



Found an Orphaned or Injured Baby Songbird?



Songbirds

- Once Spring arrives, there will be an abundance of birds building nests to raise their babies.
- Birds gather twigs, leaves and any nesting material they can get their beaks on to create a cozy home for their families. Nests may be found in nearby trees, shrubs or bushes.
- Nests could be built above your front door, under your deck, or in a shed if there is an opening!
- Please do not touch any active bird nests!
- The Migratory Bird Treaty Act states that it is illegal to take, possess, import, export, transport, sell, purchase or barter any part of a nest or eggs unless you hold a valid permit.
- If you find a baby bird on the ground, first **OBSERVE** the baby from a distance and keep pets/kids away.
- If the eyes on the baby bird are closed and the baby has few to no feathers, you have a **hatchling** (less than 4 days old). If the eyes are open and you see feathers growing awkwardly, you have a **nestling** (3-13 days old). In either case, the baby needs help as the parents cannot retrieve the baby and will abandon a fallen chick. Pick up the baby (with gloves on) and determine condition. If healthy and warm, you can return the baby to the nest if you are able to find and reach it! It is a myth that parents will smell the scent of a human on its baby and abandon him/her. Parents want their young back and you can help reunite them! The young need the body heat of their siblings and parents to stay alive.
- If the baby is fully feathered with short tail and wings and is hopping or fluttering around on the ground, you likely have a **fledgling** (13-14 days or older). Do not put a fledgling back into the nest! Being out of the nest and wandering around on the ground under shrubs or low tree branches are normal behaviors at this age. The young bird cannot find food or fly yet, but rest assured he/she is being fed by the parents and being taught how to fly. You may not see the parents if you stand too close to the fledgling. Observe from a distance for at least one hour to ensure the parent(s) return to feed the young. Feedings are very quick, so keep a close eye on the baby and check for bird droppings on the ground. If the fledgling looks healthy and is not in immediate danger, please let him/her be.
- **Do not kidnap a healthy baby!** Being with parents is the best chance of survival!
- It is **IMPORTANT** to note that not all species of songbirds fledge to the ground. Species like hummingbirds, swallows and flycatchers do not fledge to the ground. So, should you come across one of these species on the ground, it is likely the bird needs help.

When to call for help:

- Whenever you have questions about whether you should intervene
- If a baby is sick, injured, cold, or has been attacked by a cat
- If a hatchling or nestling cannot be returned to the original nest because it is too high or it has been destroyed. (Of note, it is no longer recommended to create a substitute nest for a baby bird you find on the ground. It is unlikely the parents will find the substitute nest; also, it is unlikely for parents to come back for one baby in a substitute nest when they have other babies to care for in an original nest.)
- If the parents of a fledgling have not returned in hours to feed him/her

**Always wear gloves when
handling wildlife!**