

What to do if you find a Baby Bird



Each year, wildlife rehabilitation centres treat hundreds of birds that are believed to be orphans, but are actually healthy and still in their parents' care. Learn how to tell the difference.

If you find a nestling that has fallen out of the nest:

- Search the area for the nest – check that remaining babies look the same as the fallen one.
- Place the young back in the nest (parents will not detect your scent).
- If you can't find the nest, can't reach it, or it is damaged, you can substitute a plastic berry basket lined with dry grass.
- Ducklings and goslings do not return to a nest, but stay with their parents for protection. If families are disturbed and parents do not return for all the babies, young may need to be brought to a wildlife rehabilitation centre.



Nestlings are featherless, downy, or incompletely feathered baby birds.

If you find a fledgling on the ground:

- Leave it alone unless it is being attacked by a dog or cat. Remove the fledgling from immediate danger if necessary.
- Keep pets indoors and warn others to stay clear.
- It is normal for fledglings to hop on the ground for the first few days after they leave the nest. The parents will continue to feed them during this time. For example, baby crows (which are almost the same size as adults) remain on the ground for over a week while learning to fly. Their parents commonly will dive-bomb people in the area to stay clear!



Fledglings are older baby birds with feathers, that have left the nest but are not yet ready to fly.

What you shouldn't do

- Do not handle or pet the animal. This creates more stress and may lead to deeper shock.
- Do not offer food or water, and do not leave food or water in the box with the animal. All wild animals have a unique diet. Do not trust websites that give feeding instructions – contact your local wildlife rehabilitation centre instead.
- Do not attempt to treat the animal's injuries yourself – they feel the same pain as people although they will hide it. These well-meant attempts to help are more likely to cause further harm.
- **Do not attempt to rehabilitate the animal on your own. It is ILLEGAL to keep wildlife without a permit.**

Call for help if:

- The bird is obviously injured.
- You cannot find the nest.
- A bird sits with its feathers puffed and does not move for a long period.
- A bird runs on the ground when others fly away.
- You know the bird is an orphan (dead parents are observed).

Who to call

If a young animal is truly orphaned or injured, it needs prompt attention!

Contact the BC SPCA's wildlife hotline for more information or to locate a wildlife rehabilitation facility: 1-855-6BC-SPCA (1-855-622-7722)



Cats are the most common reason birds and small mammals are injured. Cats with bells on their collars still kill wildlife and even well-fed cats kill wildlife. Cats strike most often at dawn and dusk when birds are active – so please keep them inside!



You can help wildlife now

An injured or orphaned animal's best chance for success is to be cared for by a wildlife rehabilitation centre. Help us care for wild animals in need at www.wildarc.com

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