCH BY ANIMAL" dropdown menu (highlighted with a blue circle and arrow) and a list of "TOP RESULTS" including "Ventura Hummingbird Rescue", "VCA Crestwood Animal Hospital", and "Camarillo Wildlife Rescue". A text box on the right says "Click any listing for more information."



Expert Assistance Unavailable: Do-It-Yourself Instructions

If help is not immediately available, follow these steps to free the animal from the trap.

Please do not risk harm to yourself or the animal. If you are uncomfortable with this procedure, do not attempt it. Be sure to read [Tips and Precautions](#) below.

Assemble Rescue Supplies

- Cornstarch (or cornmeal, grits and breadcrumbs) in a small bowl.
- A lightweight cloth, small kitchen towel or washcloth.
- Paper towels or newspapers.
- A cardboard box or other secure container with pre-drilled air holes.
- Cotton swabs for use later, if needed.
- Oil for use later, if needed (e.g., canola, olive, mineral).

Rescue Procedure

If the animal has glue in or near the mouth, nostrils or eyes, attend to those areas first. If not, place a paper towel or cloth under her face to avoid getting oil in her mouth, nostrils and eyes.

1. Using a light cloth to cover the head if possible, gently but firmly place one hand on the animal near the head to restrain her and prevent escape. Remain aware of teeth, talons and claws as you work.
2. For small, delicate animals, such as geckos, small songbirds, bats, mice and young rabbits, use the pre-saturated cotton swabs to work gently, calmly and methodically from front to back or side to side. Avoid flipping or turning the animal unnecessarily. Massage the oil around the parts of the animal that are stuck. Work the cotton swab between the skin and glue.
3. For larger animals, such as raptors, drip small amounts of oil on the glue board around the areas where the animal's body is stuck and gently massage the oil into the areas where the animal is stuck.
4. As the animal comes free, sprinkle cornstarch on freshly exposed glue.
5. Once the animal is freed, quickly cover the trap with a paper towel or newspaper to prevent her from getting stuck again.
6. Gently wipe any remaining oil from the animal if it is safe to do so. **Do not attempt to bathe animals who have been freed from glue.**

Additional Info

[Video of Professionals Removing Bird From Glue Trap](#)



Follow-Up Care

Important! All animals rescued from glue traps must be evaluated by an expert, even if no injuries are apparent.

- Use [Animal Help Now](https://www.ahnow.org) to connect with wildlife experts near you. All animals removed from glue traps should be taken to a wildlife rehabilitator or veterinarian as soon as possible for careful, species-appropriate bathing, a full examination, possible further treatment, and release criteria evaluation.
- **Do not offer food or water.** These can be harmful if the animal is in shock.
- Place the animal in a vented container and move to a warm, dark, quiet location away from people and companion animals.

Tips and Precautions

- The products, and amount of product, you will use depend on availability and the species of animal to be freed. The goal is to prevent further injury and illness. For example, oil will damage bird feathers, diminish feathers' waterproofing and interfere with a bird's ability to regulate her body temperature so it is important not to get oil on feathers not stuck in the glue. Use only nontoxic products.
- Many alternatives to cornstarch, cornmeal, grits or breadcrumbs are possible; however, use caution with any products that produce fine powder, especially with birds because airborne powder can cause respiratory illness.
- Do not pour large amounts of oil on the glue trap or the animal. You'd risk drowning the animal and permanently damaging feathers, scales.
- Watch the animal carefully. If you are breaking feathers, ripping out fur or splitting the skin, you are going too fast.
- If the animal is mouth breathing or gasping, she may be overheating. As long as the mouth and nose are free, it's better to take a break and let the animal cool down.
- Remember that the animal may struggle to free herself, so make sure there is no exposed glue for her to get stuck on and no puddles of oil to foul fur or feathers. Use paper towels to cover oily surfaces.
- Wear species-appropriate protective gloves, clothing and eyewear to prevent bite, beak and/or talon injuries.
- **Bats are frequent glue trap victims. In many areas of the United States, bats are considered rabies vector species (RVS), meaning they are more likely than other mammals to be infected with rabies. This disease risk, along with bats' delicate wings and bones, increase the danger for humans and bats when freeing bats from traps. Also, public health laws in many areas dictate a bat must be killed for rabies testing if a human or domestic animal had direct contact with him.**



