**Not quite old enough to volunteer at Wild ARC yet?**
**Don't despair, there's still lots you can do to help local wildlife!**

\* Make your **home and yard wildlife-friendly** – make more natural habitat by planting native trees and shrubs (check with a local garden centre for suggestions), make sure any netting around gardens and ponds is taut and in good repair, place floatation devices at edges of ponds or pools so ducklings and amphibians can climb back out.

\* Be **bird aware**! Place UV decals on the outside of your windows to prevent birds from hitting the glass, and if you are offering birds seed in feeders make sure they are taken down and cleaned regularly.

\* Help out with 'citizen science' **wildlife monitoring** – take your family on a Christmas Bird Count (birds.audobon.org), or visit naturewatch.ca for lots of different citizen-based monitoring programs like FrogWatch, PlantWatch, IceWatch, and WormWatch!

\* Keep your **domestic animals under control** – respect local leash laws and keep cats indoors to keep your pets safe and to protect local wildlife from harm.

\* Reuse or recycle your plastic products and try to **avoid disposable plastic packaging**. Animals can die after swallowing plastic debris or becoming tangled up in plastic six-pack holders.

\* **Pick up litter** – it could save an animal's life! Food scraps tossed on the road attracts wildlife and puts them at risk of being hit by a car, broken kite string and fishing line can get tangled around birds' feet and wings. Securing your garbage can lids (a bungee cord works well!) prevents wildlife from tipping them over and feeding on your leftovers.

\* Encourage your school to take eco-friendly steps – focusing on conserving water, energy, and paper are great places to start. If your school doesn't already have one, you could **start an environmental club** to get others involved too!

\* Make nesting season a little easier for your wild neighbours. Ask a parent to help you **build and hang nest boxes** for birds, bats, and bees – there are lots of great plans and instructions available online.

\* Knowledge is an important first step in helping wildlife, so take the time to **learn more about local wildlife**. Get outside and become an observer of life around you, and try taking nature hikes to nearby parks, wetlands, or beaches. You can also check out books, videos, and audio recordings of wildlife to learn more about their habits.

\* **Leave baby animals in the wild** – even if a baby animal looks abandoned, its mum is probably nearby. For example, deer, seals, and rabbits all leave their babies for long periods, returning only a few times a day to nurse them!

\* **Try not to disturb or destroy wild habitats** – even if a bird's nest looks abandoned, leave it where it is. Some bird species return to the same nest site year after year, and other bird species rely on abandoned nests to lay their eggs!

**Share these tips with your family and friends – by passing along great information and ways to help wildlife in your area, you can become a wildlife hero!**