

## IMPORTANT BIRD INFORMATION



Hatchling- eyes closed,  
not feathered,



Nestling- eyes open, few  
feathers, still in nest



Fledgling- looks like an  
adult, has head fuzzies,  
often found hopping on  
the ground, short tail

### Things to ask if you get a call on a bird

1. Is it a baby bird (hatching or nestling) with little to no feathers that is unable to stand and hop?
2. Is it a fledgling that is fully feathered with a short tail and some tufts of baby feathers still showing that can hop around on the ground?
3. Is it an adult bird with sleek feathers and a long tail?
4. Has the bird been in a cat's mouth?
5. Where was it found?
6. Can they send you a picture of the bird? (The public often mistakes the size of the bird/ age)

### Four things to tell the caller (read more below)

1. Do not give any food or water to a nestling or a fledgling. Nothing!
2. Do not worry about human's scent on the bird
3. Leave any fledgling alone to let the parents feed them.
4. Keep cats indoors! Cat saliva can be fatal to birds and small mammals

### Young Baby Birds (Nestlings)

If you find a baby bird on the ground with no feathers, or a baby bird with visible bare skin between the feathers, warm the baby by gently holding it between your hands. It should feel warm to the touch. The parents will not abandon the bird because it has been touched by humans!

The baby bird may have fallen out of the nest, or the entire nest may have fallen from the tree or shrub. If birds are on the ground, look for a nest nearby. If the nest is found, put the nest in a small plastic bowl-shaped container with several drainage holes punched in the bottom, place the baby bird(s) inside, and attach it to the tree as high as you can reach.

If the nest is still in the tree, try to return the baby to the nest. Don't worry about putting human scent on the babies. Most birds have a very weak sense of smell. If you can't find the nest but know the parents are around you can try making a substitute nest. Punch several holes in the bottom of a margarine tub and put grass and leaves in the tub to create a nest. Place the baby in the makeshift nest (**this will not work for a fledgling who will jump out immediately**) and attach it to the tree as far up from the ground as possible but not exposed to direct sun and not exposed so that crows or hawks can see them...maybe under some foliage of a tree. If rain is in the forecast then once you see the parents are coming back then move the nest to a covered area or create something to keep the nest and baby waterproof.. Watch from a distance to see if the parents return to feed the

babies. You must be **out of sight** of the parents and watch **constantly** for 45 minutes. The parents will come and go within a few seconds, so you cannot look away.

**To relocate a nest:** If a bird's nest has been built in an unsuitable location and has to be moved (example: a boat which needs to be moved or a porch light) then move the nest two feet a day until you relocate to a better place. If there are only unhatched eggs, the parents may not find the nest. If baby birds are chirping, there is a much better chance it will be found by the parents.

If the nest is in a hanging basket, you can just water your plant around the nest. The birds will be gone in a few weeks. If the nest is in a wreath on the door, try and use another door for a few weeks, or open and close the door gently when you use it. These are probably Carolina wrens, and they will eat lots of spiders and insects around your house! These birds love being near our houses. Wrens are also the birds who build nests in outdoor grills. If there are already eggs or babies when you find the nest, try and postpone your grilling for a while!

### **Fledglings**

If you find an older baby bird that is fully feathered and hopping around on the ground, you have probably found a fledgling. **LEAVE IT ALONE.** Fledgling birds leave the nest a week or two before they are able to fly, and the parents are probably still caring for it. At this age, the parents only feed about every hour. If you want to watch to ensure the parents are coming to the baby, you will have to watch FROM A DISTANCE for 45 minutes to an hour. The parent comes and leaves very quickly, so you cannot look away. If the baby pooped while you had it, it IS being fed!

If the fledgling is in an unsafe place, like within a dog fence or in the street, you can move it a short distance or to the other side of the fence. You can place the youngster on a low shrub or tree branch and the parents should hear it and find it. If you find a fledgling hopping in the street, move it to nearby grass or a shrub.

If the fledgling appears to have been injured by a cat or dog, seek assistance from a wildlife rehabilitator. **Any animal that has been in a cat's mouth needs antibiotics, even if a puncture is not obvious.**

### **Important!**

**Never put food or water into a bird's mouth.** Birds have an air hole just behind their tongue and can easily inhale water and drown. Special tools are needed to feed a bird as not to cause aspiration. Do not attempt this. **NEVER give birds milk! Also do not feed earthworms.**

### **Injured Adult Birds**

Birds that have run into windows will many times recover. Tell the caller to place the bird in a paper bag or in a box with air holes. Place in a QUIET place for 1-3 hours (sometimes longer). Take the box outside to check on the bird in case he can fly. Open the bag or box and if the bird doesn't take off then try again in another hour. If the bird has one wing down (dragging) or a bad head tilt, then the caller will need to get the bird to a vet or rehabber.

If you have found an injured adult bird - follow the previous instructions and provide the bird with mealworms (available at a wild bird store or pet store) as well as wild bird seed. Some birds are seed-eaters and others are not, so this allows the bird to pick the best diet if you are not sure of the species. Also provide a **small** container of water that is heavy enough not to turn over and small enough to prevent the bird from drowning. Again, the caller will need to get the bird to a vet or rehabber. <http://www.ncwildlife.org/Injured-Wildlife>