

Northwoods Humane Society – Deanna Persson, President

It is almost 'kitten' time! Nationwide, shelters begin to see an influx of unwanted kittens in the spring. This continues throughout the summer. Alecia Austin, our Shelter Manager recently shared this information with me that she found on AdoptaPet.com written by Jennifer Warner.

What should you do if you find a kitten or kittens? The first step is to assess the situation. Do not pick them up immediately. Assess the situation. Are they suffering – sick or injured? What dangers are there for a tiny kitten? Is it below 65 degrees or above 85 degrees, rain, snow, cars, dogs, or wildlife. If their lives are in peril, pick them up and seek help for them.

If you find kittens without their mother, it may be that the Mom cat might be out looking for food, or moving her kittens to a new nest. If kittens are in a relatively safe place and not injured or sick, ideally you will assess and do a 'kitten stakeout' to see if the Mom comes back. You may need to wait a couple of hours. As long as the kittens are warm enough, healthy kittens can survive a couple of hours without food. Stay as far away as you can while keeping an eye on where the kittens are located. If you are too close, some experts say closer than 35 feet, mom cat might wait for you to move away before she returns.

If the Mom cat returns, you can celebrate! If she moves the kittens to a new nest, you may not see her again. If she has made a nest on your property, you can set up a temporary mom cat shelter or just feed her until the kittens are 5 weeks old. At about 4 to 5 weeks you'll see the kittens also eating the food you leave for the mom. To assess the age of the kittens go to <https://www.alleycat.org/resources/kittenprogression> or <http://www.kittenlady.org/age>

If the Mom cat does not return, or it's dangerous to leave the kittens to see if she does, you'll need to capture and safely contain the kittens. Average kitten litter size is 2 to 6 kittens, but occasionally there are more. Be sure to return to the spot at least twice after a few hours to make sure you didn't miss a kitten.

When you have the kittens safe contained, call your local animal shelter or animal control officer to ask what any local laws may be for reporting lost kittens. For our Sawyer County area and Cable area, please call the NHS Shelter at 715-634-5394 and ask for Lisa Lew our assistant Shelter Manager or Angie Larson. They will work with you to do the problem solving. When you speak with your local shelter or animal control officer, ask if they have a foster program and can easily take the kittens in, or if they know of one. Lisa has built a strong foster program for kittens and also has a foster to adopt program for the Northwoods Humane Society. You can also offer to foster the kittens until they are of age to come to the NHS Shelter.

Taking care of infant kittens takes time, easily gained knowledge and patience. Lisa and Angie will work with you if you are able to help with fostering your found kittens or they will work you if you would like to foster kittens in need.

Dates to Save:

April 21 – Bingo at Powell's on Round Lake – 5:30 to 8 p.m.

May 27 – Dining For Cats and Dogs – Lynn's Custom Meats and Catering – 10:30 – 3:00 p.m.