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APPENDIX A: Additional Resources

[Preventing Glue Trap Emergencies](#), WildCare, San Rafael, CA

APPENDIX B: Photos



Red-tailed hawk. Source: Latitia Labbie



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Sticky bands placed on trees can destroy many spotted lanternflies. Photo: Emelie Swackhamer, Penn State



COURTESY OF MICHELE WELLARD/FOR PHILLYVOICE

Woodpecker caught in lanternfly trap.



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Screech owl treated at von Arx Wildlife Hospital in March of 2014 after it was found stuck to a glue trap.

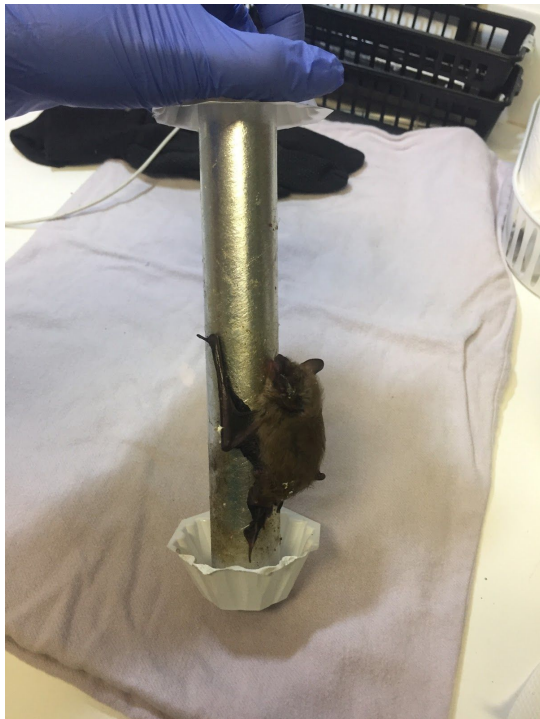
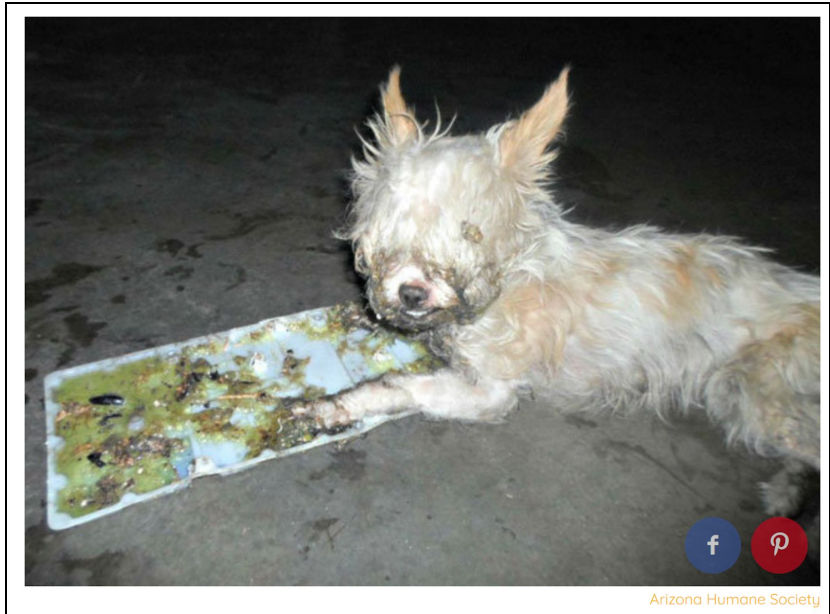


<https://www.discoverwildcare.org/never-use-glue-traps/>



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Big brown bat stuck to fly trap, treated at Audubon Sharon in 2018.



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The aftermath of a house wren improperly removed from a glue trap. This bird was treated at Audubon Sharon in 2017.

Thank You!

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