

# You've found a baby bird. Now what?

Wild birds live all around us! Sometimes they need our help and sometimes they don't. How do you tell, and what do you do?

**Is the bird sick or hurt?** Is it bleeding, weak or shivering?  
Unable to flutter its wings, or are its wings drooping unevenly?  
Has it been attacked by a cat or dog?

NO

YES **Call Bird Rescue Center at 707 523-2473**



**Is the bird feathered?**

NO

YES



**It's a nestling** And it needs help!  
Can you find the nest? Is the nest intact?  
Can you safely reach the nest?

**It's a fledgling** Hopping around on the ground is normal if the parents are still feeding it.  
Is the bird safe from cats, dogs and people?

NO

YES

NO

YES

**Make a nest**

Use a berry basket or margarine tub. Line it with dry grass, the old nest, or pine needles (but no cotton balls!). Secure it into the original tree or one nearby.

**Put the baby in the nest**

Observe from a distance for an hour. Are the parents visiting the nest?

**Put the bird low in a bush or low in a nearby tree**

Watch from a distance for an hour. Are the parents nearby?

**Leave the area**

The baby is okay.

**Leave the area**

The baby is okay.

YES

NO

NO

YES

**Call Bird Rescue Center at 707 523-2473**

## If you need to bring an injured or orphaned bird to the Bird Rescue Center

**1 Prepare a container** A shoebox with air holes in the lid, lined with a small towel, works for most songbirds.

**2 Protect yourself** Even sick birds may try to protect themselves with their beaks or talons. Wear gloves if possible. Birds may have parasites or carry diseases. Wash your hands after handling.

**3 Put the bird in the box** Gently place it in the box, close the lid, and don't keep checking on it.

**4 Keep it warm** If the bird is cold, put one end of the box on a heating pad set on low.

**5 If you can't transport it immediately:**

- Keep the bird in a warm, dark, quiet place.
- Do not give it food or water.
- Do not handle it.
- Keep children and pets away from it.

**6 Transport the bird to BRC** Keep it in the box, keep the car quiet (radio off, etc.).

**7 Complete the BRC intake form** Provide complete info on the circumstances of your rescue. Write your personal info legibly in case we need to contact you.

## Fact or not?

**Birds can smell the scent of humans on a baby that has been handled.**

**NOT!** Birds' sense of smell is not well understood, but they will not reject babies that have been touched by humans.

**Birds recognize their babies' voices and will come when they call.**

**FACT** Adult birds respond to the begging calls of their young, and will feed their babies if they can reach them.

**Birds may carry diseases that can be transmitted to people.**

**FACT** Birds can carry parasites, as well as bacterial, fungal or viral infections that can affect people. If you have handled a wild bird, you should wash your hands and anything the bird has been in contact with.

**A bird that has been caught by a cat should be let go if it can still fly.**

**NOT!** Cats' teeth cause nearly invisible puncture wounds on their prey. Bacteria from their saliva in these wounds can cause deadly infections 3-5 days later. Birds caught by a cat should be brought to BRC.

**It is illegal to keep a wild animal without a permit, even if you are trying to care for it and plan to release it.**

**FACT** Wild animal care requires very specific skills and knowledge. Wildlife rehabilitators are licensed by the California Department of Fish and Game and the US Department of Fish and Wildlife to rehabilitate wildlife, and are the only ones permitted to treat wild animals. This ensures the best chance for their survival.

**A licensed veterinarian can rehabilitate an injured wild bird.**

**NOT!** Unless they are also a licensed wildlife rehabilitator or are working with a licensed wildlife rehabilitator, a veterinary license does not permit them to rehabilitate wild animals. The California Department of Fish and Game permits veterinarians to stabilize an injured or orphaned wild animal for up to 48 hours.

**Orphaned baby birds like to be cuddled and talked to.**

**YOU WISH!** Sorry but they are normally terrified of us and think we are predators. Not being able to see or hear us helps calm them.



The Bird Rescue Center  
of Sonoma County

707 523-2473 3430 Chanate Rd, Santa Rosa  
birdrescuecenter.org