

HAVE YOU FOUND A BABY BIRD?

If so, here's what you should do. Ensure the baby needs help, as not all babies need to be rescued. Use this guide to determine if the bird needs your help.

Identify if the baby came from a nest not all birds are raised in one! Look carefully around the area for its parents. Watch where they fly to help find where the nest could be located. Perhaps all the baby needs is a lift back to its nest. This guide shows you when to take action and what you need to do.

TYPES OF BABY BIRDS

Altricial babies are born with the eyes closed, and no feathers. It may take several days before they open their eyes. They need regular assistance from parents for food, warmth and protection. Songbirds are altricial.

Semi-altricial chicks are covered in down, fed by adults, and unable to leave the nest. Some, including hawks and herons, are born with eyes open, while owls are born with their eyes closed.

Precocial babies are born with eyes open and fully covered with down feathers. These type of babies are ready to walk away from the nest a few hours after hatching and they can even feed themselves. Adults stay with them for protection. This is the case of ducks and most shorebirds.

Semi-precocial chicks are those that can walk right away, but still remain in the nest where they are fed by the parents. Gulls and terns are good examples .

Birds in Helping Hands is a non-profit organization dedicated to the rescue and rehabilitation seabirds, marsh birds, shorebirds, and songbirds. Find out more at birdsinehelpinghands.org

DO BIRDS ABANDON THEIR BABIES?

Birds rarely abandon their offspring. If they get separated from their parents, many precocial babies will pretend to be dead as a defense mechanism. Altricial babies may stop chirping and hide in vegetation. Adults may try distracting you by faking being injured, effectively pulling you away from their prized offspring.

BABY BIRD DEVELOPMENT

Nestlings have little or no feathers and need parents for food, warmth and protection. If the bird is uninjured and a nest is present, it's best to put it back and let the parents raise it.

Fledglings are covered with feathers and about ready to fly. Most baby birds leave the nest a few days before they can fly. Some will move through branches of nearby trees or bushes and are commonly called "branchers".

Important: If a dog or cat brings you a live bird, immediate medical attention should be given to the bird to prevent infection. Contact your local wildlife rehabilitator or veterinarian.

Under the Federal Migratory Bird Treaty Act, it is illegal to possess any migratory bird without the proper permit, except when transporting to a care giving licensed facility.

**Please don't rescue me!
I'm precocial and doing great!**

Countless birds are unnecessarily rescued every year by well intended people, thinking they are abandoned or hurt. Please read this guide before taking action.

Sandhill Crane Colt



Birds in Helping Hands
birdsinehelpinghands.org

Found a Baby Bird? Here's what to do next.



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Is the bird injured?

Look closely for blood, open wounds, bite marks, punctures or ants crawling on it. Does it feel cold?

YES

Contact
Birds in Helping Hands at
727-365-4592

Place the fledgling in a bush or nearby tree where parents can find it. Bring dogs or cats inside. Watch for adult birds from a safe distance to ensure they are tending for the little bird.

NO

Does it have any feathers?

Nestlings have little or no feathers at all. Fledglings are mostly covered with feathers including their wing feathers.

YES

Is it within reach of a dog or cat?

YES

Do's and don'ts

- Don't give food or fluids to a baby bird unless instructed by a wildlife rehabilitator.
- Don't bathe or wipe clean.
- Do not try to raise; it's illegal without the proper permits.
- Do keep in a dark and warm container with breathing holes.
- Do seek assistance as soon as possible.

NO



Can you see a nest?

YES

Place bird back in the nest .
Watch from a distance for adults tending the nest.

NO

Leave it alone. It's normal for fledglings to spend some time on the ground while learning to fly. Keep an eye out for adults as they will come to feed and protect their fledgling.

NO

Call 727-365-4592

Build a makeshift



If a nest falls from a tree, you can improvise one using a plastic container. Drill holes on the bottom for drainage, line it up with grass and attach it safely to a tree or bush using zip-ties or any suitable cord. Once secure, move the babies to the nest and watch from a distance to ensure the adults find them.

FACTS

Most birds have poor sense of smell. Touching a baby bird will not make the parents reject it. That's just an old myth.